

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #67

Genesis 29:30 – 30:24

Make no mistake about it - jealousy and envy are not of God; they are of the flesh and the Devil and they are evil. Jealousy and envy causes problems in families, friendships, Israel and the Church. This evil began with an angel Satan in heaven and it began to show up in humans in Genesis.

JEALOUSY AND ENVY OCCUR IN GOD’S FAMILY WHEN ONE MEMBER BECOMES JEALOUS OF THE FRUITFULNESS OF ANOTHER, BUT THE KEY TO NOT BEING JEALOUS IS TO REALIZE GOD IS THE ONE WHO DETERMINES THE FRUITFULNESS OF ANY PERSON AND THOSE FAITHFUL TO HIM WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE FRUIT.

SUBPOINT #1 - God determines who becomes fruitful. 29:30-35

Verse 30 informs us that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Verse 31 says Leah was unloved, literally “hated.” It is important to observe the Semitic use of the concept of hate - when it is used comparatively it presents the idea of loving less. Jacob loved Leah less than Rachel (Luke 14:26), he loved Rachel more than Leah. Although Jacob was spending more time with Rachel, God made Leah more fruitful. When all is said and done regarding Jacob’s children, 1) **Leah** will have bore six sons - Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun and Dinah; 2) **Bilhah**, Rachel’s maid, will have bore two - Dan and Naphtali; 3) **Zilpah**, Leah’s maid, will have bore two - Gad and Asher; and 4) **Rachel** will have bore two - Joseph and Benjamin.

In the Hebrew text, the names of Jacob’s children are very significant and there are word plays with the names that give them special meaning. Each mother named her child in the background of historical jealousy and according to their own feelings:

Son #1 - Reuben (29:31-32) means the Lord has looked on my affliction and given me a son.

Leah thought a baby would make her husband love her, but it won’t.

Son #2 - Simeon (29:33) means the Lord heard that I was hated, I am not loved.

Son #3 - Levi (29:34) means a hope that her husband will be joined to her.

Son #4 - Judah (29:35) means let Him be praised or He will be praised.

Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, but God chose to richly bless Leah. Through this unloved woman would come Moses, Aaron, David and Jesus Christ. Dr. Allen Ross said, “We learn that God’s choice to bless is not made by human standards. In fact, God characteristically works for things or people that humans reject - the downcast, the afflicted, the troubled, the oppressed, and the rejected. Those who find themselves in such predicaments can by faith rely on God, who in His sovereign plan will bless them. His blessing, however, cannot be gained by bargaining or striving” (*Creation & Blessing*, p. 515). Perhaps you feel used or unloved. You draw close to God and His blessings will come to you.

SUBPOINT #2 - Those not fruitful envy and scheme against those who are fruitful. 30:1-8

Each woman wanted what the other had - Leah wanted the attention of Jacob like Rachel and Rachel wanted to have children like Leah. Rachel, who is physically beautiful (29:17) is spiritually and emotionally ugly. She envied Leah and begged Jacob to give her children or she said she would die (30: 1), which ironically is exactly what killed her (35:16-19).

Rachel was insanely jealous and came up with a scheme - she gave her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob to produce children by her, and as a result Bilhah produced two sons - **Son #5** - Dan (30:5-6), which means God has vindicated me and **Son #6** - Naphtali (30:8), which means I have wrestled and won and have been in a great struggle.

SUBPOINT #3 - Those who are fruitful may be drawn to envy those who aren't fruitful.
30:9-13

Leah allowed herself to be pulled into this baby production competition. When she saw that Bilhah had stopped bearing children, she took her handmaid, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob and she bore two sons - **Son #7** - Gad (30:11) whose name means good fortune, and **Son #8** - Asher (30:12-13), whose name means happy and blessed because of advancement. Her attitude was, I'm happy now because I am ahead 6 to 2.

Israel's historical lineage originated from a wild, jealous game among two women who were trying to outdo each other in having babies. It is no wonder that the tribes in Israel have a hard time getting along together; their historical roots stem from two mothers who could not get along.

SUBPOINT #4 - Those who aren't fruitful will try worldly tactics to become fruitful.
30:14-21

Reuben was out in the wheat harvest, the month of May, and found mandrakes (30:14) which names means "love apples." Mandrakes were plants in the potato family that grew flat on the ground, whose apple like yellowish fruit and roots were, according to Greek writers, supposed to possess aphrodisiac powers which would promote passion and conception (Marcus Dods, *Genesis*, p. 129). This is something Solomon, himself, believed (Song of Solomon 7:13).

Usually the fruit is ripe in May and Reuben found some and brought them home and when Rachel heard of this, she requested that Leah give her some of the mandrakes (30:14). Verse 15 implies that Jacob was spending most of his time with Rachel, so Rachel agreed to send Jacob to Leah, if she gave her some of the mandrakes. Jacob came out of the field (30:16) and went to Leah because of this negotiation and as a result Leah bore **Son #9** - Issachar (30:18), whose name means reward for hire and **Son #10** - Zebulun (30:19-20), whose name means precious gift of honor and Dinah (30:21). One would tend to think that Jacob's life was the ultimate but, as he himself would later say, his life was totally depressing (Genesis 47:9).

Rachel had her aphrodisiac, but she did not have the blessings of God.

SUBPOINT #5 - Those who aren't fruitful become fruitful by the power of God. 30:22-24

Rachel finally came to the end of herself, she learned her schemes didn't work and God answered her prayers. God finally allowed Rachel to conceive and give birth to **Son #11** – Joseph whose name means may He add or increase and the Lord has taken away my disgrace.

Lessons:

1. God is still sovereignly working out His program even in miserable and bizarre family scenarios.
2. God chooses to do His most productive work with the least likely people and circumstances.
3. Jealousy and envy are not godly and do not belong in God's family for it leads to disaster. Paul classifies these as evil works of the flesh, on the level of immorality that actually send people to hell (Galatians 5:19-21).
4. Jealousy and envy is caused when someone is more fruitful than another.
5. The key to victory in these areas is to realize God is the One who determines who does what.
6. No matter how long it takes, stay faithful and keep praying for in the end you'll receive the blessings of God.

One would eventually come from this family who can straighten out any family or any person. Jesus Christ eventually came out of this mess and if you will draw close to Him, He'll take you out of your mess.