

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Eight – Genesis 30:1-43

We left Jacob at Laban University. As far as Jacob’s life is concerned, we’ve watched him negotiate the birthright away from his brother for a bowl of chili, we watched him actually trick his father into stealing the blessing. Out of that hatred and strife, Esau committed to murder him.

His mother Rebekah sends him off to her homeland, Paddan Aram, to find a wife. And so we had him on the trip in our last time together. The first night out he meets God in Bethel.

We discussed that this was probably his conversion experience. This is the first time he heard from the Lord. We don’t see Jacob praying and doing the things that the servant did when he went to find a bride for Isaac.

After that meeting, the next 240 miles were probably on air. It says, “He lifted up his heels” to make the journey. He ends up exactly in Paddan Aram at the home of Laban and his daughters Rachel and Leah.

Laban is Rebekah's brother. So this family qualifies to carry on the Abrahamic covenant. It's a wonderful thing. Oftentimes in life we make assumptions. We anticipate something so much that we go ahead and make decisions before God's will is known.

Affection also is involved. Rachel and her beauty blows Jacob away at the well and he falls deeply in love with her.

Laban is a man of deceit equal to everything that Jacob has done in his home. God sometimes brings into our lives people to teach us the things about ourselves that we would not learn in any other way. He sends people into our lives like those whom we have actually treated in that same way in earlier experiences in our lives.

This is a sad time because Jacob makes a contract with Laban that he will work for seven years because of his love for Rachel. He ends up seven years later, being deceived by Laban, putting Leah the firstborn in the marriage bed, instead of Rachel.

This means seven more years of service. So now we're in the midst of the fourteen year period. He has both wives, but the score right now is four to nothing. Leah has had four children, Rachel has had none.

There are some really painful things we learn about the relationship between the two of them before the series is over.

What has happened is, the firstborn takes the rights over the second-born. Whereas it was just the reverse back home. He, as the second-born, tried to take over the place of the firstborn and steal the blessing. He was successful in doing that.

Whatever we sow, we're going to reap. And we have to understand that this is the way God disciplines us. This is the way God works in our lives. And we'll have a better understanding as we see this study.

We also have to recognize that these four children who are born during the first four years of their marriage, are four children who are intimately involved in the whole future of the nation Israel. Reuben is the firstborn, Simeon is second, Levi is the third—and he is going to be the one who's responsible for the religious tribe. And Judah is the fourth son that is born. And he, of course, is the one through whom the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is going to come.

It's like God is saying to us, "You know, wait. You get involved and you're going to make a mess of it."

Many times the biggest messes in our lives are because of affection, because of assumption, because of wanting to help God out—feeling like it's a joint venture and sitting around isn't going to get it done and so we're impatient.

We're going to see that in this passage. This is one of the messiest studies and if we want to see human nature in its

raw form, here it is. The thing is, we all have to recognize that each of us are vulnerable because we have an old nature within us.

And what's going to be interesting in the study is how one domino triggers all of the others. It's just like setting all the dominoes up, touching one and they all fall. That deceit on Rachel is the trigger that brings all of this about that see.

Jacob does not cooperate with that either. And he's operating in the flesh rather than the spirit. We'll see him praying. He's not going to ask God for anything. We will see that happen a little bit later on, but not in this episode.

Let's look at a couple of verses from one of the previous studies:

Genesis 29:30

so Jacob went into Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban another seven years.

Jacob got so ticked that next morning that he just wouldn't have anything else but for this to work out. So Laban, to solve it, said, "As soon as you finish Leah's seven days of feasting, you'll have Rachel's in the anticipation you're going to work seven more years." So that's the way the scenario's played out.

Genesis 29:31

The Lord saw that Leah was unloved and he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

She's going to be barren for 13 years. Talk about a lady who has to really suffer a lot. We just hurt for Rachel every time we turn around and look at what we're getting ready to see.

So during these first four years of marriage, Rachel's not been successful in having children. But dear Leah has four boys running around. We can just imagine all of the incredible jealousy.

