

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 27-29

In 2003 the American troops began their invasion of Iraq... The day after, a presumptuous reporter asked Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, to explain “the apparent failure (of the Army generals) to follow the war plan.” Rumsfeld shot back, “I don’t believe you have the war plan.”

This is our predicament. We’re not always privy to God’s plans.

With their birth God promised Rebekah a twist with her twins. Despite the custom of the day, her younger son, Jacob, would gain preeminence over her older son, Esau. The little brother would receive his father’s birthright.

The unexpected twist pleased Rebekah. Jacob was a mama’s boy. He was her favorite. She liked the fact God chose Jacob over Esau. So much so, she decided to help God out. If Rebekah had been patient and trusted God – He would’ve fulfilled His will in a harmonious way. But since Rebekah was not privy to God’s war plans she concocted her own plan and turned her family into a war zone.

Genesis 27 is a fascinating study in the providence of God. Nobody in the story does anything right – and everyone reaps the consequences of their bad choices. Yet in the end God accomplishes His purposes through the mistakes of people.

The chapter begins, “Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.” And he

answered him, "Here I am." Remember, Isaac lived long before the day of eyeglasses and laser surgery. The old guy was nearly blind.

"Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death.

Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

Notice Isaac is afraid he's about to die. Ironically, he ends up living another 43 years. According to 25:17 Ishmael died at the age of 137. Isaac is now about the same age, so he's worried about suffering the same fate as his brother.

Apparently, Isaac liked the taste of venison - and for his last meal on earth he would love a venison steak – so he sends Esau out with his bow and arrow.

Verse 5, "Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son."

She eavesdropped in on the conversation. Rebekah recalled God's promise when the children were born – *the older would serve the younger*. She'd always wondered how God would reverse the birthright. Now she sees her husband fading and thinks God is running out of time, so she devises her own plan.

Guys, God never runs out of time. Remember we don't have His war plan.

"And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard

your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." This is well thought out plan...

While we were in Haiti we were treated to goat meat. I've now had both goat and venison, and trust me they taste nothing alike. Apparently, Rebekah had created a recipe to solve the problem. She could make goat taste like deer.

Guys, I don't care how slick and sophisticated and clever our plans might be – you and I can never accomplish God's will through the works of the flesh. Hebrews 6:12 tells us that it's through faith and patience that we inherit God's promises.

Verse 11, "And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." Notice, Jacob isn't concerned with the morality of the plan. He's not asking is this right? All he cares about it what'll happen if he gets caught.

"But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." Rebekah has thrown caution to the wind. She doesn't care about right or wrong – only getting the best for her baby boy.

“And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved.

Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.” She tried to cover all the bases, and Jacob was just as conniving as his mother. He could’ve stood up to her and refused. Instead he participated.

Verse 18, “So he went to his father and said, "My father.' The Bible doesn’t say, but Jacob probably changed his voice to sound more like his brother. Esau was more masculine than Jacob and his voice might’ve been deeper and raspier.

Verse 23 tells us Jacob’s impersonation didn’t work.

”And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?"

Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought it to me." This is scary. Jacob brings God into his lie. Here’s an example of taking the Lord’s name in vain.

Verse 21, "Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." This is just what Jacob and Rebekah

anticipated. Apparently Isaac smelled a rat. He was a little suspicious.

“So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.” I’m sure Jacob brought Isaac a whole bottle of wine to further cloud his judgment.

Isaac is an interesting study... Apparently there was a check in his spirit. His initial suspicion might’ve been God’s warning to him. But his desire for physical pleasure drowned out any spiritual discernment he might have had.

Isaac listened to his stomach more than he listened to God.

Verse 26, “Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed.” Which doesn’t say much about Esau’s hygiene.

“Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those

who bless you!"

This was the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 12, and was passed down to Isaac (not Ishmael) - and now is being passed on to Jacob (not Esau).

But it didn't have to happen as the result of a ruse. Rebekah didn't know God's plan so she concocted her own, and the consequences were devastating...

You start to see the pain she caused in verse 30... "Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me." And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him - and indeed he shall be blessed."

Notice, Isaac didn't become angry – rather he “trembled exceedingly”. Perhaps it dawned on him that God's will had been done – not because of him, but in spite of him. That he had been spiritually insensitive to what God had wanted all along.

