

# The Offspring and Obligation of Jacob

## *Genesis 30:1-43*

- I. THE FIRST FOUR CHILDREN OF JACOB (Genesis 29:31-35; Genesis 30:1-4)
  - A. Those Born by Leah (Genesis 29:31-35)
    1. Reuben (Genesis 29:32)
      - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s first child
      - b. Leah’s words—“*Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore will my husband love me.*”
    2. Simeon (Genesis 29:33)
      - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s second child
      - b. Leah’s words—“*Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also.*”
    3. Levi (Genesis 29:34)
      - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s third child
      - b. Leah’s words—“*Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons.*”
    4. Judah (Genesis 29:35)
      - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s fourth child
      - b. Leah’s words—“*Now will I praise the LORD.*”
  - B. The Frustrations of Rachel (Genesis 30:1-4)
    1. Rachel envied her sister (Genesis 30:1).
    2. Rachel demanded children of Jacob (Genesis 30:1).
      - a. That which started the use of maids for children was the demand of Rachel to Jacob to give her children.
      - b. Rachel was indeed frustrated.
        - (1) Rachel was envious (Genesis 30:1; cp. Proverbs 27:4) of her sister who had not only cheated Rachel out of being Jacob’s first wife but also had born him four boys up to this point. Note: Envy was not becoming to Rachel, it is worth noting that envy would be an issue for several of the boys of Jacob and would cause much division (Acts 7:9; see Genesis 37). In like manner the Jewish leadership crucified Jesus because they were envious of Him (Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10).
        - (2) The stigma of her bareness would aggravate the situation for Rachel.

3. Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel (Genesis 30:2).
  - a. Rachel's demand on Jacob angered him.
  - b. He reminded her that it was God, not him that was in control of conception.
4. Rachel gave Bilhah to Jacob (Genesis 30:3-4).
  - a. Rachel devised a plan in order to provide children. This was fully acceptable in the nations around God's people.
  - b. Jacob was consenting to this plan as well and had two boys by Bilhah.
  - c. Note: This should immediately remind us of the plot of Sarah when she too was barren (Genesis 16:1-3).

## II. THE CHILDREN OF JACOB (Genesis 30:5-24)

### A. The Children by Bilhah (Genesis 30:5-8)

1. Dan (Genesis 30:5-6)
  - a. Place in the family—Jacob's fifth child
  - b. Rachel's words—*"God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son"* (Genesis 30:6).
2. Naphtali (Genesis 30:7-8)
  - a. Place in the family—Jacob's sixth child
  - b. Rachel's words—*"With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed"* (Genesis 30:8).

### B. The Children of Zilpah (Genesis 30:9-13)

1. Leah not to be outdone pulls the same plan on her sister. Leah uses her handmaid Zilpah as well to have more children.
2. Gad (Genesis 30:10-11)
  - a. Place in the family—Jacob's seventh child
  - b. Leah's words—*"A troop cometh"* (Genesis 30:11).
3. Asher (Genesis 30:12-13)
  - a. Place in the family—Jacob's eighth child
  - b. Leah's words—*"Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed"* (Genesis 30:13).

### C. The Remaining Children of Leah (Genesis 30:14-21)

1. The confrontation before the children—The confrontation over mandrakes, which Leah's son, Reuben, had found in the field, was prompted by a belief that these mandrakes prompted fertility. Because of this fact Rachel wanted them.
  - a. Leah's denial—Leah snapped back at the request of Rachel, accusing her of taking her husband (a hypocritical accusation if there ever was one).
  - b. Rachel's agreement—This confrontation ended with Rachel's agreement of letting Leah go in unto Jacob that night.

2. The conceiving of the children—“*God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son... Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son*” (Genesis 30:17, 19). Two more sons born unto Jacob by Leah.
  3. Issachar (Genesis 30:17-18)
    - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s ninth child
    - b. Leah’s words—“*God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband*” (Genesis 30:18).
  4. Zebulun (Genesis 30:19-20)
    - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s tenth child
    - b. Leah’s words—“*God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons*” (Genesis 30:20).
  5. Dinah (Genesis 30:21)
- D. The First Son of Rachel (Genesis 30:22-24)
1. God’s care for Rachel (Genesis 30:22)
    - a. God remembered her.
    - b. God hearkened to her.
    - c. God opened her womb.
  2. Joseph (Genesis 30:23-24)
    - a. Place in the family—Jacob’s eleventh child
    - b. Rachel’s words—“*God hath taken away my reproach...The LORD shall add to me another son*” (Genesis 30:23-24).