After all, Leah is the unwanted wife. She's the one that's been forced upon Jacob by her daddy. And yet God, in the midst of this, has provided.

Now if we took some words like this to paint the picture to get ready to get into the study, we could use the words depressed, bitter, resentful, and jealous.

As the scene of our study opens, we're going to see this happy couple—that Jacob worked for seven years because of his great love for her—have their first fight. It's going to be wonderful if they survive what's happening.

Ever had those times in life? Couples experience conflict in their marriage, if it's growing and dynamic. We all have differences.

Jacob gets nailed for some stuff he's not guilty for here and it's going to be hard.

Laura Schlessinger says:

(Stop Whining, Start Living by Dr. Laura Schlessinger)

Real life requires a sense of humor and a margin of forgiveness. The sense of humor helps you accept the things you cannot change by transforming them into smiles, and forgiveness helps you let go of the bitterness that gets in the way of loving life. Some quirks, weaknesses, and dumb habits are just not worth getting worked up over. Everybody's got 'em, including you!

It comes down to this: do you really think you'll be happy only when everything and everyone around you is and does things exactly the way you wish? Then, my friends, you'll never be happy; and neither will anybody be happy with you!
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And then from *The Loveliness of Christ* we read:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

I pray you learn to be worthy of his pains who [corrects you]; and let him wring, and be ye washed; for he [has] a Father's heart, and a Father's hand, who is training you up, and making you meet for the high hall.

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Scene opens—we are in year 11 of the 20 years in Paddan Aram, under Uncle Laban.

Understand it's messy, there's multiple wives, there's multiple births, there's sister hatred, there's brother hatred. All of this has been accumulating over the years to create what we're getting ready to see.

And then also remember this, one sin starts all that. It's just like a fish getting hooked. It can fight and it can fight and it can fight. A lot of these folks that are sitting in the prisons because of drug addiction and that sort of thing would say the same thing. It was one time that it all started and then everything began to fall apart.

Each of us must guard that we're walking in the Spirit, that we're daily in His presence, and that we're eager to do His will, His way and not try to make things happen on our own in the flesh.

Ready? Verse 1.

v. 1 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”

“When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, ‘Give me children, or I’ll die!’”

Now the word “became jealous” tells us that these first four years she was constantly sure that this was going to be the time that she would get to have a child. And this has happened four times and so it’s just built up and it’s built up and built up.

We should always be careful what we say when we’re bitter and resentful.

“Give me children, or I’ll die!”

And she’s going to.

In our last study we’ll have three funerals—and hers will be one of them. We have to be careful of the things we wish for and what we want. God’s timing in the midst of all that.

We don’t see Jacob and Rachel praying. We don’t see them patiently waiting for the process, knowing that God is going to vindicate Himself in this situation. That’s the tragedy of all of this. Instead of praying, like Isaac did for his barren wife Rebekah for 20 years, until twins were born.

Well, a verse of scripture that really helps us along this line is:

Psalm 127:3

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.

And here's the picture. God can use the process of giving the gifts of children to teach His children much needed lessons.

Now we know in this family that Leah was sister ugly and Rachel was beautiful. Rachel had to be the center of the attention all the time, because she was Miss Perfect. And Jacob, when he comes, immediately is attracted to her.

We don't know about Leah, as far as her beauty is concerned. We don't know why Laban felt this way. Maybe he thought that Leah would fall in love with somebody during that first seven-year contract and it would take care of itself, but it didn't.

So he decided, "I'm going to get two for one here. And I'm also going to get Jacob's service for seven more years."

And so this is what happens. We can't predetermine or say what God's reasoning is in the way He's dealing with her.

Joni Eareckson Tada says:

(Pearls of Great Price: 366 Daily Devotional Readings by Joni Eareckson Tada)

On a scale of one to ten, how often do you ask God to remove a painful situation? On the same scale, how quick are you to tell people about the gospel, the real focus of Jesus' coming? Remember, God saved you to tell others

his good news. Your painful situation just may be his best platform to showcase the gospel.

