

## JACOB: HIS LIFE IN HARAN Part II (Genesis 29:30 – 31:43)

### **HIS CHILDREN** (29:31-30:24)

Jacob now has two wives, each with her own maidservant. One wife he loves and one he doesn't love. It is an unhappy, tension filled home that will pit sister against sister and wife against husband.

v.31–35. “When the Lord saw that Leah was *not* loved he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren“. It is helpful to remember, firstly, that nothing is hidden from the eyes of the Lord (I Chron.28:9<sup>b</sup>), secondly, that he understands our pain and struggles and, thirdly, that the ancient patriarchs had a much more complete view of life and conception than modern man – He is the ultimate giver of life and of children.

Leah has four children in quick succession, their names reflecting her pain and struggles.

**Reuben** – literally, “he (God) has seen my misery” [surely my husband will love me now, or become attached to me]

**Simeon** – “one who hears” [the Lord has heard that I am not loved]

**Levi** – “attached” [now my husband will become attached to me]

**Judah** – “praise” [This time I will praise the Lord]. What a prophetic choice of name for his lineage would produce the saviour, the one deserving of all praise?

Three of these four names refer to Jehovah, suggesting that this woman with tender (kind) eyes, suffering in an unhappy marriage, had a real measure of faith. Not only would she be the mother of Judah - the kingly tribe, but also of Levi - the priestly tribe.

Ch. 30:1-8. “When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister ----- Rachel’s servant Bilhah conceived ---.

Rachel’s reaction to her sister’s fruitfulness was jealousy, not joy. There was no appeal to God nor any seeking of the Lord, just a strident demand of her husband.

Jacob, while angry, rightly identifies the real issue.

Rachel wrongly identifies the solution. Compare with Gen. 16:1-4.

The names of Bilhah’s two sons via Jacob reflect Rachel’s mindset. Dan = “he has vindicated”, and Naphtali = “my struggle” (i.e. with my sister).

v.9-13. “When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife --- Zilpah’s two sons were Gad = “good fortune”, Asher = “happy”.

v.14-21. Mandrakes were a type of herb with a yellow fruit, the size of a small apple. They were thought to give sensual desire and thus aid conception. In a shameless barter arrangement, Leah gives some to Rachel in return for Jacob’s services for the night. “God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son”. Issachar = “reward”, then Zebulun = honour, dowry or gift”. God had given Zebulun as a gift and thus her husband would now honour her (she hoped).

v.22,23. “Then God **remembered** Rachel, he --- opened her womb --- She named him Joseph”.

This is the same word used of Noah in 8:1 when God took care of Noah in a supernatural way during the flood. The sense here is of someone who at last has sought the Lord in the matter, who, after many years of frustration and failure is now looking to Jehovah for help.

If you are new or visiting; a special warm welcome to you. We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord’s Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

### Today

- Speaker John Hannah
- JCF 5.00pm

### Friday Kids Club

- Kids Club for Year 3 - Year 7  
Thursday 6:30pm - 7:30pm  
Wray Street Youth Hall  
For more information contact:-  
Hamish Smith, (03) 4739547

### Youth Group

- Friday 13 June at 7:00pm  
Pettigrews, 41 Clyde Street,  
Sawyer Bay

### Next Week

- **Sunday** Andrew Stopyra

### Crèche Roster

- June 8 Vicki Halford  
Rosie Pettigrew  
June 15 Sarah McIlroy  
Jennifer Pettigrew

### Prayer

**Colleen Redit**, India, would like prayer regarding the Tsunami Project. It is three years now since the Tsunami struck. 34 houses have been completed and the foundations for 110 more are currently being laid with the money that is in hand.

Please pray that the funding will continue to come in so these houses can be completed. Please also pray for teams that can go and help build the houses to keep the labour costs down.

**HIS PROSPERITY** (30:25-43)

“After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way –“. The 14 years of service have now elapsed. Laban, however, doesn’t want to lose someone who has been the source of blessing to him (c.f., v30). Thus he allows Jacob to name his conditions.

Jacob wishes to build up his own assets (“when may I do something for my own household”) and so proposes to continue watching after Laban’s flocks, provided Laban will allow him to take as his hire the spotted sheep, the dark coloured lambs and the spotted or speckled goats (the rarer kind of animals). [Goats were typically black or dark brown, but seldom spotted. On the other hand, sheep were nearly always white, infrequently black or spotted]. Then Laban, in an immediate act of bad faith, removes such goats, plus the dark coloured lambs from his flock, sending them three days journey away.

Despite Laban’s craftiness, Jacob has a counter plan to increase his flocks. He exposes the white wood on certain trees, and places these branches in the watering troughs near where the flocks would breed. The intent was to introduce fear and/or pre-natal influence during breeding.

He segregated the flocks (v.40).  
He engaged in selective breeding, deliberately arranging that only the strongest animals were born spotted or speckled.

While he quickly became exceedingly wealthy, he subsequently saw this as God’s provision (30:7,8).

As believers, we need to remind ourselves that we are called (a) To live with a clear conscience (Acts 24:16), (b) To forgive wrongs done to us (Rom.12:17-21), and (c) To understand that the Lord is the source of all blessing (I Cor.4:7).

**Small Groups**

**Tuesday**

- Ladies Home Group - see Laura Hannah 473-7954
- Central Home Group - see Steve Clark 479-2070
- Brockville Home Group - see Geoffrey Stewart 476-7888
- Town Home Groups - see Dave Smeaton 477-2110

**Thursday**

- JCF Home Group - see Gideon Chang 488-2118

**Friday**

- Friday morning Home Group - see Bethney Stewart 476-7888

**Prayer Groups**

**Thursday**

- All Saints main church building from 5:15pm

**Sunday**

- All Saints Hall from 8:30am


**NOTICES**

- Bible League of New Zealand Quarterly Report - see notice board.
- Christian Broadcasting Association 'News' - see notice board.
- MAF 'News' in Africa magazine and 'Flight Deck' covering NZ news - see Alan Knight if interested
- Slavic Gospel Association 'Focus' magazine - see notice board.
- Broadsheet from FEBC 'Voice of Friendship' - see notice board.
- Logosdor catalogue of DVD's and VHS tapes for children - see notice board.
- Letter from the Bible College of New Zealand inviting participation in a special partnership in their development plans from 2008 to 2012, details from Alan Knight.
- Quarterly Report from Bible League of New Zealand with an invitation to participate in bible distribution in Africa, see notice board or Alan Knight for details.
- News and prayer letter from Matthew & Rebecca Hawkins - see notice board.
- Annual Report from Tandem Ministries (alias Student Life) is now available, see Alan Knight.

• Outreach opportunity! Have you a spare half hour in your week? Do you know the simple truths of the Bible? Do you love children? If the answer is yes, yes and yes, maybe you should consider joining a Bible-in -Schools teaching team. We still have the opportunity in New Zealand to present the gospel in the classroom but there is a great need for more teachers. If you are interested in finding out more please see Lois Woodfield or Bethney Stewart or Ross and Catherine Pettigrew.