

GENESIS 30: A NATION IS BORN

I. INTRO

- A. Have you ever tried to manipulate circumstances for your benefit and it backfired?
 - i. This is the story in this chapter
 - a. Jacob faced the consequences of his deception of Esau in chapter 29
 - b. Those consequences continue in chapter 30
 - c. Then Jacob starts the manipulation cycle all over again in his deal with Laban
 - i. Laban was trying to take advantage of Jacob at the same time

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Rachel became jealous of Leah
 - i. So she gave her servant Bilhah to Jacob as a concubine
 - ii. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and Naphtali
- B. Leah became jealous of Rachel
 - i. She had stopped bearing children
 - ii. So she gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a concubine
 - iii. Zilpah gave birth to Gad and Asher
- C. Leah's son Reuben went and found some mandrakes
 - i. Rachel offered to give Jacob to Leah that night in exchange for the mandrakes
 - ii. Leah became pregnant and gave birth to Issachar, Zebulun and Dinah
- D. Then God remembered Rachel
 - i. She gave birth to Joseph
- E. Jacob asked Laban for permission to return to his family
 - i. Laban asked Jacob what he should give him in return for his service
 - ii. Jacob asked to remove all the speckled and spotted sheep from his flock
 - iii. Laban agreed
 - a. But before Jacob could remove them, Laban removed them himself
- F. So Jacob peeled sticks and put them in front of the watering troughs
 - i. When the stronger sheep would breed, he would put the sticks out
 - a. They would breed speckled and spotted lambs
 - b. Jacob would set them apart for his flock
 - ii. So he increased his wealth greatly

III. SHE ENVIED HER SISTER – V. 1

- A. She saw and became envious of what she didn't have like Eve
- B. John 21:20-22 ***Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"***

IV. OR I SHALL DIE – V. 1

- A. Eve said she will die if she took the fruit
 - i. The serpent told her you surely will not die
- B. Now children are being compared to the fruit
 - i. She tells Jacob that if he doesn't give her children, she will die
- C. Contrasted with Leah
 - i. Rachel valued children over her own life
- D. She would eventually die as a result of having children
 - i. After Benjamin was born

V. GOD, WHO HAS WITHHELD FROM YOU – V. 2

- A. Jacob recognized God was responsible for Rachel's barrenness and Leah's fertility
 - i. But he didn't bother to ask why God favored Leah over Rachel

VI. GIVE BIRTH ON MY BEHALF – V. 3

- A. Literally *on my knees*
- B. Some say this is a figure of speech referring to adoption
- C. Others say the child would literally be conceived and delivered on her knees¹
 - i. So she could claim the child as her own

VII. HAVE CHILDREN THROUGH HER – V. 3

- A. Same thing Abraham and Sarah did with Hagar
 - i. Except Jacob and Rachel didn't have a promised child
 - ii. The son of the promise (Judah) had already been born to Leah
- B. A bad family situation is now made worse instead of better

VIII. GOD HAS JUDGED ME – V. 6

¹ Guzik, D. (2018). Genesis 30 - The Children Born to Jacob. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-30/>

- A. And gave her what she wanted
 - i. Just like He allowed Eve to take what she wanted
 - ii. She assumes this means God approves of what she is doing
- B. Rachel is telling Leah that God now favors her instead of Leah²

IX. HEARD MY VOICE – V. 6

- A. Same as what Leah said when Simeon was born
 - i. As if she's mocking Leah

X. DAN – V. 6

- A. Means *judged*

XI. A SECOND SON – V. 7

- A. Number two represents division
 - i. Highlights division in Jacob's family
 - ii. Israel would eventually be divided between a son of Leah and a son of Rachel³
- B. We will see this with Zilpah also

XII. PREVAILED – V. 8

- A. She sees this as a competition
 - i. Even though she only has two sons compared to Leah's four
- B. Leah seems to be innocent so far in all of this

XIII. NAPHTALI – V. 8

- A. Means *wrestling*

XIV. SHE HAD CEASED BEARING CHILDREN – V. 9

- A. No indication that God was responsible this time
 - i. Likely that she was being neglected by Jacob, rather than suddenly barren

XV. TOOK HER SERVANT ZILPAH – V. 9

- A. Now Leah is being compared to Eve, Sarah and Rachel
- B. Up to this point Leah had done nothing wrong
 - i. She could have stayed innocent, but she decided to escalate the problem further
 - ii. Matthew 5:39 ***But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.***