Isaac could've been resistant to what he knew was God's will, and God's desire to break with custom - and it stuns Isaac that God has gone over-his-head. Isaac realizes that God in His sovereignty has accomplished His will without him.

Hey, *God's will always gets done... either with us or without*

US.

Verse 34, "When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me - me also, O my father!" But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" "Jacob" means "supplanter, double-crosser". Esau says, "*My brother has lived up to his name.*" Jacob extorted his brother and deceived his father.

Verse 36, "And (Esau) said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?" And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me - me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept." At first you feel sorrow and pity for Esau.

But Hebrews 12:14-17 puts Esau's plight in context. Hebrews tells us...

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward,

when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.” Esau cried. He showed remorse, but no repentance. Esau regretted the outcome, but was never willing to change and conform to the will of God.

And its interesting Isaac refused to reverse what he’d done. I suppose he could’ve revoked what had happened – but instead he lets it stand. Hebrews 11:20 tells us why... “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau...” Isaac sensed that providence had prevailed, and he accepts the situation as God’s will.

But there is a secondary blessing for Esau. Verse 39, “Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck."

After their exodus from Egypt, the Hebrews will re-enter the land, and Esau’s descendents, the Edomites, will become subservient to the tribe of Judah. Their submission lasts for 600 years until the reign of King Jehoram in 850 BC.

2 Chronicles 21:8 says, “In his days Edom revolted against Judah’s authority, and made a king over themselves.” This was predicted 1000 years beforehand.

Hebrews tells us Esau never found repentance because a root of bitterness blocked his progress. Bitterness is a blocker. It blocks us from God's blessing.

This past week while I was in Haiti my wife had an ordeal of her own. Our toilet overflowed, and soaked the basement with water. A root had grown into our septic line and blocked the flow of sewage. It was a miserable situation to say the least.

But this is what happens in our lives.

God wants cleansing and blessing to flush through us, but bitterness blocks the spiritual flow. Sewage backs up - anger, hatred, pride, jealousy spill over behind the blockage. Our lives become flooded with spiritual sewage. This is why we need to uproot a root of bitterness. Chose to forgive – rather than be bitter.

Esau's bitterness is obvious in verse 41, "So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah." I'm sure it hit her, "*What kind of monster have I created? What have I done to my family?* **Her plan** has put her kids at odds... Her older son now wants to kill her younger son.

"So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.

And stay with him a few days (these "few days" are going to turn into 20 years), until your brother's fury turns away, until

your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. (It'll never happen) "Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

It's sad, but there's a good chance Rebekah never saw Jacob again. Rather than trust God she took matters into her own hands... It not only turned her older son against her - but it cost her the fellowship of the son she had always loved.

Verse 46, "And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?" This is another reason for sending Jacob away, Rebekah doesn't want her son to marry an unbeliever. She sends Jacob northeast to Haran – to her own homeland.

Chapter 28, "Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham." Jacob will later pass on the Abrahamic Covenant to his twelve sons – who become the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Verse 5, “So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.” In 26:34 we’re told that Esau had already taken two Canaanite wives. Here, he doesn’t want Jacob to *one-up* him, so he also tries to marry a member of the extended family.

This is bitterness in action – rather than concern himself with what’s right – all he cares about is keeping up with Jacob. His hatred of his brother rules his life.

Verse 10, “Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.” Jacob was exhausted from his ordeal with Esau, and he needed some sleep. He didn’t even mind using a nearby stone as a pillow.

Verse 12, “Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the

angels of God were ascending and descending on it.” It reminds me of the boy who told his longtime girlfriend, “I had a dream last night that I actually proposed to you. What do you think it means?” The frustrated girl responded, “It means you’re smarter asleep than you are awake.”

And the same can be said of Jacob. Here’s a conniver and schemer, yet in a dream he sees a glorious vision of a ladder connecting heaven with earth.

We have to wait 2000 years to learn the spiritual significance of this ladder. In John 1:51 Jesus speaks to Nathanael, *and says of Himself*, “I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” Jesus is the ladder reaching from heaven to earth!

Jesus is the only way to reach God. Jacob saw a prophecy of Jesus.

