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Genesis Chapter 29 and 30 Judah Is Born

As we've already seen from last week's study in the 28th chapter of the book of Genesis, Jacob now knows that he is indeed the chosen offspring of Isaac that was chosen by Yahovah personally to carry on the covenant of Abraham his grandfather. Yahovah had personally told Jacob that he indeed was the one that would carry on the family line. And we know that Jacob, who would later on be renamed "Israel"... would indeed give birth to the 12 tribes of Israel and we're going to see that here starting in the 29th and 30th chapters of the book of Genesis.

We're not exactly sure how long it took Jacob to reach Haran in Mesopotamia, but we do know that it was about a 400 mile journey from the southern end of Canaan all the way up to Haran in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia of course was Abraham's birthplace, and a large part of Abraham's family still resided there in Mesopotamia, and so did Rebecca's family, and of course this is why Jacob was there in the first place, to find himself a wife from his mother Rebecca's side of the family just as his father Isaac instructed him.

As we've already seen earlier in Genesis, Abraham's servant had taken the same path to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac, but there is a huge contrast between the way that Abraham's servant arrived in Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac, and the way that Jacob arrived in Mesopotamia to find a wife for himself.

Abraham's servant arrived in Mesopotamia with an entourage of men and camels and gifts to offer the bride of Isaac, while Jacob on the other hand, arrived with nothing more than the shirt on his back. And so, even though the journey between Abraham's servant and Jacob was much the same, the arrival in Mesopotamia was much different between Abraham's servant and Abraham's grandson Jacob, and we're going to see how this affects Jacob as we journey into the 29th chapter of the book of Genesis.

And so, before we do anything else let's once again take the time to read the 29th chapter of the book of Genesis so that we can know both what it does say, as well as what it does not say.
Genesis chapter 29:

Gen 29:1 *Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east.*

Gen 29:2 *As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep*

lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large,

Gen 29:3 and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

Gen 29:4 Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran."

Gen 29:5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him."

Gen 29:6 He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!"

Gen 29:7 He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them."

Gen 29:8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

Gen 29:9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

Gen 29:10 Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Gen 29:11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.

Gen 29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

Gen 29:13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things,

Gen 29:14 and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month.

Gen 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Gen 29:16 Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

Gen 29:17 Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance.

Gen 29:18 Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

Gen 29:19 Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me."

Gen 29:20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

Gen 29:21 Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.”

Gen 29:22 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast.

Gen 29:23 But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her.

Gen 29:24 (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)

Gen 29:25 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?”

Gen 29:26 Laban said, “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

Gen 29:27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.”

Gen 29:28 Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

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

Gen 29:30 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

Gen 29:31 When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Gen 29:32 And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, “Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.”

Gen 29:33 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.

Gen 29:34 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.

Gen 29:35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “This time I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.

Once again Jacob winds up at the water well in Haran that belongs to Rebekah his mother’s family. Now as we read through the Torah we’ll begin to learn a little bit about water well etiquette. Water wells in those days were extremely important, not only because of the great effort it took to dig a well and to maintain that well, but also because that water well sustained the very lives of the people who lived there as well as their herds and their flocks of animals.

Each well was owned by someone. It was owned either by a local King, or in this case it was owned by Rebecca's family. These wells often times became a meeting place for not only family members but for the community as well. If you did not own a well, then you had to pay the owner of the well to use the water from their well. And so, it was commonplace for people to often times meet at these water wells.

As we read through the 29th chapter of the book of Genesis we see that there was a large rock or a stone that covered the mouth of the well that belonged to Rebecca's family. This large stone that covered the mouth of the well was used to help maintain the well and to keep small children from falling into the well or small varmints from polluting the water.

Once again it was up to the owner of the well to decide when to move the stone away from the mouth of the well so that the flocks of sheep and animals could be watered, and that generally happened in the evening hours in the cool of the day. At that time the owner would come and move the stone away, and the flocks and the animals could be watered and anyone who is not part of the family would pay the owner for the water that they used, and then the rock would be placed back over the mouth of the well to protect it.

