

Day 27 - FRIDAY: November 18th

Genesis 30

Genesis 30:1-43 NKJV

Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her." Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali. When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher. Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah. Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son." And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me

away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?" So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages. So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me." And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock. And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Daily Deep Dive:

In this chapter, we continue to see the children born to both Rachel and Leah, as well as through their maids Bilhah & Zilpah.

Verse 14 – The first harvest of the early spring was barley and then in later spring wheat was harvested. Other crops were harvested in the later fall harvest.

What were mandrakes? The Hebrew word is “Duday” and John Gill’s commentary says “which seem to have their name “dudaim” from love”. It’s used 7 times in the Bible (5 of which occur in this chapter). The Brown-Driver-Brigg’s dictionary says this word means “mandrake or love-apple” and continues with “as exciting sexual desire, and favouring procreation”. Strong’s dictionary says it was an “*aphrodisiac*”.

To obtain these mandrakes from Leah’s young son, Rachel gives Leah a night with Jacob.

The UCG reading program talks more about the relationship between Rachel & Leah:

“Jacob’s competition with Esau had brought near-open warfare to Isaac’s household. Now Jacob would live the remainder of his life eating the bitter fruits of his ways. Leah and Rachel vied with each other for the affection of Jacob. Jacob loved Rachel deeply but he lacked love for Leah. Where the New King James Version says Leah was “unloved” (Genesis 29:31), the old King James Version has “hated.” *The Nelson Study Bible* says that “hated” is the literal translation. According to *New Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, the Hebrew word here “sometimes means only a less degree of love and regard; to be cold and indifferent to, to show less favor to” (p. 209). In any case Leah was second-rate in Jacob’s eyes, a very difficult position for any woman. Because Jacob treated Leah this way, God blessed her with children (which would seem to indicate that, in God’s eyes, Leah was not principally at fault in the whole mess—her father having forced her into it). In the meantime Rachel was barren and very frustrated in general. She felt betrayed by her father and resentful of her sister, whom she no doubt viewed as an unwelcome interloper in her marriage. Between these two squabbling women, and their maids, Jacob would father 12 sons and a daughter. The sons of the various wives and concubines would likewise squabble and fight. Jacob’s house was in constant turmoil—a classic picture of the dysfunctional family.

Part of the dysfunction in Jacob’s family may have had its roots a generation earlier in Isaac and Rebekah, who fell into a devastating pitfall in parenting—

favoritism within the family. Isaac greatly favored Esau; Rebekah favored Jacob. This divided affection produced an unhealthy atmosphere of competition, mistrust, double-dealing, disrespect and lingering resentment. The two sons of Isaac and Rebekah were the unwitting victims, and Jacob likewise repeated the error in his own family: Rachel was favored over Leah, Joseph over his brethren, then later Benjamin over his brethren. Of course this is a lot more understandable in Jacob's case, since he had not wanted to marry Leah in the first place. Still, she was his wife and they had children together—so he should have done his best to show them all love and affection.

God later gave the following law to Israel: “Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive” (Leviticus 18:18). It does not appear that God had revealed this to be sin to those of Jacob's day. But Jacob's life demonstrated the great need for the revelation of this law.” [END]

Now pay special attention to what the UCG Reading Program brings out on the rest of this chapter, as this is commonly misunderstood:

“Verse 25 of chapter 30 begins a peculiar story that very few seem to understand. But understanding Jacob's reasoning in his strange deal with Laban can help us to better see Jacob's character development.

Jacob had served Laban 14 years. Now he wished to depart and return to his father in Canaan. Laban, however, was eager to have Jacob remain, for God had blessed everything Jacob did while in Laban's household, and Laban had grown rich. “Name me your wages, and I will give it,” Laban said (verse 28), hoping to entice Jacob to stay. “You shall not give me anything,” Jacob replied. This is essential to understand, for an inattentive reading of the story can make it seem as if Jacob separated the colored and spotted sheep from Laban's flock and took them for his payment. He most emphatically did not. Jacob took out the colored and spotted sheep and gave them to Laban, whose sons took them away a distance of three days' journey (verse 36). This left Jacob with only the pure white sheep.

The last clause of verse 32, “and these shall be my wages,” is a little confusing. The Hebrew literally says, “it shall be [i.e., in the future] my wages.” Jacob was not saying that the spotted and colored sheep he removed from the flock would be his wages. Instead, “You shall not give me anything,” were Jacob's words. The

spotted and colored sheep were given to the sons of Laban, who drove them three days' journey away. Instead, Jacob was saying that *in the future* any spotted or colored sheep born in the flock that Jacob would tend would be his wages. But this seemed *impossible* to Laban—Jacob was left with only the white sheep! How could white sheep bear spotted and colored sheep? That is why Laban so hastily agreed to the deal: “Oh, that it were according to your word!” (verse 34).

Now, the beginning of verse 33 is most important. “So my righteousness will answer for me in the time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you...” This telling declaration marks a profound advancement in Jacob’s character development. When Jacob arrived in Padan Aram he was a grasping manipulator who relied upon his own innate abilities and craft to obtain what he wanted. But 14 years of service for Laban—during which Laban consistently outwitted him, and during which God blessed him in all that he did—had produced a change in Jacob. He had now progressed to the point where he relied upon his righteous conduct to secure blessings and prosperity from God. That is a dramatic change of heart, a major development in right character!

Verse 37 begins the equally odd business of the poplar, almond and chestnut branches. Many commentators suggest some kind of magic practice, or that the peeled rods were intended to cause the sheep to imitate the partly colored rods by bringing forth partly colored sheep. Yet this is certainly *not* what Jacob was engaged in here. Notice verse 38: “And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink.” The word “conceive” is translated from the Hebrew *yacham*, literally meaning “to be hot,” and which, when speaking of animals, can mean “to be in heat.” By peeling the *fresh cut* rods (verse 37), Jacob caused the sap-filled meat of the rods to be exposed, thus possibly allowing the sap of the rods to mingle with the water in the watering troughs. Perhaps he believed this additive in the water would help to bring the animals to heat. It has also been suggested that the peeled rods were used as a sort of corralling fence, set up when the flocks came to drink to keep them together longer for mating. Verses 41-42 also inform us that Jacob practiced selective breeding, ensuring that the best of the flock would be subject to his treatment of the water.

But all this *did not* produce the spotted and colored sheep. These actions only aided Jacob in selecting which sheep would breed at what time. *God caused the unusual coloration of the sheep*. As Jacob said: “My righteousness will answer for me.” The production of colored sheep was God’s response to Jacob’s righteousness. Indeed, we later find out that Laban, seeing the results, kept changing the deal about which sheep Jacob would get—and, in every case, God followed suit with the coloration of sheep produced. Jacob explained to his wives: “God did not allow [Laban] to hurt me. If he said thus: ‘The speckled shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: ‘The streaked shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked. So *God* has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me” (Genesis 31:7-9).

Jacob had matured tremendously while in service to Laban. He had moved away from his grasping, manipulative ways and had come to the point where he understood that prosperity and protection are dependent on righteous conduct before God. And for that, God rewarded and prospered him. Jacob’s character, however, was to be further developed.” [END]