(May 11)

Irving Kristol said:

“Being frustrated is disagreeable, but the real disasters of life come when you get what you want.”

(source unknown)

Not too far from the truth.

Laura Schlessinger says:

(Stop Whining, Start Living by Dr. Laura Schlessinger)

Sadly, sadness is an inherent part of life. There are innumerable tragedies, accidents, problems, disappointments, frustrations, offenses, losses, betrayals, challenges, diseases, and wars, as well as strife, hatred, bad luck, and random acts of malevolence that make everyday life some level of struggle for every human being on the planet. Opportunities for suffering and sadness are the one universal constant for all humanity.

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And yes, she’s really hurting. Now, the reason we know there’s a fight is because she has carried this in for four years and now she’s unloading. Jacob gets defensive and gets mad.

v. 2 Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”

“Jacob became angry with her and said, ‘Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?’”

Well now there’s TWO VERY UGLY THINGS and these two things will start a fight:

1. “[Rachel] became jealous” and
2. “Jacob became angry.”

JEALOUSY and ANGER are the words that are like knives that stab the heart. And it takes a long time to get over verbal abuse.

And the sad, sad thing here is they’re going to say some things and do some things because of this. We can just hear old Jacob saying, “Look! If Leah and I can and you and I can’t, it’s obvious where the problem is, right?! Am I in the place of God, who has withheld you from the fruit of the womb? You aren’t putting a guilt trip on me! You make me so mad!”

Aren’t those awful words? But that’s what we do when we lose control.

But fruitfulness for Leah and restraint for Rachel, and our two heroes are out of control. It’s a sad, sad picture.

Now when we get in a situation like this, then we're most eager to do something to help solve it and Rachel does it—verse 3.

v. 3 Then she said, “Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family.”

“Then she said, ‘Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family.’”

“My heart has already been broken by you and Leah. Have at it with Bilhah.”

Abraham and Sarah at the ten-mile mark decided to do this very thing by using the handmaid as a means of extending—because of a barren wife—the family? And they felt that this was the way to help God and so Ishmael was born and we've suffered the consequences ever since.

When the flesh is most eager to act it'll make the most pitiful mistakes. And here Rachel is mad. She's hurt! She's upset! So she, in her barrenness after four years, turns to Bilhah and Bilhah becomes the surrogate mother here.

Now what we're going to notice in the remainder of the passage is that when there's one child born, there's another one. So it's a whole series of two's from now on.

We had the first four, but it's going to be two here, two there, two there, two there. And then we have Rachel wishing that she could have two. That's the scenario in the rest of the passage that's before us.

But just like Jacob, she couldn't wait for the Lord to work it out. And Jacob was the same way with the birthright. He was the same with the blessing. And throughout his life, he is filled with acts of impatience.

There's a seriousness, a consequence, when we're allowing the old nature to get out of control. And God will not bless that nature. And here in this situation, it is so sad to see how deep they get into it.

Chuck Colson put it this way:

(The Faith: What Christians Believe, Why They Believe It, and Why It Matters by Charles Colson and Harold Fickett)

But trying to argue that the God who spoke the universe into being is less than all-powerful is a self-refuting assertion. The real reason for sin and evil is that God created us in His image and gave us a free will, which means we have the capacity to reject God and prefer our will to God's. Pride—"I can do it my way"—will always separate us from God.

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And it's awkward. It's like everything around doesn't fit. It's

like, “I’ve got to make this happen over here to impress them over here. And I’ve got to make this happen over here to impress them over here.” It just doesn’t work.

Jacob and Rachel aren’t really happy about this. It is really sad and embarrassing what we’re getting ready to see in this situation. But always remember, God can take a mess and make a miracle happen—because that’s what happens.

v. 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her,

“So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her,”

And sure enough, just like before:

v. 5 and she became pregnant and bore him a son.

“and she became pregnant and bore him a son.”