When Jacob arrives at the well he finds that there are several shepherds there waiting to water their animals but the owners not there to remove the rock from the mouth of the well yet. Jacob wants the shepherds to hurry up and water their animals and leave so that he can have a private conversation with the family members that he came to find. Since Jacob is family, he of course feels justified in rolling the rock off the mouth of the well and allowing the sheep to drink so that the shepherds could be on their way, and finally allow Jacob to converse with his newfound family members.

In verse nine we find that Rachel was a shepherdess which is somewhat unusual for a woman in this area of the world. We know that Bedouin women of the Sinai and the Arabian Peninsula often tended flocks and herds, but Mesopotamian women and eventually Israeli women usually did not tend to flocks and herds. This was a mostly male-dominated occupation for Mesopotamian and Israeli people, so this was somewhat unusual, but was something that both Rachel and Jacob had in common.

Something else that I want to bring to our attention is what some biblical scholars call a contradiction in the Bible. In verse five Jacob asks the shepherds if they know Laban the son of Nahor. In earlier chapters of Genesis, we're told that Laban is the son of Btuel, not Nahor. What we need to understand is that Nahor is actually Laban's grandfather. What is being described here in verse five is which clan Laban belongs to. Laban belongs to the clan of Nahor.

Oftentimes the Bible will describe people as being from the tribe of "so and so", or the son of "so and so" son of "so and so". This isn't always necessarily speaking about a father-son relationship. Sometimes it **does** mean a father and son, but just as often, it's simply attaching a person with his clan as it is here. In order to know which is which, we simply need to keep

things in the proper context, and we know full well that Nahor is Abraham's brother, and that Laban is his grandson according to previous scripture. So, these supposed contradictions of names are not contradictions at all, it was just a normal way of speaking and explaining a person's identity back in that time.

After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, Laban asks Jacob what he should pay him. Laban knows that it's not right for Jacob to work for him for free, but more than money... Jacob is interested in Laban's youngest daughter Rachel. Now we have to remember that Jacob doesn't have anything to offer Laban for his youngest daughter Rachel. Jacob just showed up with the clothes on his back, and he has no gifts to offer the way that Abraham's servant did when he was searching for a wife for his father Isaac.

So, Jacob offers to work for Laban for seven years if Laban would agree to allow Jacob to marry his youngest daughter Rachel. And I want us to understand that it was not the custom for a father to sell his daughter to a man in exchange for servitude back in those days. This was a very unusual circumstance and it's important to understand how Laban's two daughters felt about being literally sold for a price. I'd like us to turn to Genesis chapter 31 verses 14 and 15:

Gen 31:14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house?"

Gen 31:15 Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money.

As you can clearly see Laban's two daughters were harboring some degree of animosity against their father for doing what he did and treating them like merchandise, and so I just want us to understand that this agreement that Laban made with Jacob was indeed highly unusual.

And so, Jacob works for Laban for seven years so that he can finally have his permission to marry Rachel, but... after seven years of labor, Laban decides that he's going to switch daughters and give Jacob Leah instead of Rachel. And so, that evening he sends Leah into the tent with Jacob and Jacob unknowingly consummates the marriage with Leah.

Of course, when morning comes Jacob realizes that Laban has tricked him and so Jacob's a little bit astonished to find out that he's now married to Leah instead of Rachel the one that he worked for seven years to have the permission to marry.

Laban then gives Jacob some hogwash about local tradition and cons Jacob into working for him another seven years for permission to finally marry Rachel. Now this might seem like a dirty trick, but at some point, in time Jacob must have been remembering how he himself tricked his father Isaac into giving him Esau's birthright. In essence, Jacob was simply getting a taste of his own medicine so to speak.