### III. THE CONTRACT FOR JACOB (Genesis 30:25-43)

- A. The Cause for the Contract (Genesis 30:25-27)
1. The request to go—Jacob wanted to leave and go back to Canaan. That involved faith as well as affections. It was the land that God had promised him (Genesis 28:13-15). This is also a possible indicator that Laban once again has been delinquent about taking care of Jacob for his work. Jacob has fulfilled his part of the contract to work for Laban seven more years for Rachel and Laban has not come to him to negotiate a new contract for service. Apparently, Laban is enjoying more “free” labour on the part of Jacob (Genesis 30:26).
  2. The request by Laban—“*I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by **experience** that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.*” (Genesis 30:27).
  3. Note: Laban had benefited from Jacob being with him (see Genesis 28:14).
  4. Note: The NIV says that Laban learned “*by divination.*”
- B. The Considerations for the Contract (Genesis 30:28-31)
1. The activity of Jacob
    - a. Laban offered Jacob the opportunity to set his own wages (Genesis 30:28).

- b. Laban knew full well how good Jacob had served him; this was why he gave Jacob the opportunity to set his own wage. He knew that he had benefited from greatly from Jacob. He was a hardworker. This fact is emphasized later when Jacob is speaking to both Rachel and Leah (Genesis 31:6, 40). Jacob’s work ethic deserved to be rewarded.
      2. The accountability of Jacob
        - a. *“Thy cattle was with me”* (Genesis 30:29)
        - b. Laban could leave his livestock in the care of Jacob without any fear of their demise.
        - c. Jacob could certainly out connive just about anyone else, but that did not mean he couldn’t be trusted to take of things left in his care.
      3. The accumulation of Jacob
        - a. Jacob had helped grow Laban’s wealth and Laban knew he couldn’t deny that fact.
        - b. Thus, Jacob deserved to be rewarded handsomely for his efforts.
      4. The administration of Jacob
        - a. *“When shall I provide for mine own house also”* (Genesis 30:30)
        - b. It was now time for Jacob to consider the needs of his own household (1 Timothy 5:8).
        - c. If Laban is going to hire Jacob, he must consider these factors in the contract that he will make with him. If Laban would agree to Jacob’s deal, Jacob would stay and work for Laban.
- C. The Conditions in the Contract (Genesis 30:32-33)
  1. The removal of certain cattle (Genesis 30:32)
    - a. Jacob would pass through the flock and remove certain cattle for himself (Genesis 30:32).
      - (1) Speckled and spotted cattle
      - (2) Brown cattle among the sheep
      - (3) Spotted and speckled among the goats
    - b. Note: The word *cattle* can refer to more than sheep and goats, or to these only. The majority of sheep and goats in an oriental flock are either plain black or plain white. This made Jacob’s deal seem good.
    - c. Note: Laban, a man of greed, would be quick to jump on a deal such as this. However, Jacob had a plan, the contract may have looked liberal for Laban, but Jacob had a scheme to turn the situation into his favour.
  2. The agreement to deal honestly – Jacob made a vow to deal honestly with Laban (Genesis 30:33).
- D. The Concurring for the Contract (Genesis 30:34)
- E. The Conniving after the Contract (Genesis 30:35-43)
  1. The stealing by Laban—The removal of the ringstraked and spotted, speckled and spotted, brown and white (Genesis 30:35, 36)

- a. Some Bible students have pointed out that the “he” in verse 35 is Laban and his work at the removal of the blemished cattle. They also go on further and point out that the “sons” in verse 35 are the sons of Laban. Therefore, Laban moved quickly and removed all of the blemished cattle in the herd and gave them to his sons effectively causing Jacob to start with nothing, going against the agreement that Jacob and he had made. If this is the case, it shows once again the deception that Laban’s heart is filled with (Proverbs 20:17; Romans 1:29).
- b. Some Bible students do not point out the possibilities presented above, rather they only cover the fact that the animals were separated.
2. The scheming by Jacob—The work done by Jacob (Genesis 30:37-43)
  - a. Jacob’s work to increase his herd (Genesis 30:37-39)
    - (1) Jacob got branches of poplar, hazel, and chestnut trees and “*pilled* (peeled) *white strakes*” in them (Genesis 30:37).
    - (2) Jacob set these rods in the gutters of the water trough (Genesis 30:38).
    - (3) This was done at a certain time so that the animals conceived while facing the rods. Whatever it was that took place, Jacob got results.
    - (4) Laban’s flocks bred speckled cattle (Genesis 30:39).
  - b. Jacob’s work to strengthen his herd (Genesis 30:40-42)
    - (1) Jacob set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked and all the brown in the flock of Laban (Genesis 30:40).
    - (2) Jacob put his own flocks by themselves (Genesis 30:40).
    - (3) When the stronger cattle conceived, Jacob laid the rods before their eyes in the gutters that they might conceive among the rods (Genesis 30:41).
    - (4) If the cattle were weak, the rods were not placed before them (Genesis 30:42).
    - (5) The feeble were Laban’s, and the strong were Jacob’s (Genesis 30:42).
  - c. Jacob increased in cattle and servants (Genesis 30:43)