Verse 13, “And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: “I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Jacob was wrong in the deceptive way he went about obtaining the blessing from his father - but now God is affirming the outcome as His will. Jacob, and his descendents, the nation of Israel, are God’s heirs to the Abrahamic Covenant.

“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 spoken to you.” Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “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!”

This was the turning point in Jacob’s life. Out from under his mom’s apron he encounters and experiences God for Himself. *Her God* now becomes *his God*.

Verse 18, “Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.”

The name “Luz” means “*separation*”. “Bethel” means “*house of God*”. Jacob is separated from Isaac’s house, but at Bethel he becomes part of God’s household.

“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.”

At this point, Jacob’s faith is weak. It’s conditional. “If God will be with me...” It’s a far cry from the three Hebrews in Babylon who said, “God is able to deliver us from the fiery furnace, but even if He doesn’t we won’t bow to a false god.”

Jacob still has a long way to go. He’s going to have to grow in his faith. Jacob has been blessed, but he’s about to be broken. At least, this is a starting point.

And Jacob prays, “And this stone which I have set as a pillar

shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Notice Jacob's journey of faith begins with a promise to give 10% of his income to God. Hey, tithing is not the end of faith – it's just a first step. You can't really say your journey of faith has begun until you agree to trust God by giving Him a tithe.

In chapter 28 Jacob dreams, but in chapter 29 he meets the girl of his dreams.

"So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth." The stone was heavy. It took a combined effort of shepherds to move. It guarded the well from unauthorized users.

"And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." Did they ever! Laban was a bigger conniver and deceiver than Jacob. Jake is about to meet his match.

In Bethel he saw God's glory. In Haran he experiences man's cruelty.

Verse 6, "So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time

for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother." There's nothing like a macho demonstration of a little muscle to try and impress a girl... but it worked!

Verse 11, "Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept." His tears are tears of joy. He has found the woman of his dreams. It's love at first sight. Jacob kisses Rachel. It's been said, "A boy becomes a man when he decides it's more fun to steal a kiss than second base." Well, Jacob is certainly growing up.

"And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father. Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house."

"So he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month."

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what

should your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance." The phrase, "Leah's eyes were delicate" can either mean she had weak, ugly eyes - or she was so ugly she made your eyes hurt.

Either way Leah was not an attractive young lady.

On the other hand Rachel was a beauty. She was a shepherdess with the looks of a cover girl. You might call her *a fox in sheep's clothing!*

Verse 18, "Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her." I hope you notice, love is always willing to wait. Love never forces the issue. It's willing to bide its time. It doesn't resent or begrudge.

It's been said, "Lust can never wait to get. Love will always wait to give."

Verse 21, "Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast." The wedding feast lasted a week. For seven days Jacob partied hearty, and by the time the wedding night rolled around he was sauced.

"Now it came to pass in the evening, that (Laban) took Leah

his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid.” Now fast-forward about eight hours...

“So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah.” Again, Jacob kisses a girl and cries, but for a different reason. He’s kissed the wrong woman. He went to bed expecting to hug Rachel - instead his arms were around Leah.

Guys, every married person encounters this same experience. At some point after the wedding night we wake up to realize the person we’ve married is not the person we thought they were. Every married person is in a sense married to two people – to Leah and to Rachel. In many ways your spouse is like a beautiful Rachel, but there are other ways that he or she is like an ugly Leah.

Rachel is the part of your spouse you love, you're attracted to, you absolutely adore! You could be forced to wait on this Rachel for seven long years, and your love for her would cause it to seem like but a few days!

But you're also married to a Leah. This is the side of your spouse that was a surprise! When you married you knew you were getting Rachel, but you didn't know about Leah. He's the ornery, ugly, and selfish side of him. She's the side of her that was covered-up, veiled, hidden before the vows were taken.

Hey, I don't care how long you date before you marry - whether its seven months, or seven years, or seventeen years - you'll never learn all there is to know about your

spouse. There are definite surprises after the wedding day.

For the first 24 years of my marriage I thought my wife's favorite restaurant was Red Lobster. Whenever I wanted to take her to a nice place I would suggest Red Lobster, and she would say, "great"! Until the other day and I told her I wanted to take her to her favorite restaurant, Red Lobster. She said, "I don't like Red Lobster." "Well, why do you always want to go there?" "I just go for you."