² Armstrong, S. (2012, August 5). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30a

³ Armstrong, S. (2012, August 5). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30a

XVI. GAVE HER TO JACOB – V. 9

- A. Jacob didn't need more wives or children

XVII. GOOD FORTUNE HAS COME – V. 11

- A. Leah is no longer giving glory to God

XVIII. GAD – V. 11

- A. Means *good fortune*

XIX. HAPPY AM I – V. 13

- A. Leah finally found the happiness she had been wanting
 - i. But it came in the context of family rivalry

XX. WOMEN HAVE CALLED ME HAPPY – V. 13

- A. She cared more about what others thought of her than she did about the child⁴

XXI. ASHER – V. 13

- A. Means *happy*

XXII. MANDRAKES – V. 14

- A. Root shaped like human figure resulted in being associated with fertility⁵
 - i. Called *love apple* in Hebrew⁶
- B. Rachel probably believed they had powers to cure her infertility

XXIII. IN EXCHANGE – V. 15

- A. Rachel sold her right to have children for mandrakes
 - i. Just like Esau sold his birthright for stew⁷

XXIV. SO HE LAY WITH HER – V. 16

- A. Jacob could have put a stop to this at any point
 - i. But he continues to give in to his wives' wishes
- B. Reveals that he is either a weak head of the household or he loves the attention⁸
 - i. Either way this is extremely dangerous
- C. This is a phrase that was only used in context of immoral sexual relations
 - i. Even though Jacob and Leah were married, this was not a healthy relationship

⁴ Guzik

⁵ Carter, A. J. (2003, March). *Myths and Mandrakes*. U.S. National Library of Medicine.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC539425/#:~:text=Mandrake%20roots%20became%20highly%20sought,who%20attempted%20to%20uproot%20it.>

⁶ Guzik

⁷ Sailhamer, J. H. (2008). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (T. Longman & D. E. Garland, Eds.; Revised Edition). Zondervan.

⁸ Armstrong, S. (2012, August 5). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30a

- a. It has become corrupted with sin and jealousy⁹

XXV. GOD HAS GIVEN ME MY WAGES – V. 18

- A. Leah had stopped glorifying God but she is now recognizing His provision again

XXVI. ISSACHAR – V. 18

- A. Means *wages* or *hire*

XXVII. ZEBULUN – V. 20

- A. Means *honor*

XXVIII. DINAH – V. 21

- A. She will be important later

XXIX. GOD REMEMBERED RACHEL – V. 22

- A. Turned His attention toward her
- B. Long after the mandrakes were gone
 - i. So He would receive the credit, not the mandrakes

XXX. OPENED HER WOMB – V. 22

- A. God has authority over the womb

XXXI. LEAH WAS GOD’S CHOICE FOR A WIFE FOR JACOB

- A. She bore six sons and one daughter
 - i. Three times as many sons as Jacob’s other wives
 - a. Three represents the completion of a task, God’s authority and purposes
- B. Jacob’s other wives only bore two children each
 - i. Two represents division¹⁰
- C. Leah was imperfect but overall portrayed as righteous and grateful to God
 - i. Rachel is portrayed as spiteful, divisive and petty
 - ii. Jacob was a weak man who could have been guided into a strong, godly marriage and family
 - a. If only he had loved and cherished Leah as his only wife

XXXII. JOSEPH – V. 24

- A. Means *may he add*
- B. Sounds like *taken away*

⁹ Armstrong, S. (2012, August 5). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30a

¹⁰ Armstrong, S. (2012, August 5). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30a

XXXIII. MY OWN HOME AND COUNTRY – V. 25

- A. Jacob's goal was to take care of his family
 - i. Not to build wealth
- B. He began to recognize there was a promise waiting for him there

XXXIV. GIVE ME MY WIVES AND MY CHILDREN – V. 26

- A. Jacob didn't ask for any material wealth or reward for his work

XXXV. THE LORD HAS BLESSED ME BECAUSE OF YOU – V. 27

- A. Laban was only interested in the blessings he could get¹¹
- B. Jacob worked hard for Laban and increased his wealth
 - i. Without increasing his own wealth
 - ii. We should have this mindset when working for an employer

XXXVI. NAME YOUR WAGES – V. 28

- A. Laban is offering to keep Jacob as a permanent employee¹²
 - i. Seems generous but is actually a poor offer
 - ii. Jacob has an inheritance from his father that he can go back and claim
 - a. He would make less by staying with Laban than by going home

