

Chapter 29 concludes with Jacob taking two sisters to be his wives. Troubles befall him right away as his affections are given to Rachel, rather than Leah. In this section we see a rivalry escalate through the arrival of children, fueling the dissention between these two sisters and the desire to attain what they want.

Genesis 29:31- 30:1-43

Jacob's Children; Jacob's Prosperity

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

Hopelessness is a strong term. It's a feeling most of us can relate to on some level at some point in our lives. However, how we deal with hopelessness, where we take those emotions, how we seek to remedy our circumstances, can bring about peace, or if poorly mediated, it can make those same feelings escalate.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

DESCRIBE a time when you struggled to find hope.

HOW do you look for peace in times of hopelessness?

HOW might you describe the relationship between the things *you* want and the things God wants from you?

WHEN the things you desire and the things God desires from you come into conflict, *how* do you tend to make the right decision?

Genesis 29:31-30:43

30:43

Jacob's Children; Jacob's Prosperity

OBSERVATION

According to vs. 31, why did God open Leah's womb?

What can you observe about the names given to Leah's sons (what they mean) as they relate to her situation (vs. 32-35)?

What does 30:1 reveal about Rachel's feelings surrounding her barrenness?

What is Rachel's solution to her barrenness (vs. 3)? How does Leah have a similar solution for her as well in vs. 9?

In vs. 8, where does the focus of tension seem to reside with these sisters?

List which son goes with which mother.

According to vs. 25-30, why does Jacob feel it is now time to leave?

Explain the details of the negotiation Laban and Jacob make in vs. 32-36.

What is the outcome of the deal struck (vs. 37-43)?

INTERPRETATION

What does it mean that Leah was hated (vs. 31)? Consider Luke 14:26.

What tension do you see in this passage between Rachel, who has the affection of Jacob, and Leah, who now has the children?

Contrast the way Jacob responds to Rachel in 30:1 to that of Isaac and Rebekah in Genesis 25:21.

How have others in the Genesis narrative sought to gain children through efforts similar to that of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel (see Genesis 16)? What can we conclude regarding the outcome of both these scenarios?

As Jacob determines the time has come to return to his country, why is Laban reluctant to let him go? How is this consistent with what we've learned about his character previously in 24:29-31?

What do we learn about the character of Laban in vs. 35-36?

If Rachel and Leah are looking for purpose, hope, or identity in children, where is Laban looking?

Explain how the Lord seems to still be working regardless of the polygamy and selfishness shown here.

APPLICATION

What are the things that you think are necessary for happiness? Are there things you find lacking in your life that are keeping you from being "happy"?

Do you believe God is really sovereign? Is He at work, even in the difficult circumstances you might be experiencing?