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SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 2

Genesis 28:6-30:43: Gone but Not Forgotten

*"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land.
For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

– Genesis 28:15 ESV

- **A sibling rivalry with a sadistic twist** – Genesis 27:41-46

From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: "I will soon be mourning my father's death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob." – Genesis 27:41 NLT

- Esau has murder on his mind
 - He wants his **blessed** brother dead
 - He has lost everything

Esau exclaimed, "No wonder his name is Jacob, for now he has cheated me twice. First he took my rights as the firstborn, and now he has stolen my blessing." – Genesis 27:36 NLT

*"The birthright and the blessing were two different things. The birthright was usually given to the firstborn son and guaranteed him the largest portion of the family's estate upon his father's death. But Esau had flippantly traded that right away. By selling his birthright, Esau had given up his right to be the chief of the tribe and head of the family, but he still held out hope that his father would reward him with a double portion as the eldest son of the family." – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis**

- But Jacob had robbed him of that hope
- Rebekah is still playing God
 - She tries to put a positive spin on it all
 - It's a temporary setback to her plan
 - She still thinks she's in full control

- But she is in for a rude awakening
- **Jacob meets his maker** – Genesis 28:10-22
Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. – Genesis 28:10-11 ESV
 - 58 miles into his journey, Jacob stops for the night
 - He is still within the borders of Canaan
 - But he doesn't get much rest
 - His sleep is interrupted by a “dream”
 - Dreams will play a major role in Jacob's story
 - They will presage future events
 - The blessing confirmed
 - God reiterates Isaac's last words to Jacob

Isaac

“God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.” – vs 3

“May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land...” – 4

God

“Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth.” – vs 14

“The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants.”
– vs 13

- The gate of heaven
“Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” – Genesis 28:16-17 ESV

“The symbolism contained in this dream is powerful and significant. As Jacob lay in the darkness, separated from his family and facing an uncertain future, a host of angelic beings were moving back and forth between heaven and earth. These messengers of God represent His divine oversight and influence over all that happens on earth. Their movement between the two realms was meant to symbolize His sovereign control over the affairs of this world. They were His celestial agents, carrying out His wishes and accomplishing His divine will among men.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- God was letting Jacob know He was in charge
- But Jacob wasn't convinced

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God...” – Genesis 28:20-21 ESV

- Jacob put conditions on his worship
 - He attempted to bargain with Yahweh
“You bless me and I'll worship you!”
 - Jacob was demanding guarantees
- **Jacob meets his match** – Genesis 29

Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. – Genesis 29:1 ESV

 - He finally arrives in Haran
 - He meets his uncle, Laban
 - He has come in search of a bride
 - But he gets more than he bargained for
 - The deceiver gets deceived
 - Laban welcomes Jacob into his home
 - Jacob worked for his room and board
 - After a month, Laban offers to pay him
 - Jacob chooses Rachel as his reward
 - She is Laban's daughter and Jacob's cousin
 - And she's beautiful
 - Jacob agrees to a 7-year contract

Laban said, “It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.” So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. – Genesis 29:19-20 ESV

- Jacob served Laban
 - After 7 years, he demanded his reward
 - But Laban tricked him
 - He substituted Leah for Rachel
 - The older took the place of the younger
 - Laban defended his actions

Laban said, “It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” – Genesis 29:26-27 ESV

- Jacob now had...
 - ...a binding contract for 7 more years
 - ...two wives
 - ...and a looming domestic situation