Now Rachel is excited.

v. 6 Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Because of this she named him Dan.

“Then Rachel said, ‘God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.’ Because of this she named him Dan.”

“Dan” means “vindicated by God.”

She is now bringing God into the picture and saying because of what she’s done, she is now vindicated before God for this because Bilhah had a baby.

But they come in twos, don’t they? Here we go.

v. 7 Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.

“Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.”

v. 8 Then Rachel said, “I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.” So she named him Naphtali.

“Then Rachel said, ‘I have had a great struggle with my sister and I have won.’ So she named him Naphtali.”

And that word Naphtali means “struggle” or “doe set free.”

She’s really not very realistic is she? Because the score is still four to two, and yet she can say now that because Bilhah the handmaid has two children, that she’s in a position of acceptance in the family.

Is that the way God does things when He makes a promise?

Manipulate everything and work what we have as our resources to make it happen?

Now look at verse 9. Is this a sister fight?

v. 9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.

“When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.”

He probably quit sleeping with Leah. He did not know that Rachel was so bitter and so mad. After those four children, she basically put Leah in this situation. And Jacob was not there with her and as a result children weren't being born.

But it's tit-for-tat. “You send Bilhah, I'm going to send Zilpah!”

This is what happens when we're doing spiritual service in the flesh rather than by the leadership of the Lord.

Listen to what Jim Montgomery Boice said:

This sounds like a poker game in which each side is constantly raising the ante.

“I bid one wife.”

“I bid one wife and four children.”

“I'll match your wife and raise you a concubine and the concubine's two children.”

“I’ll raise you another concubine and two more children. That makes one wife, one concubine, six children against one wife, one concubine and two children.”
(source unknown)

Pretty creative, but at least what he’s saying is the way we feel.

v. 10 Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

“Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son.”

v. 11 Then Leah said, “What good fortune!” So she named him Gad.

“Then Leah said, ‘What good fortune!’ So she named him Gad.”

Here comes number two.

v. 12 Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.

“Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.”

v. 13 Then Leah said, “How happy I am! The women will call me happy.” So she named him Asher.

“Then Leah said, ‘How happy I am! The women will be happy. So she named him Asher.’”

Well, we've got eight kids—all of them under 5. Talk about having their own playschool and nursery. And we aren't done yet.

Leah's got four, Bilhah's got two, Zilpah's got two.

Dan and Naphtali to Bilhah.

Gad and Asher to Zilpah.

Out of these sad circumstances comes the **TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL**.

Polygamy is a bad deal. God never intended it that way. Discord, jealousy, hatred, competitive spirits, envy, contention, increased sensuality—all of these ugly things are acts of the flesh and they're dominant in the scene and we understand why.

Okay, **TRANSITION**. We're going away from kids now to fertility drugs. Ready?

v. 14 During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

"During wheat harvest, Reuben"—now he's about 5, figuring this would be the fifth year of the seven years.

“During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, ‘Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.’”

When you’ve got eight kids in the house, the women are begging him to take the kids to work with him. So Reuben probably went out into the field with his daddy and he found these love melons—they had fertility propensities. Rachel is into this.

First it was MAIDS, now it’s MANDRAKES. And these, we can call them honey dew melons. They’re love melons and they are to produce the possibility of fertility—to increase it—is what they believed. And so she’s just asking her sister to give her some of these.

Now, obviously we’re going to see the jealousy come out big time here with this request. Naturally she asks for it, because she feels like that’s going to be helpful. And Leah certainly doesn’t need any.

But now notice verse 15. Notice how she misinterprets the whole thing for her own advantage? People, when they’re operating in the flesh, will always interpret everything so it looks like they are perfectly innocent, even if they’re misinterpreting the facts.

When that happens, it only intensifies the anger.

v. 15 But she said to her, “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?” “Very well,” Rachel said, “he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.”

“But she said to her, ‘Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband?’”

“Leah, let’s reverse the video a few years. I know Leah, you were a victim, but you were put in the bed that night and that was not something that Jacob wanted and it was not something that Rachel wanted. Because he’d already worked seven years for her.”

