

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

"...whoever observes Jacob's life, after he had surreptitiously obtained his father's blessing, will perceive that he enjoyed very little worldly felicity."
—C.H. Mackintosh

"God & Jacob: His Family"**The Background: Genesis 29:1-8**

- Jacob had fled from his father's household for fear of his brother Esau. Though it seemed that he had lost everything that he believed that he had gained through his intrigues, the Lord appeared and made to him the same promises that had been made to Abraham and Isaac.
- Following his encounter with the Lord, Jacob continued east where he encountered men who knew his family and reported to him that it was well with them.

Deceiving the Deceiver: Genesis 29:9-30

While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and...Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father. —Gen. 29:9-12

Laban

- Jacob's uncle embraced his arrival, inviting him to stay with the family for an extended period of time.

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. —Gen. 29:15-20

Daughters of Contrast:**Leah**

- She was the older of Laban's daughters.
- "Leah's eyes were weak..."
- The meaning of her name is difficult to determine, but it can be translated as "_____"
- This is probably not a reference to poor eyesight and can instead be translated as "soft" or "delicate."

Rachel

- She was the younger of Laban's daughters.
- "...but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance."
- Her name means "_____"
- The contrast between the two girls is in their "form" or overall appearance.

God's Fatherly Love and Discipline:

"What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" —Gen. 29:25b

- There is a dramatic sense of irony involved in Laban's deception of Jacob which shows us that he has not gotten away with the sins that he previously committed against both his father and his brother.
1. Jacob's deception of Isaac was with the goal that the younger might receive that which was the right of the older.
⇒ Laban's deception of Jacob _____ this from occurring in the lives of Leah and Rachel.
 2. Jacob's sin against his own family created conflict and tension within their home.
⇒ Laban's sin against Jacob created an environment of _____ and strife within the family of Jacob that would endure throughout the rest of his life.

Point of Emphasis: God's loving discipline of Jacob had a two-fold purpose:

1. To instruct him regarding the character of God.
2. To prepare him to receive God's promised blessings.

The Growth of Jacob's Family: Genesis 29:31–30:24

"When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren."—Gen. 29:31

"**Hated**"— This term is frequently translated as "unloved" but is a stronger term that carries the idea of aversion to someone or something. In the context of multiple marriages, it was perhaps a legal term as shown in Deut. 21:15-17.

⇒ Jacob did not merely love Rachel more than he loved Leah. He simply did not love Leah at all.

Wives of Contrast:

Leah

When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb...

- God blessed Leah and Jacob with multiple children
 1. Reuben— "Look, a son"
 2. Simeon— "Has heard"
 3. Levi— "To join/attach."
 4. Judah— "Praising"
- When she realized that she was no longer having children, Leah also gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob so that she might bear children on her behalf.
 7. Gad— "Fortune/Luck"
 8. Asher — "Happy one"
- God once again opened Leah's womb and she gave birth to more children.
 9. Issachar— "He provides a wage"
 10. Zebulun— "Gift/Honor"

Rachel

...but Rachel was barren.

- In her barrenness, Rachel envied Leah.
- She demanded that Jacob have children for her with her servant Bilhah.
 5. Dan— "Judge"
 6. Naphtali— "My wrestling"
- After many years of being unable to conceive, God opened her womb.

"**Remembered**"— Literary term that demonstrates that Yahweh is about to undertake a certain action in a situation.

 11. Joseph— "Removed/Added"

God's Fatherly Love and Discipline:

1. Leah, having taken that which was to be her sister's, failed to obtain the love and honor that she desired from Jacob.
2. Rachel, having in all likelihood considered herself of more value than her sister because of Jacob's love, was unable to produce children for him.

Point of Emphasis: God was merciful to them, however, granting to them the _____ of their hearts, but in His own timing in order that they might be instructed to seek Him rather than simply the things He gives.

Lessons from the Lives of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel

1. Sin has both temporal and eternal _____ that come in the form of either discipline or judgment.
2. Because our sin separates us from God, we are prone to struggle with issues of _____ throughout the various seasons of our lives.
3. God knows the desires of our hearts, but invites us to seek _____ above all other things.