

Come As You Are (CAYA) Service
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Two Can Play That Game

Scripture Reference: Genesis 29:16-35 – 30:24

16 Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

17 Leah's eyes were weak,¹ but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance.

18 Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

19 Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me."

20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."

22 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast.

23 But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her.

24 (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)

25 And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"

26 Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."

28 Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

29 (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)

30 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

31 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,³ 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.⁶ Then she ceased bearing.

Chapter 30

1 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,⁷ that even I may have children⁸ 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 restlings
10 I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.

11 When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, "Good fortune has
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!"

Notes on scripture above from the ESV Study Bible:

Gen. 29:15–30 **Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel.** Jacob's journey to Paddan-aram to find a wife results in his obtaining not one, but two. The episode is full of irony. Having deceived his father by pretending to be the firstborn, Jacob himself is now deceived by his uncle Laban into marrying his firstborn daughter, Leah. Afterward, Laban permits Jacob to marry Rachel, but only on the understanding that Jacob will work for another seven years in order to pay the bride-price for her.

Gen. 29:15–18 These verses set the scene by providing information essential for the development of the story. The brief descriptions of **Leah** and **Rachel** are sufficient to explain why Jacob loves Rachel.

Gen. 29:18 **I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.** In the ancient Near East it was customary for a prospective husband to give the bride's father a substantial gift of money, known as the bride-price. Jacob indicates that he is prepared to work for Laban in order to give the equivalent of seven years' wages for Rachel.

Gen. 29:22 **made a feast.** Feasting was an important element of ancient Near Eastern weddings.

Gen. 29:23 **in the evening.** It was dark or nearly dark when Leah was introduced to Jacob for the consummation of their marriage, and darkness in a world without artificial lighting can be pitch-black. At this stage, Jacob did not realize that Leah was the bride. She may also have come to him wearing a veil, the sign of a betrothed woman (see 24:65).

Gen. 29:24 The mention of **Zilpah** here anticipates later developments when she will become a substitute wife for Leah (see 30:9–13).

Gen. 29:25 Only **in the morning** does Jacob realize that he has been deceived by Laban.

Gen. 29:26 **to give the younger before the firstborn.** Laban's remarks are highly ironic in light of Jacob's earlier deception of his father.

Gen. 29:27 **Complete the week of this one.** The wedding celebrations lasted for seven days. Laban persuades Jacob to complete this process with Leah on the understanding that he will then be able to marry Rachel. This would also give ample opportunity for Leah to conceive a child.

Gen. 29:29 The mention of **Bilhah** here anticipates later developments, for she will bear children on behalf of Rachel for Jacob (30:3–8).

Gen. 29:31–30:24 **Jacob's Children.** These verses report the birth of 11 sons and one daughter to Jacob. Not surprisingly, given his unexpected marriage to Leah, Jacob's domestic scene is fraught with tension. Laban's deception and manipulation of Jacob creates years of discord between his two daughters.

Gen. 29:31 **When the Lord saw that Leah was hated.** From the outset, Jacob had loved Rachel (v. 18). Undoubtedly, he found it difficult to love Leah, given the events that had brought them together, and Rachel probably also loathed her sister for the same reason. Yet their treatment of Leah causes the Lord to favor her over Rachel. While Leah is able to have children, Rachel is **barren**. As Genesis frequently highlights, the Lord is ultimately the One who creates human life.

Gen. 29:32–35 **Leah** bears Jacob four **sons**. As the esv footnotes reveal, each son's name is associated with a wordplay involving a comment made by Leah: **Reuben** ("see," v. 32), **Simeon** ("hear," v. 33), **Levi** ("attach," v. 34), and **Judah** ("praise," v. 35).

Gen. 30:1–2 Rachel's barrenness causes further tensions to surface within Jacob's household. When Rachel demands **children** from Jacob (v. 1), he places the blame on **God** (v. 2). While recognizing God's role in this situation, however, Jacob does not pray for Rachel, as his father Isaac had done for Rebekah (see 25:21–22).