Everyone of us is married to a Leah. There are aspects of our mate that are ugly, and the blemishes were there from the beginning... but you were drunk on love and didn't see them. Your spouse is not what you thought, and it's a shock!

"And (Jacob) said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn." How those words must've stung... Jacob the deceiver is the one who gets deceived.

As the old saying goes, "what goes around comes around."

Laban continues in verse 27, "Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." Jacob gets Rachel now, but in return he has to serve Laban an additional seven years.

Verse 28, "Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven

years.”

Jacob ends up agreeing to serve for Rachel a total of fourteen years.

This story reminds me of the Italian man who was about to be married when a heavy fog rolled in. He couldn't see what he was doing and married two women. When asked to explain his mistake, he said, “It was a bigga mist.”

Guys, nowhere in Scripture is bigamy advocated by God. The divine blueprint for marriage is for one man and one woman committed to a lifelong relationship.

I believe Jacob should've never married Rachel. He should've left with Leah and learned to be content. But you say, *“Come on Sandy, the girl was ugly as mud, and Jacob didn't even love her. How can you say he should've left with Leah?”*

Hey, I honestly believe, even if Jacob didn't love her - if the two of them had conducted their marriage God's way, Jacob would've eventually loved Leah just as much as he ever loved Rachel. Love grows when marriage is done God's way.

It sounds funny saying it, but *the feeling of “love”* is a far over-rated ingredient when it comes to success in marriage. It's important in courtship, but in marriage its way overblown. I've seen marriages where love was depleted, but the husband and wife decided to stick it out, and do things God's way - and love started to grow again! On the other hand, I've seen marriages abounding in love, but the couple ignored God's guidelines, and love dwindled as the marriage broke apart.

Give me two people who can't stand each other and encourage that couple to interact God's way and love will grow out of nowhere! I've seen it happen! **With the right commitment no problem is unsolvable – without it every problem is a threat.**

As we're told in verse 30, in the beginning, Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, but there's strong evidence that slowly over time Jacob's initial feelings changed...

Verse 31, **"When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."** At first, your heart breaks for Leah – she's always longing for her husband's love, but notice what happens next...

Verse 33, **"Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon."** **"Reuben"** means **"see"** – **"Simeon"** means **"heard"**. The Lord saw her barrenness, heard she was unloved, and made her fruitful.

"She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi." **"Levi"** means **"attached"**. Obviously, Leah kept working at her marriage. All that's mentioned of her efforts are her three labors, but I'm sure she labored in other ways to improve her situation and benefit her marriage.

Finally verse 35 tells us, “And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.” “Judah” means “praise”. And the implication is the hard work paid off. With the birth of Judah she praises God. At last she experiences the enjoyment of marital love, and no longer has a need to bear another child.

When you jump ahead to the end of Jacob's life you find him making an interesting choice. In Genesis 49 he's on his death bed – and with his last breath he makes a final request. He says, “bury me in the cave (where they) buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and (where) I buried Leah.”

You'd think Jacob would want his final resting place to be next to Rachel in Bethlehem. But, no, he asks to be buried in Mamre - alongside Leah.

On the first night of their marriage he resented lying next to Leah - but at the end of their road together it was his utmost desire. Jacob wanted to make sure until the resurrection his bones would lay next to Leah's. *His heart had turned!*

It's ironic, but Rachel died prior to Leah, thus Leah was the wife who ended up with Jacob all to herself. It was Jacob and Leah who enjoyed growing old together.

It's also interesting, that it was through Leah, not Rachel, that *Judah* was born. The Messiah came through the tribe of Judah, and thus, Jesus was of the lineage of Leah, not Rachel. Perhaps this was God's way of putting his stamp of approval on the union between Jacob and Leah. The royal line came through their union.

In the beginning we're told, "(Jacob) loved Rachel more than Leah" - but in the end the roles reversed. That's why I say Jacob should've made a life with Leah. Instead he lived *in a bigga mist*, and tried to exist between two warring women.

We'll discover next week that Jacob's house was not a happy home.