

Birth of a Nation

6-05-2016

Gen 29:31-30:24

When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. 32 And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." 33 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. 34 Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing. 30 When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" 2 Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" 3 Then she said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her." 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. 5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. 7 Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali. 9 When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 And Leah said, "Good fortune has come!" so she called his name Gad. 12 Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13 And Leah said, "Happy am I! For women have called me happy." So she called his name Asher. 14 In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went 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." 15 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?" Rachel said, "Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes." 16 When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. 17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. 19 And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. 21 Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah. 22 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. 23 She conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." 24 And she called his name Joseph, saying, "May the Lord add to me another son!"

In this account of the origin of the 12 tribes of Israel we find insight into the nature of man, problems with polygamy & patience/grace of God.

- Two wives in a home without a spiritual leader. Both are desperate for what the other has.
 - Rachel loved but was barren, Leah was unloved but had many children. Gen 29:31-35, Ps 34:18 & 127:3

God caused Leah to bear the children 1st....4 consecutive sons!

- 4th son was Judah, the lineage from which Messiah, Jesus, would come.
 - Names given to honor the Lord, at same time we see the manifestation of the flesh.

Leah thought having sons would make Jacob love her.

- Neither sex nor children can create love. Love & sex must go together.
- Its a mistake to believe having children will strengthen a weak marriage, keep it from falling apart or weaken a strong marriage.
 - Children are a blessing from God, but should not be where our identity comes from.
- Our ultimate joy, and fulfillment should be in the Lord, not our children, careers, or marriage.

Giving birth degenerated into a vicious competition. Gen 30:1-8, Prov 15:1, 1 Pet 3:7

- Rachel does not need a lecture on theology or gynecology. Needed a gentle/loving understanding & correction from husband.
 - Wives, manipulation buys short-term results & long-term frustration.

Jacob should immediately have rejected her suggestion & prayed to the Lord like his father.

- Guy's: Passivity buys instant peace at the cost of long range problems.
 - Be a peace maker not a peace keeper.....A leak will not fix itself.
- Be the spiritual leader, lead family in prayer, instruct/model the ways of the Lord & correct lovingly/Biblically when necessary, repent.

Back & forth it went with neither seeking the Lord for children or anything else.

- Even resort to form of coercion & "magic". Gen 30:9-21
 - Mandrakes thought to increase sexual desire (Leah) & help conceive (Rachael)

What a mess! Jacob was not leading. Wives justified their selfishness, jealousy & pride by saying birth of child was proof that God was on her side. *Highlight text*

- Yet God's grace, mercy, love & faithfulness is in the midst of this absolutely chaotic, stressful, dysfunctional family.
 - Jacob blessed with 11 sons (12th born later), foundation for nation, Levi priestly line, Judah Messianic line & type of Christ in Joseph. Gen 30:22-24, Jam 4:1-3, Eph 4:31-32

God will work in ALL of our broken/messy families/marriages to glorify His name.

- He begins healing/restoration process with you...not "THEM"!
- Pray fervently to actively grow in love/grace toward each other.
 - God's grace/love toward us model for how treat others in family.
- Daily live in a manner pleasing to God, beginning with thoughts> words >deeds.
 - Determine to be a loving, godly peace maker not a passive peace keeper.
- Pursue primary/ultimate joy, worth & fulfillment in the Lord, not our children or marriage.