We have to remember that Jacob was already selected by Yah to be the chosen one who would

carry on the covenant of Abraham. Jacob didn't need to be deceitful and trick Isaac into giving him Esau's birthright. Yah would have seen to it, that one way or another Jacob was indeed the chosen one. The problem is that Jacob and his mother took things into their own hands. The result was the same, but the method was peppered with trickery and deceit that didn't need to be there if they would of just trusted Yah to unfold his plan instead of forcing the matter. And so, in the end Jacob now has to work another seven years which is a total of 14 years in order to have the permission to marry the daughter that he wanted to originally marry in the first place.

So, Jacob winds up having two wives because of the way that Laban had deceived him. Now my friends I want us to remember that Jacob is no young stud. Jacob is well into his upper 80s at this point in time. And so here Jacob is in his upper 80s just now starting out his family with not one, but two wives, and before we go any farther I want us to make note of a couple of flaws that can be found in Jacob's character.

Jacob unfairly loved, and openly favored Rachel more than Leah. We're told that Rachel was more beautiful than Leah, and of course we also know that Leah was the older daughter and that Rebecca was the younger daughter. One of the things that I want us to make note of is that unlike Abrahams servant when he came to seek out a wife for Isaac... Jacob never consults Yah about which wife he wants them to have. Jacob never prays and asks his Father in heaven which wife that he wants him to have, the way that Abrahams servant did when he was choosing a wife for his father Isaac.

Jacob simply chooses from the lust of the eye rather than from the heart, but we can see that God blesses Leah with children while at the same time closing the womb of Rachel. So, Leah gives Jacob four sons right off the bat. Ruben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. I want us to notice that Leah continuously gives Yah all the praise and glory each time he gives her another son. Rubin means "*look a son*", because she knew that Yah had seen her affliction and the fact that her husband Jacob fawned over Rachel her sister continuously. Simeon means "*hearing*" because Yah heard her prayers for another son. Levi means "*joined*" because she hoped that at this point in time Jacob would love her because she gave him another son. Judah means "*praise*" because once again, she continuously praised Yahovah for blessing her with these four sons.

Let there be no doubt in our minds that Leah was an extremely good, and godly woman who truly had a heart for Yahovah, and Yahovah was blessing her for it. Not only did Leah give Jacob a firstborn son... but take a look at who her other two sons were. Levi and Judah. Leah was honored with giving birth to the Levitical priesthood who would be priests and servants of Yahovah, and she was also honored with giving birth to Judah which would be the tribe that would bring forth the Messiah who would become the only begotten son of the one true God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. We must always remember that our Messiah came from the house of David and the tribe of Judah. He was indeed a Jew.

As we read in verse 35, Leah one last time praises Yahovah for the blessings that he has bestowed upon her and then she ceases to bear children (at least for a time).

At this point in time we're going to be moving into Genesis chapter 30, and we're going to see things get a little heated between Jacob and his father in law Laban. As we've already seen, Laban has cheated not only Jacob, but his own two daughters Leah and Rachel, and we're going to see even more deception emanating from Laban as we journey into the next chapter, but once again it's important to remember that Jacob is the chosen one of Yahovah. Laban learns this the hard way, but as we often see in life... what we do to others... often times comes back to bite us where it hurts the most.

With that being said... let's read the 30th chapter of the book of Genesis so that we can know and understand both what it does... and what it does not say. Genesis chapter 30:

Gen 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!"*

Gen 30:2 *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?"*

Gen 30:3 *Then she said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her."*

Gen 30:4 *So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her.*

Gen 30:5 *And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.*

Gen 30:6 *Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.*

Gen 30:7 *Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.*

Gen 30:8 *Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.*

Gen 30:9 *When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.*

Gen 30:10 *Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son.*

Gen 30:11 *And Leah said, "Good fortune has come!" so she called his name Gad.*

Gen 30:12 *Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.*

Gen 30:13 *And Leah said, "Happy am I! For women have called me happy." So she called his name Asher.*

Gen 30:14 *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."*

Gen 30:15 *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."*

Gen 30:16 *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.