And then:

“Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?” ‘Very well,’ Rachel said, ‘he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.’”

Obviously Rachel has now become the keeper of the door. She makes sure that anybody that’s with Jacob is by her permission from here on out.

And in this situation, she believes so much in mandrakes that she said, “Okay, you can have him for tonight.”

v. 16 So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. “You must

sleep with me,” she said. “I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he slept with her that night.

“So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. ‘You must sleep with me,’ she said. ‘I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.’ So he slept with her that night.”

Tommy Nelson describes conditional love:

(The Book of Romance: What Solomon Says About Love, Sex, and Intimacy by Tommy Nelson)

Conditional love is never a good foundation for a marriage for several reasons: the conditions tend to change over time, no one can fulfill all the conditions another person might set, and self-righteousness tends to develop, which in turn can give rise to all sorts of manipulative, controlling, angry, and rigid behaviors.

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We see every one of them in the passage right now.

Look at verse 17. God’s still in the picture.

v. 17 God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son.

“God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and gave Jacob a fifth son.”

Now the mandrakes didn't work, but God worked in Leah. And now she has five and here comes number six.

v. 18 Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband.” So she named him Issachar.

“Then Leah said, ‘God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband.’ So she named him Issachar.”

But we aren't done yet!

v. 19 Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son.

“Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son.”

v. 20 Then Leah said, “God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun.

“Then Leah said,”

Now, look at this:

“God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.’ So she named him Zebulun.”

The wish of her heart is that Jacob would accept her. And she feels so free to talk about God's intervention in all of this over and over again.

v. 21 Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

“Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.”

And we'll just mention her just a little bit later here in one of the final studies together.

God is at work in the whole situation.

v. 22 Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb.

“Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb.”

Isn't this beautiful? What do we notice about this? God is in the center of all of it. It just happens. It's so peaceful. It's so right.

Everything up to this point has just gotten us riding a storm-tossed boat. It's just going, going, going all the time. And here we are at complete peace. And it happens. God's in it.

“God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her

womb.”

THREE THINGS—the KEY VERBS:

1. “remembered,”
2. “listened,” and
3. “opened her womb.”

And at the perfect time her son Joseph is born.

Now she’s been waiting for thirteen years for this. And here we are.

Her son Joseph will have the same number of years in waiting before he becomes the king’s assistant in Egypt. He was 17 when he was sold, he was 30 when he was elevated to vice-president in the land of Egypt.

It’s phenomenal how figures relate to families and children, and how firstborns and second-borns and all of that come together.

v. 23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, “God has taken away my disgrace.”

“She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, ‘God has taken away my disgrace.’”

What a nightmare. How can something so beautiful thirteen years ago when they first met become such a mess and finally get to the birth of one child?

Satan is really ugly and the flesh also is very ugly. And some of these things we see are just exactly that. What a nightmare.

How can something so beautiful become so ugly?

And yes, that's what happens when the dominoes start to fall and the flesh is in control. That's what Paul meant when he said to young Timothy, "That they might be recovered from the snare of Satan." (see 2 Timothy 2:26)

They are trapped by him and it takes a sovereign intervention on God's part to free them.

v. 24 She named him Joseph, and said, "May the Lord add to me another son."

"She named him Joseph, and said, 'May the Lord add to me another son.'"

She wants to be among the group that has two—Bilhah and Zilpah. And then Leah's had two more here. Two seems to be the magic number.

This is the joy of being a parent, being a mother. But she wants to be a part of the ones born in pairs so she's asking for

another son.

Okay—TRANSITION. Quickly, and we'll wrap it up.

v. 25 After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way so I can go back to my own homeland.

“After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, ‘Send me on my way so I can go back to my own homeland.’”

Eleven kids, huh?

“I want to go home. I have been faithful sir to serve you for fourteen years. My contract just expired with the birth of Joseph.”

And isn't that significant, that at that point this precious child that is going to be the joy of his heart is also born?

