

“A House Divided”
GENESIS 29:30-30:24
Pastor Skylar Bernick
Berean Baptist Church

INTRODUCTION

The naming of Jacob's sons, the 12 fathers of the Jewish nation, displays human failure and God's faithfulness. We could make a good case that human failure versus God's faithfulness is the very theme of Genesis! But the Scripture before us is not an academic theology lesson, this is the very personal history of a family's struggle with sin and God's loyal love to that family. Here we see how families are broken when we don't seek the Lord's will, and how powerful God's faithfulness is.

PUT GOD'S WILL FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY BECAUSE HE IS FAITHFUL AND TRUE; LOVE YOUR FAMILY AS HE LOVES THEM!

I . Genesis 29:30-35

Leah was not pretty (Gen 29:17) and not loved (Gen 29:31) by her husband, but she was the wife that God had given Jacob. Ge 29:31 “And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.” Leah bore four sons for Jacob. The name she chooses for each tells the sad story of a broken family. We also see encouraging evidence of growing faith in God.

Vs 32 – Ruben - “look, a son!” “Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.” Leah hopes that her husband will finally love her now that she has given him a son. But Jacob does not...

Vs 33 – Simon - “hearing” “Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also.” Leah is still hated, turning to God she finds comfort in this child and the knowledge that at least God hears her...

Vs 34 – Levi - “joined or brought together” “Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons.” Leah's prayer is still that her husband will love her, and now certainly that she has born him three sons, her husband will be joined to her...but Jacob's attitude does not change.

Vs 35 – Judah - “praise” “Now will I praise the LORD.” This is the first time that Leah does not bring up her broken relationship with Jacob in naming the child. She simply looks to God and praises him.

Learn from this that only God is the master of life and death. Insisting on having things your way against the will of God only causes pain for you and those you love. Jacob and his family do not yet learn this lesson...

II. Genesis 30:1-13

Rachel rejects God's sovereignty and hatches a scheme. Jacob knows that it's wrong and virtually says so, but allows it to happen. Rachel's maid Bilhah bears him two sons...

Vs 6 Dan - “judging” “God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.” She claims that God is on her side but what she is doing is wicked and Jacob knows better!

Vs 8 Naphtali - “wrestling” With great wrestling have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed

In all this Leah is provoked into the same sin and her maid Zilpah also bares Jacob two sons...

Vs 11 Gad - “a troop of people” or “good fortune”

Vs 13 Asher - “happy” “Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed:”

God was mentioned in the naming of each of the first four sons, and look here God is only mentioned in the naming of Dan, in a profane suggestion that God approves of their sinful plan. These children are conceived in envy and their own conduct will reflect this.

Be comforted knowing our Lord is able to use even sinful, foolish choices, to his glory and the good of his people. But even so flee from envy and Godless ambition, seek the will of God; you will reap what you sow.

III. Genesis 30:14-24

In the birth of the last three sons, we see these same themes...Jacob fails as a leader, Rachel schemes and fails, and Leah shows an imperfect trust in God.

Vs 14-17 Leah and Rachel fight over some mandrakes (a plant believed to aid in conception). Finally, Leah gives the mandrakes to Rachel on the condition that Leah be allowed to spend the night with her husband.

Vs 18 Issachar - "hire" And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. 17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

Vs 20 Zebulun - "Dwelling" or "Gift giving" "And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun."

Leah bore six sons and she knows she's blessed of God, but she is still not accepted by her husband.

Vs 22-24 God gives Rachel a son, in His way at His time.

Vs 24 Joseph - "to add" "The LORD shall add to me another son."

God finally gives Rachel what she wants. Joseph means "added" but it is very close to the word for "taken away". There could be a double meaning here in that God added a son and by this took away Rachel's shame.

CONCLUSION

So, what can we say to this sad family history...

God's promises never require human schemes or human permission!

Abraham became impatient and his scheme to bring about the Son of Promise instead brought only pain to his family.

Isaac loved Esau and paid no attention to what God valued, but God still accomplished His will.

Jacob inherited the birth right but had to flee from his brother because of his own scheming

And here envy and pride in Jacob's family drive them to pain and dishonor. This sad, foolish pattern continues repeatedly through the history of God's people.

Jacob's children would reject God's plan for Joseph with the same bitter jealousy.

At last Messiah, Jesus would come. And yet again human ambition would lead to rejection of God's will... notice three things...

See how in all these human failures God works things to His glory and the good of His people!

When we try to drive God's plans it never works the way we want!

God is never defeated by our foolishness. He is always faithful even when we mess up!

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