Gen 30:17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.

Gen 30:18 Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.

Gen 30:19 And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son.

Gen 30:20 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.

Gen 30:21 Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.

Gen 30:22 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

Gen 30:23 She conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach."

Gen 30:24 And she called his name Joseph, saying, "May the LORD add to me another son!"

Gen 30:25 As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country.

Gen 30:26 Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go, for you know the service that I have given you."

Gen 30:27 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you.

Gen 30:28 Name your wages, and I will give it."

Gen 30:29 Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me.

Gen 30:30 For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?"

Gen 30:31 He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it:

Gen 30:32 let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages.

Gen 30:33 So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen."

Gen 30:34 Laban said, "Good! Let it be as you have said."

Gen 30:35 But that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in the charge of his sons.

Gen 30:36 And he set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock.

Gen 30:37 Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks.

Gen 30:38 He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink,

Gen 30:39 the flocks bred in front of the sticks and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.

Gen 30:40 And Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock.

Gen 30:41 Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks,

Gen 30:42 but for the feebler of the flock he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

Gen 30:43 Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Now... the first thing that I want to make light of is the idea of a man taking on more than one wife. It is tectonically important for us to understand that our Father in heaven never intended for a man to have more than one wife. Marriage and the consummation of marriage meant that one man and one woman would become one flesh. That has always been Yah's intention and his unfolding plan from the very beginning.

Second, third, fourth, wives were never prescribed by our Creator. Man took it upon himself to take as many wives as he chose and as we often times see... this did not turn out well for man.

When a man takes on even a single wife, it's important to understand that a woman is going to take away much of a man's time, effort, and attention from his creator. Look what happened to Adam. Adam walked in the garden with Yahovah his Father and he had no problem with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil being there with him in that garden. But as soon as the woman was introduced, Adam's attention was taken away from his Father, and he loved the woman so much that he chose to partake in her sin with her in order to try to save her from the wrath of Yahovah.

As soon as the woman was introduced into the picture, the devil moved in to try to take the man's mind off of his creator and to put his mind on worldly things. And this is one of the reasons why our Messiah clearly tells us that it is better for some people not to marry at all. Let's turn to Matthew chapter 19 versus nine through 12:

Mat 19:9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

Mat 19:10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

Mat 19:11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

Mat 19:12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

Now just to be clear a eunuch is someone who has been made incapable of procreating. A person who is a eunuch is not able to procreate, and that’s a polite way of describing their situation. The point that we need to see in all of this is that there are reasons for a person not to marry. Let’s turn to first Corinthians chapter 7 versus one and two:

1Co 7:1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

1Co 7:2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

Paul tells the church at Corinth that it’s good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman at all, but because of the temptation of sexual immorality that the Devil uses against us through the flesh... each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. If we scroll down just a couple of verses to versus seven through nine... Paul elaborates on this concept even more:

1Co 7:7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

1Co 7:8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am.

1Co 7:9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

And so, it’s important for us to understand as Christians that if it’s better not to marry in the first place... taking on more than one spouse is bound to be a bad idea. And I don’t think we have to look any farther than King Solomon to know and understand what happens when we start becoming worldly and entrenching ourselves with the things of this world and the temptations of the flesh.

My point in all of this is that whole denominations have been built on polygamy and the idea that man is allowed to have more than one wife, but the truth is, that our Father in heaven was very clear in the book of Genesis when he told us that one man and one woman were to become one flesh, and we can see that again from our Messiah who also says that one man and one woman is to become one flesh as far as his Father is concerned.