“Now I want to go home, back to my family.”

In our lives we come to those places of exhaustion. We come to those places of retirement. We come to those places where we want to just quit and coast. Jacob is there. He is totally worn out. He is close to ninety-something years of age now and he just wants to go home.

He feels like he's paid his dues. He's got these eleven kids and he wants to go home.

Sometimes we're like that. We're ready to go before God's ready for us because we've still got some more lessons to learn

“There are fourteen years in Laban University, but there's six more years in post-graduate work that's still before you sir. You've taken care of the family side of it, now I want to take care of the household, the wealth, the provision for you. So it isn't over yet.”

Just the fact that his great love has caused them to be able to be successful in completing the contracts is quite a tribute to the man himself.

And verse 26 is his REQUEST:

v. 26 Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you, and I will be on my way. You know how much work I've done for you.”

“Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you, and I will be on my way. You know how much work I've done for you.”

Mother's Day Out, kiddy school and folding diapers for a mob like that would be a major, major chore.

Here's a statement that kind of epitomizes what we're looking for. The choices we make in the flesh are going to be choices that we'll regret for the rest of our lives. That's just the way

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the flesh is. And we do stuff like this and we mess it all up, and then our pride will not let us be broken enough to admit it and be transparent enough to say, “I’ve dealt with it before the Lord and I’m right with Him.”

So many people stifle all of that. Listen to this:

Woman Regrets Ruinous Choices

In the 19th century, Marie d’Agoult left her children to follow after the most famous pianist of her day, Hungarian composer and virtuoso Franz Liszt. After the ardor of her infatuation cooled and the reality of missing her children set in, Marie is said to have made this observation: “When one has smashed everything around oneself, one has also smashed oneself.”

*Gary Thomas, Sacred Marriage (Zondervan, 2000), p. 101-102,
submitted by Lee Eclow, Vernon Hills, Illinois*

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Jacob is really hurting. And he is ready to go home. But God’s got some things yet for him to learn.

v. 27 But Laban said to him, “If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you.”

“But Laban said to him, ‘If I have found favor in your eyes,

please stay. I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you.”

Does that sound like Joseph? Remember? Potiphar and the prisoner, the jailer and all of them recognized that.

Okay, this guy is 90 years old as this scene is playing before us.

God knows the circumstances He needs to bring into our lives. And Jacob has still got some more things that he needs to learn in this whole process. So there are **SIX MORE YEARS** left.

v. 28 He added, “Name your wages, and I will pay them.”

“He added,”—Laban, and this is Mr. Deceitful—“Name your wages, and I will pay them.”

“Well fine, write your own contract.”

v. 29 Jacob said to him, “You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock has fared under my care.”

“Jacob said to him, ‘You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock has fared under my care.’”

v. 30 The little you had before I came has increased

greatly, and the Lord has blessed you wherever I have been. But now, when may I do something for my own household?”

“The little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the Lord has blessed you wherever I have been. But now, when may I do something for my own household?”

“I need to care for them.”

v. 31 “What shall I give you?” he asked. “Don’t give me anything,” Jacob replied. “But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them:

“What shall I give you?” he asked. ‘Don’t give me anything,’ Jacob replied. ‘But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them:”

There are some things that are in the next episode. God gives him a dream of what He’s getting ready to do to ensure the prosperity of his livestock and everything that his hands touch, God blesses.

We’ve all been around people like that. When they’re walking with the Lord and they’re in fellowship with Him, it just seems like every time they turn around, they’re blessed. And we get jealous of them! We wonder what it is. It’s just the Spirit of God taking an available vessel and blessing them.

And now Jacob is getting ready to be blessed beyond anything he could have thought or imagined here and it's because God has told him what to do. And this contract on the surface looks like it's sure success for Laban. And he buys into it. It's time for Laban to pay the price for some of the ugly things that he's done so he's going to get it right here.

v. 32 Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.

“Let me go through”

Just don't go try this, okay? This is a God-thing for this scene.

“Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.”

v. 33 And my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered stolen.”

“And”— this is the REASON—“my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered

stolen.”

“My honesty will be verified every time. It’s a clean deal!”

And of course, Laban knows he’s got a bird nest on the ground

v. 34 “Agreed,” said Laban. “Let it be as you have said.”

“‘Agreed,’ Laban said. ‘Let it be as you have said.’”

But watch this turkey. He cheats as soon as he gets through making a promise.

v. 35 That same day he removed all the male goats that were streaked or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (all that had white on them) and all the dark-colored lambs, and he placed them in the care of his sons.

“That same day he removed all the male goats that were streaked or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (all that had white on them) and all the dark-colored lambs, and he placed them in the care of his sons.”

What he’s going to make Jacob do is start at ground zero. And if anything happens, it has to be a God-thing.

v. 36 Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the rest of Laban’s flocks.

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“Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the rest of the flocks.”

He is not going to have any advantage of having any animals that are prone toward streaked, spotted and discolored!

v. 37 Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches.

“Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches.”

He has a plan!

Psalm 1:3

Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord
He is going to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,
he’s going to bring forth his fruit in its season.

v. 38 Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink,

“Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering

troughs, so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink,”

v. 39 they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted.

“they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted.”

So many of them were born that Laban had to change the wages ten different times. Kind of like playing Russian Roulette, hoping that in the next birth bunch he’s going to get some advantage. And every time it comes.

v. 40 Jacob set apart the young of the flock by themselves, but made the rest face the streaked and dark-colored animals that belonged to Laban. Thus he made separate flocks for himself and did not put them with Laban’s animals.

“Jacob set apart the young of the flock by themselves, but made the rest face the streaked and dark-colored animals that belonged to Laban.”

Laban has also changed the wages again and he’s got some of his own there.

“Thus he made separate flocks for himself and did not put them with Laban’s animals.”

He's no dummy.

v. 41 Whenever the stronger females were in heat, Jacob would place the branches in the troughs in front of the animals so they would mate near the branches,

“Whenever the stronger females were in heat,”—now notice what else he does. He's going to go pick up the litter here.

“Jacob would place the branches in the troughs in front of the animals so they would mate there in front of the branches,”

v. 42 but if the animals were weak, he would not place them there. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob.

“but if the animals were weak, he would not place them there. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones went to Jacob.”

v. 43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.

“In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.”

Does God know what He's doing? We see all of it together and we recognize it's a miraculous thing.

There are six lessons that come out of our text.

Lesson #1: God uses our circumstances to train us and prepare us for fruitfulness.

Lesson #2: God's wisdom is having one woman for one man in marriage.

Lesson #3: Children are a gift from the Lord.

Lesson #4: Human efforts can never accomplish God's ultimate purpose.

Lesson #5: Our love and preferences sometimes do not equal God's will.

Lesson #6: God, in His own time, remembered Rachel and made her fruitful.

Gangel and Bramer pray:

Father, keep us from our own schemes and always focusing on ourselves. Draw us into your truth and help us to commit our lives to you without reservation.

(source unknown)

Here's a beautiful prayer by Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

(The Pastor In Prayer: A Collection of the Sunday Morning Prayers of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

And now, Lord, we ask Thee to accept of us this morning whatever offerings we can bring. We bring our hearts to Thee, full of love to Thee for what Thou hast done, full of gratitude, full of faith, full of hope, full of joy. We feel glad in the Lord. But we do confess that if there be anything acceptable in these our offerings, they are all first given us of Thee. No praise comes from us till first it is wrought in us, for

‘Every virtue we possess,
And every victory won;
And every thought of holiness,
Are Thine, great God, alone.’

p. 3

And then this statement came from Max Lucado’s book:

(S.H.A.P.E.: Finding & Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose For Life by Erik Rees)

To melt down the old and recast it as new is a disrupting process. [But] with time, a change occurs: What was dull becomes sharpened, what was crooked becomes straight, what was weak becomes strong, and what was useless becomes valuable.