...he loved Rachel more than Leah... – vs 30

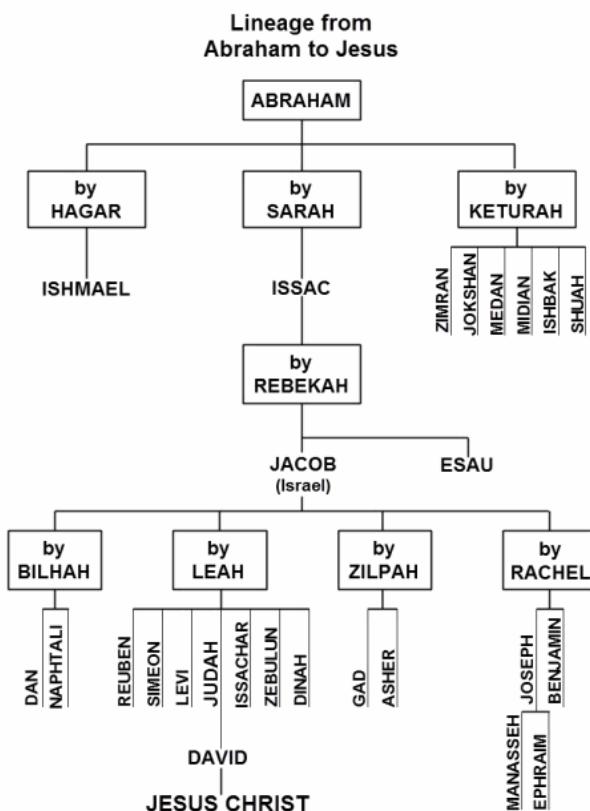
- Jacob knew all about favoritism
- But God had plans for Leah

When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to have children, but Rachel could not conceive. So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. – Genesis 29:31-32 NLT

- **God's improbable yet providential will**

- Jacob saw no value in Leah
- But God had great plans for her
 - Jacob's plans revolved around Rachel
 - But Rachel was barren
 - God's plans included the unloved one
 - She was key to the promises being fulfilled

...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. – Isaiah 53:2-3 ESV



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- **The sport of competitive conception** – Genesis 29:31-30:24

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!” 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?” – Genesis 30:1-2 ESV

- Chapter 30 features the war of the wombs
- 4 different women bear Jacob sons
- And it all seems out of control

“It would be easy to read this story and be left with the impression that things have gotten completely out of control. There is no referee in this game of one-upmanship. Each of these women seems to make up the rules as the game unfolds. And Jacob comes across like a Triple-A prospect who suddenly gets called up to the big leagues.

“This little country boy from Beersheba was going up against the pros. But Moses wants his readers to know that this is not some no-rules, make-it-up-as-you-go-along free-for-all. God is fully in control and operating behind the scenes to accomplish His divine will.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the LORD add to me another son!” – Genesis 30:22-24 ESV

- **Discussion questions**

What's your main takeaway from this lesson?

How does a glance at Jacob's family tree prove that God was in control all along?

Why is it important that we recognize God's involvement in every area of our lives?



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SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 3 HOMEWORK

WEEK 3 – Genesis 31:1-33:20: Wrestling with God

After more than two decades exiled to the land of Haran, Jacob receives word from God that it is time to return to Canaan. Jacob packs up his growing family and gathers his extensive herds to make the long trip home. But he quickly finds himself confronted by his angry father-in-law and facing the less-than-appealing thought of running into his disgruntled older brother Esau. And somewhere along the way, he ends up in a wrestling match with God Almighty. Jacob's life of self-absorption and deceit is catching up to him. But God has plans for this manipulative son of Isaac that were beyond anything he could have ever imagined.

- Read 31:1-33:20. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.

- Now read pages 57-86 of Ken's Devotional™ on Genesis Part II.
- According to Genesis 30:25-43, Jacob not only ended up with a lot of kids, but with a great deal of wealth. Look back at Genesis 31:1-16 and then write down how these blessings ended up being a curse for Jacob.

What was Jacob's primary motivation for returning home to Canaan?

What did Leah and Rachel voice as their main concern in this passage? Do they show any interest in the will of God or returning to Canaan?

- Review Genesis 30:17-25. Describe the interpersonal dynamics going on in these verses.

What had Rachel done to jeopardize Jacob's departure and what does this reveal about her belief in Yahweh? Why is this significant?

What does Jacob reveal about his belief in Yahweh in verse 42?

- What do verses 1-21 of Genesis 32 reveal about Jacob's faith in Yahweh? What does he do to try and appease his brother Esau?

Go back and look at Genesis 28:13-16. How do Jacob's actions reveal his disbelief in these promises?

- Genesis 32:22-32 records Jacob's surprise encounter with "a man." Who do you think this was and what do you think this wrestling match is supposed to signify?

What does Jacob demand from this unknown individual? What might this reveal about who Jacob thought he was?

- Finally, look at Genesis 33:1-20. What happens when Jacob meets Esau?

Jacob had attempted to bribe his own brother, but it proved unnecessary. How does this reflect God's sovereign will?

How does Jacob deceive his brother one more time in this account? What does this reveal about the state of Jacob's character?