

First Southern Baptist Church - November 11, 2020
Rachel's Envy - Genesis 30

Introduction:

1. Two broad sections
 - Wives/ Children - first half
 - Herds - second half
2. Interlude
 - Chapter 29 - Jacob gets a wife/ wives
 - Chapter 31 - Headin' Home
 - Chapter 30 - "How I made my money"
3. Jacob's children - 29:31-30:24

I. Leah's Children (29:31-35)

1. Reuben - #1
2. Simeon - #2
3. Levi - #3
4. Judah - #4
5. At 30:9 - she gives her handmaid over to Jacob - Zilpah

II. Rachel/ Bilhah's Children (1-8)

1. Rachel complains to Jacob
2. I'll die
 - am I God?
3. The children to Rachel and Bilhah
 - *the irony, you cannot "supplant" God

III. Dueling Handmaids

1. Rachel and Bilhah
 - Leah and Zilpah
2. The kids
 - Dan** (4-6) - "judging" (by Bilhah - Rachel's handmaid) #5
 - Naphtali** (8) - "wrestling" (by Bilhah) - #6
 - Gad** (9-11) - "troop" (by Zilpah - Leah's handmaid) - #7
 - Asher** (12-13) - "happy" (by Zilpah) - #8
 - placed on "Rachel's knees" - idiomatic statement (3)
 - Issachar** (18) - "hire" - by Leah - #9
 - Zebulun** (19) - "dwelling" - by Leah - #10
 - Dinah (21) - means "judgement" -
 - Joseph** (22-24) - means "adding" - by Rachel - #11
 - Benjamin** (35:18) - means "son of sorrow" or "son of my right hand"
 - By Rachel - #12

IV. Mandrakes (14-16)

1. Described:

- Mandragora officinarum - part of the nightshade, potato and tomato family
- leaves are bluish purple flower
- dark roots that resemble the lower half of the human torso
- 2. Believed to have magical sensual properties
 - cultivated in Egypt, in gardens, often near ponds
- 3. Called:
 - by the Greeks - mandragora (nicknamed “love apple”)
 - by the Arabs - “devil’s apples”
 - Reputation as an aphrodisiac
- 4. Found by Reuben during a time of harvest
- 5. Another source of conflict between Leah and Rachel... give me the mandrakes
 - you have taken my husband, now you would take my mandrakes?
- 6. God gives life, not mandrakes

V. Rachel’s Child (22-24)

1. Joseph - “adding”
2. The Lord has taken away my disgrace
3. Expresses her faith that God will give her more - “add”
4. Benjamin - 35:18

VI. Jacob Makes Request of Laban (25-27)

1. The request to leave is turned down... sorta
2. What will be your wages?
3. Acknowledges that God has been with him (27)

VII. Jacob’s Herds (30:25-43)

1. Duel with Laban
 - will he ever get free from his F-I-L?
2. Four steps in the story:
 - A. Jacob proposes his wages will be black animals among the sheep and the variegated animals among the goats (32-33)
 - !!). Camels and donkeys are costly and rare... these come later
 - B. Laban accepts the proposal -then separates out the designated animals for himself and takes them to another herd (under the care of his sons)
 - C. Jacob employs visual aids for the cattle (peeled branches)
 - to increase the variegated goats (36-39)
 - to increase the black sheep (40)
 - D. Jacob crossbreeds the strongest of the stock (41-42)
3. So neither human devices nor superstitious beliefs can bind or befuddle the Lord
 - the animals he bargains for are smaller to begin with... he is trusting God to make him prosperous
 - in the same way that Lot was given first choice... then God blessed Abraham in worse land
4. He bargains for the rare and the unborn... faith in God
5. They agree to terms (25-34)
6. Laban tries to trick Jacob (35-36)

-removes the variegated and speckled/ spotted

-removes himself 3 days journey (36)

7. Variegated branches (37-39) - folk lore or faith?

A folk custom - expose the underlying white tree/ shoot

Jacob's folk methods correspond with Rachel's mandrakes

-it was their prayers not the mandrakes/ branches that they credit

-it was God who gives life, in the herds and with his wives

Takeaway

1. God fulfills His Promises

Of children (prosperity)

Of herds (prosperity)

2. While Jacob was in Captivity

Compare Israel growing into a large nation, while in Egypt

3. God blesses - God is building a nation

-using sinful people