XXXVII. YOU HAD LITTLE BEFORE I CAME – V. 30

- A. Laban had a very inefficient system

XXXVIII. THE LORD HAS BLESSED YOU – V. 30

- A. Jacob is starting to realize that God is keeping His promise to be with him wherever he goes

XXXIX. WHAT SHALL I GIVE YOU – V. 31

- A. Laban is offering to give part of the inheritance to Jacob
 - i. Essentially, adopt him as one of his sons¹³
 - ii. Shows how desperate he is to keep Jacob

XL. YOU SHALL NOT GIVE ME ANYTHING – V. 31

- A. Just like Abraham refused to take anything from a pagan king
 - i. Jacob refuses to take anything from a pagan relative

¹¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Authentic: Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World: OT Commentary, Genesis 25-50*. David C. Cook.

¹² Armstrong, S. (2012, August 12). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30b

¹³ Armstrong, S. (2012, August 12). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30b

XLII. SPECKLED AND SPOTTED SHEEP – V. 32

- A. Very rare in the region¹⁴
 - i. So it would be a small number that Jacob would remove for himself
 - ii. Makes it easy for Laban to see which were his and which were Jacob's

XLIII. AND PUT THEM IN THE CHARGE OF HIS SONS – V. 35

- A. Laban was trying to cheat Jacob again
 - i. Even though everything Jacob has ever done benefitted Laban greatly

XLIV. POPLAR, ALMOND, PLANE TREES – V. 37

- A. Shown to have medicinal properties to increase reproductivity in livestock¹⁵

XLV. THE FLOCKS BROUGHT FORTH STRIPED, SPECKLED AND SPOTTED – V. 39

- A. Some say this was superstition just like the mandrakes¹⁶

XLVI. THE STRONGER OF THE FLOCK – V. 41

- A. God told him in a dream which ones would produce striped and speckled offspring
 - i. Genesis 31:12 ***And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.'***

XLVII. LAY THE STICKS IN THE TROUGHS – V. 41

- A. Jacob probably made the females come and drink water
- B. The males would come up behind them and mate¹⁷

XLVIII. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. Completes the story of the birth of the nation of Israel
 - i. Jesus came as Israel's Messiah first, then to the Gentiles
 - ii. Israel is God's chosen vessel to bless the world
 - iii. One day Jesus will rule the earth from Jerusalem
- B. Jacob took spotted and speckled sheep from a flock of pure white sheep
 - i. He brought them back to the promised land with him
- C. Jesus is the good shepherd
 - i. He took spotted and stained people and made them white as snow

¹⁴ Armstrong, S. (20120, August 12). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 30B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_30b

¹⁵ Lacey, T. (2019, April 26). *Jacob's Odd "Breeding Program" of Genesis 30*. Answers in Genesis.
<https://answersingenesis.org/genetics/animal-genetics/jacobs-odd-breeding-program-genesis-30/>

¹⁶ Wiersbe

¹⁷ Lacey

- ii. Zechariah 3:1-5 *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?" Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.*

XLVIII. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. Does God allowing something to happen equal His approval of that thing? -
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- B. How can we protect ourselves from living a sinful lifestyle and thinking that God endorses it?
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- C. How does Leah fall into the trap of jealousy? How is she able to overcome it?
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- D. Have you ever had someone try to cheat you out of something that you worked hard for? How did you respond in that situation?
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- E. How should Jacob have responded to Laban's shady business practices? How should we respond when someone tries to cheat us out of something?

- F. What was Jacob's priority when dealing with Laban? Do you think it was right or wrong for him to prioritize this?

XLIX. FURTHER STUDY

- A. Compare Rachel's response to barrenness to Rebekah's (Genesis 25:21-23) and Hannah's (1 Samuel 1:9-16) response to barrenness.

- B. Read 1 Samuel 8:4-18 and Romans 1:18-32. What happens when God allows people to do whatever they want to do against His will?

- C. What does Psalm 127 say about a house full of children?

- D. What did Joseph go on to do later in the rest of the book of Genesis? What could Elizabeth be implying about her son John in Luke 1:24-25 by quoting Rachel when she gave birth to

Joseph?

- E. What priority did Jacob place on providing for his own household? What priority should this take in our own lives? See 1 Timothy 5:3-8.
