

Jacob—Genesis 30

Jacob Accumulates Wealth in Mesopotamia

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

30:14... MANDRAKES—“What these were is utterly unknown, and learned men have wasted much time and pains in endeavoring to guess out a probable meaning. Some translate the word lilies, others jessamine, others citrons, others mushrooms, others figs, and some think the word means flowers, or fine flowers in general. Hasselquist, the intimate friend and pupil of Linne, who traveled into the Holy Land to make discoveries in natural history, imagines that the plant commonly called mandrake is intended; speaking of Nazareth in Galilee he says: “What I found most remarkable at this village was a great number of mandrakes which grew in a vale below it. I had not the pleasure to see this plant in blossom, the fruit now (May 5th, O. S.) hanging ripe to the stem, which lay withered on the ground. From the season in which this mandrake blossoms and ripens fruit, one might form a conjecture that it was Rachel's dudaim. These were brought her in the wheat harvest, which in Galilee is in the month of May, about this time, and the mandrake was now in fruit.” Both among the Greeks and Orientals this plant was held in high repute, as being of a prolific virtue, and helping conception; and from it philtres were made, and this is favored by the meaning of the original, loves, i.e., incentives to matrimonial connections: and it was probably on this account that Rachel desired them. The whole account however is very obscure” [Adam Clarke]. ||| “The use of mandrakes as an aid to women who wish to bear children is, of course, not approved by anything in the Bible. The superstitions connected with this plant were in no sense reliable, but Rachel, who was by no means free from pagan ideas, was in a desperate mood and willing to try anything. She later took personal charge of Laban's household gods (*Gen. 31:34*). And the impression through *Genesis* is that she was more than a little contaminated by pagan beliefs” [Coffman].

30:37... PILLED—Past tense of peel. To peel off skin or bark.

30:32-43... “More nonsense has been written about this than about nearly anything else. This device of Jacob was one of two things: (1) It was either a semi-pagan superstition, just like the mandrakes, or (2) it was an order from God Himself delivered to Jacob as a test of his faith, nor can that possibility be discounted. Certainly, it was a supreme act of faith in God that Jacob agreed to continue working for Laban for that class of cattle. Why did Jacob propose this? The answer comes out in the next chapter, where Jacob explained what he was doing to his wives. God appeared to him in a dream, revealing that the livestock thus marked would proliferate in Laban's herds. How did this come about? God caused it to be that way. Although nothing is said in the text about God's telling Jacob to peel the rods, it might very well have been done. As noted in (1), it could have been merely a superstitious action by Jacob, just like Rachel and Leah's use of the mandrakes” [Coffman].

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **Patriarchy.**

III. Summary.

Because of envy of her sister, Rachel begins to complain to Jacob, “Give me children or else I die.” Obviously there was a great deal of conflict in this home. Homes were never designed by

the Lord to contain more than one wife and thus we should not be at all surprised that God's way is best and problems will persist wherever we go against His plan. Jacob has not the ability to grant Rachel's request and thus become frustrated with her desperate plea. Rachel urges Jacob to take Bilhah and bear children with her. From this union came two sons. This evidently planted the idea in Leah's mind for Jacob to take her handmaid, Zilpah to do the same. Zilpah bears two sons of Jacob. Rachel is still not contented and looks for any means to relieve her embarrassment at not being able to bear children. When she sees Reuben with some mandrakes, she evidently concludes that this fruit/vegetable might be the key to her sister's fertility and she strikes a bargain with Leah to receive the mandrakes. Leah subsequently bears two more sons and a daughter for Jacob. Then the Lord blessed Rachel with the ability to bear children. This chapter tells us of the birth of Joseph. Jacob is ready now to go back home. He seeks some sort of agreement with Laban that he might leave with his family and his wages. An agreement is made that Jacob would accept as wages the speckled and spotted goats and brown sheep. The two flocks were then kept separate. We learn from the next chapter that it was the Lord's plan to provide for Jacob and whatever Jacob did to bring about good results was either from the Lord or else just something Jacob did on his own. In other words, the favorable results were of the Lord and not from anything Jacob did.

IV. Outline.

1. Rachel's complaint (Gen 30:1).
2. Jacob's anger (30:2).
3. Rachel's scheme (30:3-8).
4. Leah's response (30:9-13).
5. The bargain for mandrakes (30:14-16).
6. Three more children for Leah (30:17-21).
7. Rachel bears a son (30:22-24).
8. Jacob tells Laban he wants to settle up and leave (30:25-43).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ At the end of this chapter, Jacob is a rather wealthy man.
02. _____ The mother of Dan was Rachel.
03. _____ Laban had a large flock before Jacob came to live with him.
04. _____ Dinah was the daughter of Leah.
05. _____ Rachel was able to bear a son because God opened her womb.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ The name of Leah's maid was: (a) Rachel; (b) Zilpah; (c) Bilhah.
07. _____ Jacob told Laban that if he found any among Jacob's flock that were not speckled and spotted or brown that he should consider them: (a) stolen; (b) to be Jacob's; (c) of the Lord.
08. _____ At the birth of Joseph, Rachel said the Lord would: (a) be praised forever; (b) add to her another son; (c) be pleased.
09. _____ Laban had learned by this that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob: (a) observation; (b) experience; (c) study.
10. _____ Leah was the mother of how many of Jacob's sons: (a) four; (b) eight; (c) six.