Then the blacksmith ceases his pounding and sets down his hammer. In the still silence, he

examines the smoking tool. The incandescent implement is rotated and examined for any marks or cracks.

There are none.

The pliable, soft mineral becomes an unbending, useful tool.

Lucado says, “God sees our life from beginning to end. He may lead us through a storm at age thirty so we can endure a hurricane at age sixty. An instrument is useful only if it’s in the right shape. A dull ax or a bent screwdriver needs attention, and so do we. A good blacksmith keeps his tools in shape. So does God.”

106: Max Lucado, *Shaped by God*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1985, 50-51.
p. 106

Father, as we study the lives of these patriarchs, we thank You for each one of them. Lord, we thank You how many times You taught Jacob so lovingly and sometimes very severely the lessons he needed to learn. Thank You that we can see for ourselves how one act at the beginning created all the havoc and the sadness we’ve seen in the frustrating circumstances. But thank You, we also can see how You can work all things together for good because of what You’re getting ready to do now in completing this twenty year jaunt with Uncle Laban and taking Jacob back to his homeland. That You in Your faithfulness are going to teach even greater lessons in the days that are ahead. May we be good students and all ears. Thank You for Your faithfulness to us. In Jesus’

name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Eight – Genesis 30:1-43

NOTES

- v. 1 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”
- v. 2 Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”
- v. 3 Then she said, “Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family.”
- v. 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her,
- v. 5 and she became pregnant and bore him a son.
- v. 6 Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son.” Because of this she named him Dan.
- v. 7 Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.
- v. 8 Then Rachel said, “I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.” So she named him Naphtali.
- v. 9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.
- v. 10 Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son.
- v. 11 Then Leah said, “What good fortune!” So she named him Gad.
- v. 12 Leah’s servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.
- v. 13 Then Leah said, “How happy I am! The women will call me happy.” So she named him Asher.

NOTES

v. 14 During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

v. 15 But she said to her, “Wasn’t it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son’s mandrakes too?” “Very well,” Rachel said, “he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.”

v. 16 So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. “You must sleep with me,” she said. “I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he slept with her that night.

v. 17 God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son.

v. 18 Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband.” So she named him Issachar.

v. 19 Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son.

v. 20 Then Leah said, “God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun.

v. 21 Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

v. 22 Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb.

v. 23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, “God has taken away my disgrace.”

v. 24 She named him Joseph, and said, “May the Lord add to me another son.”

v. 25 After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way so I can go back to my own homeland.

v. 26 Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you, and I will be on my way. You know how much work I’ve done for you.”

v. 27 But Laban said to him, “If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you.”

v. 28 He added, “Name your wages, and I will pay them.”

v. 29 Jacob said to him, “You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock has fared under my care.

NOTES

v. 30 The little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the Lord has blessed you wherever I have been. But now, when may I do something for my own household?"

v. 31 "What shall I give you?" he asked. "Don't give me anything," Jacob replied. "But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them:

v. 32 Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.

v. 33 And my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered stolen."

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v. 37 Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches.

v. 38 Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink,

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v. 43 In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 30:1-43 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What problem confronts Jacob and Rachel in verses 1 & 2?

3. What action does Rachel take to solve her dilemma in the next verses?

4. How does Leah respond to Rachel?

5. What does God do to Rachel, according to verses 22 & 23?

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6. What name does Rachel give to her first son, and what is the significance of that name?

7. What request does Jacob make of Laban in verses 25 & 26?

8. How does Laban respond to Jacob's proposal, according to verse 27?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God uses our circumstances to train us and prepare us for fruitfulness.

LESSON #2: God's wisdom is having one woman for one man in marriage.

LESSON #3: Children are a gift from the Lord.

LESSON #4: Human efforts can never accomplish God's ultimate purpose.

LESSON #5: Our love and preferences sometimes do not equal God's will.

LESSON #6: God, in His own time, remembered Rachel and made her fruitful.

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