

Genesis 30:1-24

30 When Rachel saw that she wasn't having any children for Jacob, she became jealous of her sister. She pleaded with Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

² Then Jacob became furious with Rachel. "Am I God?" he asked. "He's the one who has kept you from having children!"

³ Then Rachel told him, "Take my maid, Bilhah, and sleep with her. She will bear children for me,^[a] and through her I can have a family, too." ⁴ So Rachel gave her servant, Bilhah, to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her. ⁵ Bilhah became pregnant and presented him with a son. ⁶ Rachel named him Dan,^[b] for she said, "God has vindicated me! He has heard my request and given me a son." ⁷ Then Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. ⁸ Rachel named him Naphtali,^[c] for she said, "I have struggled hard with my sister, and I'm winning!"

⁹ Meanwhile, Leah realized that she wasn't getting pregnant anymore, so she took her servant, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰ Soon Zilpah presented him with a son. ¹¹ Leah named him Gad,^[d] for she said, "How fortunate I am!" ¹² Then Zilpah gave Jacob a second son. ¹³ And Leah named him Asher,^[e] for she said, "What joy is mine! Now the other women will celebrate with me."

¹⁴ One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel begged Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

¹⁵ But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrakes, too?"

Rachel answered, "I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes."

¹⁶ So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must come and sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found." So that night he slept with Leah. ¹⁷ And God answered Leah's prayers. She became pregnant again and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. ¹⁸ She named him Issachar,^[f] for she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband as a wife." ¹⁹ Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. ²⁰ She named him Zebulun,^[g] for she said, "God has given me a good reward. Now my husband will treat me with respect, for I have given him six sons." ²¹ Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

²² Then God remembered Rachel's plight and answered her prayers by enabling her to have children. ²³ She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. "God has removed my disgrace," she said. ²⁴ And she named him Joseph,^[h] for she said, "May the Lord add yet another son to my family."

SECTION 3 - Love's Heartache and Rivalry

READ Genesis 30:1-24.

1. As God was blessing Leah with children, what sin arose in Rachel's heart and why (v. 1)?

Who did she blame for her barrenness? _____

2. According to Jacob, who kept Rachel from bearing children (v. 2)? _____

3. In her self-will to have children, what did Rachel suggest to Jacob (v. 3)? _____

PERSONAL

Rachel devised a plan that would give her a child, rather than trusting in the Lord. What causes a person to walk according to his own plan rather than trusting God?

Is there an area in your life that seems hopeless? Are you devising your own plan rather than trusting God? READ the following Scriptures: Proverbs 3:5-7, Proverbs 16:9, and Proverbs 19:21. What is God's counsel, what will He do?

4. Bilhah gave birth to two sons. What names did Rachel give them? How do they describe the rivalry between her and Leah (Genesis 30:5-8)?

5. When Leah stopped conceiving, what did she then do (v. 9)? _____

6. What names did Leah give to the sons born to her maid, Zilpah? What are the meanings of their names (vv. 10-13)?

According to custom, when Bilhah and Zilpah were given to Jacob as wives to bare children, the laying of the newborn child on Rachel or Leah's knees was a public acknowledgement that the children belonged to them.

LOOK DEEPER

REREAD Genesis 29:32-35 and Genesis 30:10-13. What difference do you see in the names Leah chose for her sons and the names she gave to Zilpah's sons?

How did the rivalry between the sisters affect them? _____

7. What did Reuben find in the fields? What did he do with his find (Genesis 30:14)? _____

Who demanded them of him? _____

8. WRITE how Leah voices her extreme heartache concerning Jacob in her reply to Rachel (v. 15).

How did Rachel control this situation? _____

9. However, what did God do for Leah (v. 17)? _____

10. Give the names of Leah's last two sons and the meaning of them (vv. 18-20) _____

How many sons did God give to Leah? _____

⁶mandrakes: a small orange-colored berry-like fruit with a pungent aroma. In ancient times, it was believed to induce fertility.

⁷hire - Hebrew *sakar* payment: wages, reward.

11. Leah continued to conceive by Jacob. How did God bless her (v. 21)? _____

12. What special miracle did God do for Rachel in answer to her prayers (v. 22)? _____

13. The years Rachel waited to conceive her own child seemed to strengthen her faith. She had to learn that her manipulative plans would not move the hand of God before His time. What two statements did she make to prove this point when she named her son (vv. 23, 24)? _____