Gen. 30:3–8 To overcome her barrenness, Rachel offers Jacob her servant **Bilhah** as a substitute wife (v. 3). This practice, which was also carried out by Abraham and Sarah (see 16:1–4), was part of ancient Near Eastern culture. (E.g., the Nuzi texts from the 15th century b.c. treat the concept of marriage, and many of these texts deal with the issue of childlessness and provisions for new wives.) Children born to the substitute, or second, wife were regarded as belonging to the main, or first, wife. In this way, continuity of the family line was preserved. For this reason, Rachel names the two boys born to Bilhah (30:6, 8). Once again each name involves wordplay, **Dan** and **Naphtali** being associated with the verbs "judge" and "wrestle" (see esv footnotes).

Gen. 30:14–16 These verses, which recount Leah's conception of Issachar, highlight the intensity of the dispute between the two sisters. On this occasion Leah buys from Rachel the right to lie with Jacob. Having agreed to this with her sister, she says to Jacob, **I have hired you with my son's mandrakes.** The Hebrew term translated here as "mandrakes" (duda'im, possibly "love fruits") is usually understood to denote the plant mandragora officinarum, a species long regarded as having unusual properties. Unfortunately, no explanation is given as to why Rachel is so eager to have these mandrakes; the context suggests that she may have viewed the plant as increasing female fertility. This and other proposals, however, must be treated with caution.

Gen. 30:17–21 **God listened to Leah** (v. 17). Although it is observed in 29:35 that Leah "ceased bearing" after the birth of Judah, she obviously wishes to have more children. God grants her wish, enabling her to have two more sons and a daughter. Once more, the names of the sons, **Issachar** (30:18) and **Zebulun** (v. 20), are deliberately chosen to reflect events surrounding their births: "Issachar" is related to the concept of "wages" and "Zebulun" to the concept of "honor." The birth of Dinah (v. 21) is briefly mentioned, anticipating the events recorded in ch. 34.

Gen. 30:22–24 **God remembered Rachel** (v. 22). After many years of waiting, Rachel eventually bears Jacob a son. (On God's "remembering," see note on 8:1.) The repetition of "God" in 30:22 emphasizes that he is the One who has enabled Rachel to conceive and give birth. This is reinforced

when Rachel acknowledges that **God has taken away my reproach** (v. 23). Since throughout Genesis fertility is often associated with divine blessing, a woman's inability to bear children could be interpreted as reflecting divine disapproval. Given the resentment that existed between the sisters, Leah may well have taunted Rachel over her inability to bear children. As with all the other sons born to Jacob, Joseph's name is derived from a remark made by his mother; in Hebrew **Joseph** (v. 24) sounds like the verb "add to." For the sad answer to her prayer, see 35:16–20.

- This scripture describes one of the most dysfunctional relationships in the Bible.

Disfunctionality of the Relationship

1. Jacob is tricked by his uncle

- Never ignore the tree from which your mate has fallen from.
- Easier to mimic than fight that which they came from.

2. Jacob marries Leah, whom he does not love, but accepts.

- Make certain you know when are you desired than tolerated.
- Some people view relationships as killing time.
- QUESTION: How do you know when someone is tolerating you?
- Leah thinks she can sleep her way to Jacob's affection. MISTAKE! She names her children out of her dysfunctional sexuality.
- You can only sleep with someone X number of times before emotions get involved (female vs. male).
- What a man does the 1st 30 seconds after intercourse speaks what he thinks of you.
- There is something dysfunctionally wrong when you have to compete for someone!
- Don't let a relationship take the place of God.
QUESTION: How do you expect God to bless an earthly relationship when you can't spend more time with Him? That is relationship idolatry.
- Don't let yourself become an option.
- Easy to equate sex with love and joy.
 - i. No one ever taught us that once you start, it's hard to stop.
- Every sexual partner is a spiritual mate.
- The more you connect with someone spiritually, the less strength you have spiritually.
- No matter how long your sexual history is, if you aren't married, you need to stop.
 - i. Reclaim yourself, spiritually.
 - ii. No matter how you've been born, you can be born again!
- One of the greatest things you can do in your singleness is squashing your sexual desires.

Housekeeping notes

- CAYA – <http://www.comeaya.com> and click on
- Singles Ministry ASBCsingles_ministry@googlegroups.com
- YAM - join Alfred Street YAM facebook page, or email asbcyam@aol.com