Fill in the Blanks

11. The second son of Bilhah and Jacob was _____.
12. Laban agreed to the deal Jacob had suggested by saying: "I _____ it might be _____ to thy word."

13. “Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have _____ thee, and let me _____: for thou _____ my service which I have done unto thee.”
14. Laban said, “_____ me thy _____, and I will give it.”
15. Jacob’s _____ was _____ against Rachel by her statement.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Genesis 29 Questions... [01—True, Gen 29:32; 02—False, Gen 29:12; 03—False, Gen 29:24; 04—True, Gen 29:31; 05—False, Gen 29:20; 06—c, Gen 29:1; 07—c, Gen 29:32-35; 08—b, Gen 29:14-14; 09—c, Gen 29:23; 10—b, Gen 29:31; 11—Jacob, wept, Gen 29:11; 12—seven, younger, Gen 29:18; 13—beguiled, Gen 29:25; 14—Rachel, Gen 29:29; 15—bone, flesh, Gen 29:14.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...Rachel envied her sister...** (Gen 30:1). The wise man tells us that envy is the rottenness of the bones (Proverbs 14:30). Rachel had the love and affection of her husband. He had made it very clear that she was the one he wanted to marry and the one for whom he had worked seven years. Rachel allowed envy of her sister to keep herself in a constant state of discontent. With such emotion, there could be no peace in this home. Envy causes such harm. The way she stated her discontent to her husband caused him to be angered because it was not within his power to give her what she wanted.
2. **And she gave him Bilhah...** (Gen 30:4). This may have seemed to Rachel to be a good solution to their problem, but surely it was an unwise maneuver. It would only increase the feelings of inadequacy. The only way that her reproach was going to be removed was by the power of God (v. 22).
3. **...for thou knowest my service which I have done thee** (Gen 30:26). God had promised to be with and bless Jacob (28:15). It seemed obvious even to those not knowing about this promise, like Laban, that the Lord was blessing Jacob. Jacob could boldly stand before Laban and make claims based upon the record of the past. Before Jacob came Laban had little (v. 30), but now his flocks and herds had increased into a multitude. It was right that Laban should compensate Jacob for the good work he had done and the blessings that had come his way. In a sense, Jacob was a steward of Laban’s possessions and was able to give a GOOD accounting of his stewardship. Let us take this statement and use it as a means of examining our own stewardship before the Lord we serve. It is certainly true that He knows of our service. Have we been good stewards?

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

T M N B V C R E M O V I N G X Z A Q W S
 X O C D E R S T G B N H Y U J M K I O E
 P O T I U Y T E L A B A N R F M C D E S
 B V C H Z X Q W R S X C D E R Y F V B U
 B G T Y Y U J M K V I U Y T R H V F R O
 W Q A Z X W S W E D E C V F R I T G B H
 N H Y U K W O I U Y H D B G T R R F V N
 B C D E R A T R N V F R T Y H E B G T W
 C R V F R S T G D E B G T Y H G F R E O
 M C O V F L R T G Y L H N P R O V I D E
 U N H W Y I T C N X S O W E D C V F R T
 L B G T N T Q A I Z X X T B G T Y D U I
 T N H Y U T T G D B V F R S E D E C D X
 I X S W D L E D R C V F R D T S N E Y T
 T B G T E E E W O A Z X E Q A V L N H Y
 U V F R T T G B C N H T Y E U K J M K I
 D N H Y T R F V C W N Q R A C C D E R F
 E V F R O T B N A U Y C U E R F V D E C
 C D E R P B G T O U N Y P R F V C D E Q
 A Z X C S V F C R I N S N H Y U I D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Genesis 30:29-34... ²⁹And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have **served** thee, and how thy cattle was with me. ³⁰For *it* **was little** which thou hadst before I *came*, and it is *now* **increased** unto a **multitude**; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I **provide** for mine **own house** also? ³¹And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed *and* keep thy flock. ³²I will pass through all thy flock to day, **removing** from thence all the **speckled** and **spotted** cattle, and all the **brown** cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and *of such* shall be **my hire**. ³³So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that *is* not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be **counted stolen** with me. ³⁴And **Laban** said, Behold, I would it might be **according to thy word**.