Not everything that the patriarchs did was good, and righteous and just. When we look at some of the most famous people found within the Scripture, we can see all kinds of flaws and mistakes that they made. We have to remember they were just flesh and bone people just like you and I. Just because the Bible records these things does not mean that it's okay for us to do them. If we study the Torah of Yahovah, and what **he** allowed and what **he** did not allow, we will know what is right and what is not right. Just because our Father in heaven winked in the eye of ignorance, does not mean that we should be so presumptuous as to assume that these things are right and just in his eyes, when they clearly are not. Let's turn to Acts chapter 17 verses 30 and 31:

Act 17:30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

Act 17:31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Men did what they did in those days, but that does not make everything they did good, and proper, and righteous in the eyes of Yahovah. Our Father in heaven may not have established a direct commandment that said that a man should not have more than one wife... but he clearly did establish the concept of one man and one woman becoming one flesh, and that understanding clearly cannot be refuted.

Rachel presumptuously gives her handmaiden Bilhah to Jacob to bear a child in her stead, but we'll soon find out that if Rachel would have simply turned to Yahovah and had patience... she could have bred that child herself. The problem was, that these two rather superstitious sisters had a battle going on for the attention of their husband Jacob.

Once again, we can see all kinds of reasons why a man should never take on more than one wife. It simply not natural, it creates all kinds of problems, and the drama never seems to end. Even in Abraham's time we saw all of the turmoil, and the drama, and the problems that were created when Sarah gave Abraham her handmaiden Hagar, and she bore him Ishmael. Once again, we can see very clearly that Sarah never had to give Abraham her handmaiden Hagar in the first place. Sarah herself bore Isaac when Yah decided it was time for her to bear Isaac.

Something else that's interesting to see is that even Leah who was the more godly of the two sisters, fell into the trap of giving Jacob her handmaiden Zilpah instead of trusting in Yahovah. Once again, if she would've just trusted in Yah, she herself would have been able to give her

husband that child, but because her sister Rachel seemed to be outpacing her... Leah too, turned away from trusting Yah and decided to take things into her own hands.

The point is that both Leah and Rachel continued to give Jacob children even after giving him their handmaidens. And so, what they had done just complicated things. Nevertheless... the plan of Yahovah went forth, and the 12 tribes of Israel went forth just as Yahovah had planned. But things could have been much better and a whole lot easier for Jacob if he would've simply trusted in Yahovah and asked him for guidance instead of listening to his two wives and taking on to more wives.

Now with all that being said I want to explain once again that handmaidens who were given to men as wives were never really counted as wives as we know them today. The handmaidens of Rachel and Leah were what we know today as concubines. They never had the full stature of a wife because they were still handmaidens to Rachel and to Leah. Bilhah, and Zilpah never stopped being handmaidens to Rachel and Leah, and so even the children that Bilhah, and Zilpah bore from Jacob legally belonged to Rachel and Leah (at least according to the legal commandments that they had created for themselves back in that day).

But I want us to understand that concubines were indeed loved and cherished in those days. The concubine was included as part of the family but the roll they played was somewhat different from a wife who was not originally a handmaiden. They were well taken care of and they were provided for just as much, if not more than the rest of the clan.

Bilah, Rachels servant bears Jacob a son in Rachels name, and she calls him "Dan" which means "*to judge*". She also gives him another son named "Naftali" which means "*wrestling*" or "*contest*". Zilpah, Leah's servant bears Jacob another son and Leah calls him Gad which means "*good fortune*", she then bears him Asher which means "*happy*", and so, we begin to see how the twelve tribes of Israel are brought into the world through Jacob.

Later on, in the chapter we see Rueben Leah's son gathering Mandrakes out in the field. Mandrake's were known to be an aphrodisiac back in those days, and so Rueben was gathering these mandrakes for his mother because she obviously confided in him about how unhappy she was about her sister Rachel taking all of her husband's attention. And so, this is what the mandrakes were all about. Ruben was gathering these mandrakes for his mother because he thought that these mandrakes would help impregnate his mother so that she could gain favor with Jacob.

These mandrakes were once again widely known throughout paganism as a powerful aphrodisiac. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, had a nickname and was often times called "*The Lady of The Mandrake*". The song of Solomon actually has connotations to the mandrake as well, and so these mandrakes had a pretty reputable reputation back in those days, but just like many of the home remedies that we see on places like Facebook, and Youtub today... not all of them truly worked.

