

“All in the Family” Genesis 29:31-30:24

THE BIRTHS OF JACOB’S SONS IS A TAPESTRY OF JEALOUSY, RIVALRY, AND DYSFUNCTION

1. The LORD had mercy on Leah and granted her children, but Rachel was barren. 29:31-35

- The LORD saw that Leah was “hated”. She was the ‘less wanted’ wife of Jacob. v.25, 31
- While Rachel remained unable to have children, God showed mercy to Leah and granted her children.
- **v.32:** Reuben “Look, a son!” → “The LORD has seen my affliction”
→ Surely, my husband will love me now!
- **v.33:** Simeon “Hear!” → The LORD has heard that I am hated. (v.33)
→ God knows how hard my life is—He is on my side!
- **v.34:** Levi “Attached” → Now my husband will become attached to me. (v.34)
The descendants of Levi would be assigned as priests and become ‘attached’ to the Tabernacle & Temple which housed the Ark of the Covenant—the place of God’s holy presence. Ref. Numbers 18:1-2
- **v.35:** Judah “Praise” → Now I will praise the Lord. (v.35)

2. Rachel’s envy toward her sister provoked her to give Bilhah (her maid) to Jacob. 30:1-8

- Leah’s fruitfulness and Rachel’s barrenness produced strife. **v.1-2**
- She comes up with a plan: Here, sleep with my maidservant Bilhah! **v.3-4**
- **v.5-6:** Dan “Judge” → God has vindicated me!
- **v.7-8:** Naphtali “Wrestling” → I have wrestled with my sister and won!

3. Leah’s jealousy provoked her to give her maid Zilpah to Jacob. 30:9-13

- **v.9-11:** Gad “Good fortune” → How fortunate!
- **v.12-13:** Asher “Happy” → How happy I am!

4. Rachel ‘rented out’ Jacob for mandrakes (thought to be an aphrodisiac). 30:14-21

- The competition between the sisters resulted in Rachel exchanging her husband for mandrakes. **v.14-16**
- **v.17-18:** Issachar “There is a reward” → God’s reward for giving my maid
- **v.19-20:** Zebulun “Honor” or ‘Endow’ → Now Jacob will honor/recognize me!
 - **v.21:** Dinah “Judgment”

5. God “remembered” Rachel and gave her children. 30:22-24

- **v.22-23:** Joseph “May He add” → God has taken away my shame—may He add another!
- Benjamin (Son of happiness) → God has made me happy. Ref. Gen. 35:16-18

SHEPHERDING OUR HEARTS...

1. This story demonstrates God’s faithfulness to save sinful and fallen mankind. Ref. Romans 5:6-10

- God was forming his people—the nation of Israel.
- Out of this sinful bunch—and an unwanted wife—would come the seed of Abraham: the Messiah.
- Judah was the ‘royal’ tribe... King David...and “from the line of Judah came the Lion of Judah”.

2. This story demonstrates God’s covenant commitment and faithfulness to His people. Ref. Phil. 1:6

Ref. Thomas Cole (1801-1848) – 19th Century American artist (and a devout Christian)

The Voyage of Life (at the National Gallery of Art)—4 paintings depicting the stages of human life: Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age.

→ Philippians 1:6: And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

3. This story is a practical illustration of Genesis 3:16: To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

→ Consider an iceberg. 85-90% is below the surface.