

## Genesis 30 Bible Study

By the time Jacob finally was given Rachel as a wife his first wife Leah was miserable. She knew her husband loved her sister more than herself and it was the focus of her life from that point on. But just as sadly, Rachel was unhappy as well because only her sister could not get pregnant. Let's have a look:

*30:1 When Rachel saw that she could not give Jacob children, she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children or I'll die!" 30:2 Jacob became furious with Rachel and exclaimed, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?" 30:3 She replied, "Here is my servant Bilhah! Have sexual relations with her so that she can bear children for me and I can have a family through her."*

*30:4 So Rachel gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob had marital relations with her. 30:5 Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son. 30:6 Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me. He has responded to my prayer and given me a son." That is why she named him **Dan**.*

*30:7 Bilhah, Rachel's servant, became pregnant again and gave Jacob another son. 30:8 Then Rachel said, "I have fought a desperate struggle with my sister, but I have won." So she named him **Naphtali**.*

*30:9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife. 30:10 Soon Leah's servant Zilpah gave Jacob a son. 30:11 Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him **Gad**.*

*30:12 Then Leah's servant Zilpah gave Jacob another son. 30:13 Leah said, "How happy I am, for women will call me happy!" So, she named him **Asher**.*

*30:14 At the time of the wheat harvest Reuben went out and found some mandrake plants in a field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Give me some of your son's mandrakes." 30:15 But Leah replied, "Wasn't it enough that you've taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes too?" "All right," Rachel said, "he may sleep with you tonight in*

*exchange for your son's mandrakes." 30:16 When Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must sleep with me because I have paid for your services with my son's mandrakes." So he had marital relations with her that night. 30:17 God paid attention to Leah; she became pregnant and gave Jacob a son for the fifth time. 30:18 Then Leah said, "God has granted me a reward because I gave my servant to my husband as a wife." So, she named him Issachar.*

*30:19 Leah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a son for the sixth time.*

*30:20 Then Leah said, "God has given me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me because I have given him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.*

*30:21 After that she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.*

*30:22 Then God took note of Rachel. He paid attention to her and enabled her to become pregnant. 30:23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Then she said, "God has taken away my shame." 30:24 She named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me yet another son." (Genesis 30:1-24).*

*What is Rachel's first plan for getting pregnant here in verse 1?*

*Why does this request make Jacob furious?*

Obviously, we are reminded here who is sovereign. It is God who decides who is born and who is not, and so Rachel getting mad at Jacob as if he could change the situation is ridiculous.

*Does Rachel's second attempt at having a son remind you of anyone from Jacob's ancestral line? (see vs 3; 16:1; 25:21)*

In contrast to the waiting of Rachel, Leah's children are born one right after the other. *Why do you think God would bless Leah in this way? (see vs. 29:31)*

Leah gives us a lot of insight into her emotional life in this chapter. Being given to the man who is romantically and physically attracted to your sister and knowing that he has no attraction for you would be an emotional gut punch, so Leah looks to her children to make things better. We can see this in the names she gives each of them and their translations. Notice what Leah says each time a child is born to her.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Leah's words</b>
Rueben	Look a son	<i>"The Lord has looked with pity on my oppressed condition. Surely my husband will love me now."</i> (29:32)
Simeon	Hearing	<i>"Because the Lord heard that I was unloved, he gave me this one too."</i> (29:33)
Levi	To join	<i>"Now this time my husband will show me affection, because I have given birth to three sons for him."</i> (29:34)
Judah	He will be praised	<i>"This time I will praise the Lord."</i> (29:35)
Gad	Good fortune	<i>"How fortunate!"</i> (30:11)
Asher	Happy one	<i>"How happy I am, for women will call me happy!"</i> (30:13)
Issachar	Man of reward	<i>"God has granted me a reward because I gave my servant to my husband as a wife."</i> (30:18)
Zebulun	Honor or gift	<i>"God has given me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me because I have given him six sons."</i> (30:20)

*From looking at Leah's explanations of why she named her sons the way she did, what do we learn about her heart? What is she looking for in these births?*

Rachel's response to her own children is slightly different. Let's have a look:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Rachel's words</b>
Dan	He vindicated me	<i>"God has vindicated me. He has responded to my prayer and given me a son."</i> (30:6)
Naphtali	My struggle	<i>"I have fought a desperate struggle with my sister, but I have won."</i> (30:8)
Joseph	May he add	<i>"God has taken away my shame. (30:23)</i>

*What is the theme of Rachel's births as seen in her words above?*

*What can you say about humanity from looking at motivations for both of these women in giving birth?*

*When you are faced with a broken heart, loneliness, shame, or guilt where do you go for relief? If you pray, what do you pray for? What does your prayer say about your God?*

In times of distress humanity desires comfort, peace, hope, love, freedom, control, order, vindication and much more. When we look any place other

than to Lord Himself, we are looking to idols, fake gods whom we think will be all that the Lord has promised to be for us. You are not alone in this tendency. It affects us all at one time or another, and if we are honest with ourselves it happens more often than not, but God is in the practice of drawing us back to His sufficiency. He is the Provider, the Healer, the Comforter, our Peace and our Hope. *As you look at the condition of your own heart, what places of pain do you need to fill with the living Christ?*

In order to look to the Lord rather than to humanity or creation we must know who God is. *What do you see about the nature of God in the following verses?*

*“I, I am the one who consoles you. Why are you afraid of mortal men, of mere human beings who are as short-lived as grass? Why do you forget the Lord, who made you, who stretched out the sky and founded the earth? Why do you constantly tremble all day long at the anger of the oppressor, when he makes plans to destroy? Where is the anger of the oppressor? The one who suffers will soon be released; he will not die in prison, he will not go hungry. I am the Lord your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves surge. The Lord who commands armies is his name! I commission you as my spokesman; I cover you with the palm of my hand, to establish the sky and to found the earth, to say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’ ” (Isaiah 51:12–16)*

*“I will lie down and sleep peacefully, for you, Lord, make me safe and secure.” (Psalm 4:8, NET)*

*“Even if he slays me, I will hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face!” (Job 13:15, NET)*

*“But this I call to mind; therefore I have hope: The Lord’s loyal kindness never ceases; his compassions never end. They are fresh every morning; your faithfulness is abundant! “My portion is the Lord,” I have said to myself, so I will put my hope in him. The Lord is good to those who trust in him, to the one who seeks him.” (Lamentations 3:21–25, NET)*

*“Live as free people, not using your freedom as a pretext for evil, but as God’s slaves.” (1 Peter 2:16, NET)*

*“For the scripture says to Pharaoh: “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then, God has mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy, and he hardens whom he chooses to harden.” (Romans 9:17–18, NET)*

*“For the scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”” (Romans 10:11, NET)*

Make a list of all of the attributes of God you find in these passages alongside of all the things you learn about humanity.

God	Humanity

This week meditate on the nature of God as you go through your days. Thank Him for who He is and stand in trust on His faithfulness to always be the perfect God He is.