What's important to realize is that these mandrakes were nothing more than pagan superstition. Leah who gave up her mandrakes to Rachel produces three more children, while Rachel who is the one who wound up with the mandrakes remains barren for the next few years. And so, once again we see the underpinnings of superstition and paganism going on that clearly stems from Laban's family, and we'll see more of how paganism played a part in the up-bringing of Rachel and Leah as we move forward.

In the mean-time Leah gives Jacob another son and calls him "Zebulun" which means "*dwelling*", because Leah thought for sure that because she was giving Jacob more sons than Rachel, that Jacob would surly make his dwelling with her for the most part and she would win his attention from her sister Rachel.

We also see something very unusual listed here in Genesis chapter 30. We see the inclusion of the name of a female child called "*Dinah*" that's born to Leah. Mothers and daughters are often times very close, and this very well could have been a gift from Yah because of the loneliness and alienation that she felt from her husband Jacob.

In the meantime, Rachel gives birth to Joseph. Rachel announces that "God has taken away my disgrace". The Hebrew word translated as taken away is "*asaf*". In the next verse Rachel goes on to say that she therefore would name him "*Yosef*" because Yah had added another son to her. "*Yosef*" means "to add". "*Asaf*"... means to "take away". This was an extremely prophetic name for Joseph because in a few years Joseph would be taken away from his father, and then many years after that, he would be added back in again.

And so, moving forward... Jacob has worked for Laban for 14 years and is now ready to have his service acknowledged as paid in full by Laban, but the very crafty Laban has a few more tricks up his sleeve. Laban knows that he's gotten fat off the presence of Jacob being there and shepherding, and raising his animals. And Laban knows that he's gotten rich off the presence of Jacob because Jacob was chosen and favored by Yahovah. What's interesting is how Laban knows that Jacob is chosen and favored by Yahovah.

If we look at verse 27 we see that Laban knows that Yahovah is blessing him because of Jacob through "divination". The Hebrew word used for divination here is the Hebrew word "*nachash*" and it means through magic or an enchanter, or fortune-telling. And we know that we're using this word in the proper context because we've already seen the evidence of Laban's two daughters using mandrakes in an attempt to bear children, and we will also see in the very next chapter that Rachel steals her father's precious idols... out of his home and takes them with her without the knowledge of Jacob her husband.

Laban is a pagan spiritualist that believes, and puts his trust in the spirit world. Laban believes in many gods, and he believes that the God of Jacob is just one of several different deities or gods. Because Laban believes that he has an upper hand with the gods, he continues to trick

Jacob into doing his work for him, and keeping Jacob under his thumb, but of course we know that Jacob's God is much more powerful than all of Laban's pagan gods put together.

The idea of the sticks that Jacob uses to turn the goats and the sheep speckled and spotted has been called everything from rank superstition to flat out baloney, but the truth is... that science has now proven that what a mother eats can indeed affect her offspring. In fact, scientists at Duke University medical Center in Durham North Carolina have shown that by treating mice supplements high in very simple molecular compounds, they can actually create mice with yellow hair. And so, it shouldn't surprise us to know that a Shepherd who has done nothing else but be a Shepherd his whole life would know a thing or two about how to create spotted and speckled livestock. This is not the first time that the Bible has taught scientists a thing or two concerning nature and the universe that we live in. And I'll be sure to leave you a link to a website that will help you in your own investigation in our PDF file if you'd like to look into that topic a little farther.

<https://biblicalfoundations.weebly.com/is-jacobs-stick-trick-scientific.html>

And that brings us to the beginning of Genesis chapter 31 which we will get into next Wednesday evening at 7 PM Eastern standard time.

EXTRA FYI:

Jacobs Sticks?

<https://biblicalfoundations.weebly.com/is-jacobs-stick-trick-scientific.html>