

Recap of "For You formed my inward parts, You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully (with Godly respect) and wonderfully made." (77)

I was given the comment that a listener could believe that a "bad" person, or a faithless person, could also be created by God in the womb. I apologize if it sounded like that was possible. It is not.

God being all good and perfect, full of agape love can not create a human being in its mother's womb that does not have the complete ability to be a faith filled person. However, because of "man" being born with a sin nature and the ability to choose right from wrong they have the ability to live a life of selfish greed, arrogant and proud and without faith. The sets of brothers; Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau all had the same parents and grew up in the same God respecting household. In those three cases one chose selfishness, greed, and prosperity as their moral choices and were filled with arrogance and pride. The other sibling fought those temptations and chose to live a life respecting what God would have them turn out to be and lived a faithful life and were more righteous than not. Yes, surroundings and indoctrinations can strongly influence their choices but we must never forget that Satan has to come to God for permission to cause affliction, but God, if He allows it, will also provide a path of escape from these temptations. (see printout Luke 4, Job 1+2, 1 Corinthians 10)

Genesis 30:1-8 Leah had three sons and who knows how many daughters. The Scriptures do not tell us and so it is not out of the realm of possibilities that four to six years had passed before chapter 30 verse 1.

Rachel is jealous and upset. And, as we tend to do, she blames

Jacob for something that is out of his control. Jacob (78) rebukes Rachel and reminds her that God controls birth and barrenness not he. So she does the "customary" not "Godly" thing of using a maid to conceive for her, on her behalf. Again, knowing that God has not chosen to make her fruitful (yet).

Lets be clear; God wants marriage to be between a man and a women. Not women! Not handmaids! God did allow Rachel and Leah to be in His plan so that the 12 tribes could be conceived; Judah born (lineage of Jesus), the tribe of Levi born (Levitical priests and Moses and Aaron), by Leah and of course the birth of Joseph who would enable the nation of Israel to exponentially increase in Egypt and who's life had many parallels with Jesus' ministry by Rachel.

So Bilhah conceives and bears two sons on Rachel's behalf.

Those sons were Dan ("God has judged my case, and He has also heard my voice and given me a son") and Naphtali ("with great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed"). In my opinion both misguided statements, "He has heard my voice" and "I have indeed prevailed" are not God's ultimate will but rather His permissive will (sermon April 27, 2025).

Genesis 30:9-13 (Anything you can do, I can do better. 🎵!🎵!🎵!🎵!🎵!)

Leah stops bearing, so she decides two can play that game and offers her maid Zilpah, as wife to Jacob, so that she (Leah) is credited with more sons. Zilpah bears Gad ("A troop comes!") and Asher ("I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed!").

Genesis 20:14-16 Reuben, Leah's first born, now at least a teenager if not mid twenties goes out in the days of the wheat harvest and finds some mandrakes, which

according to tradition (and Song of Solomon 7:13) are afrodisiacs and gives them to his mother Leah. Most likely because she has not conceived in years. Rachel gets

wind of that and tries to persuade Leah to give the mandrakes to her so that she can use them on Jacob for her benefit. And as almost always is the case when people come up with a plan or a scheme to benefit themselves, the opposite happens. In this case Rachel's plan ended up with Leah becoming pregnant. Notice that the animosity of the sisters against each other has exceedingly grown: in verse 15 Leah says, "are you kidding me? You have taken the love of Jacob from me and now you want to the child bearing too!"

Genesis 30:17-21 So the broken heart (being unloved) of Leah, along with her grief of becoming barren, and the fact that Rachel was attempting to use manipulation to bear a child (in the above verse reference) led to God allowing Leah to conceive.

Three times! First, Issachar ("God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." - Obviously a misconception since God was not going to "reward" her for bypassing His plan and offering her maid to bear children -) and after that a sixth son named Zebulun ("God has endowed me with a good endowment, now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons". - Again, notice the sorrow in her heart and the misconception of believing that child will change the marriage relationship.)

Sidenote:

Many failing marriages fall prey to this concept. Often a couple who is having a troubled marriage have a child in hopes that that will remove the underlying problems.

This never does anything but escalate the strife. The only solution in a Christian marriage is when the two draw closer to God which results, automatically, in drawing close to each other.

In verse 21 we note that Leah then bears a daughter 80 and calls her Dinah. Now I said that the Bible rarely

names daughters. This is true; unless their existence is important. Such as by their faith transition, or by their amazing faith walk. Or, by their courage (Deborah, the Judge and Warrior, Naomi and Ruth), or sometimes because of their exceedingly being wicked (Jezebel). In any event, a woman is mentioned when her story has Biblical significance, and Dinah's does when we get to Chapter 34 where she is mistreated and abused causing the slaughter, in great numbers, of those who abused her.

Genesis 30:22-24 (Probably around 15 years later if you consider Reuben going out to the wheat harvest, finding mandrake, Leah conceiving 3 different times after that, and Rachel and Leah having sons through their hand maids). Rachel finally conceives her own son and calls him Joseph ("God has taken away my reproach"). So if you think about it, this is a very unhappy bunch! The loved wife lives with Jacob but is barren for a long time. The un-loved wife was able to bare children. Both tried to use child-birth to establish dominance over the other, and both used their maids to further that dillusion. Messy, messy, messy. Meanwhile it looks like Jacob has been living under his unrighteous father-in-law's jurisdiction for about 25-35 years. (7 for Leah, 7 for Rachel, 7 additional - 29:30 not to mention the birth of 12 children).

Genesis 30:25-28 Jacob says, "It's time to go!". He has been hiding from Esau for maybe 30+ years and his father-in-law is milking him for everything he has. But Laban does not want him to go because Jacob's being blessed by God has resulted in his, Laban's prosperity. Will Jacob escape? Tune in next week to find out.