

Loveless Leah and Childless Rachel

Introduction: this section, which counts the births of Jacob's 12 children, falls within the section of Jacob's sojourning in the land of Laban. This large family is given to Jacob by God, and so it is part of the fulfillment of God's promise to Jacob at Bethel. These 11 boys will grow up to be the heads of the nation of Israel. Also, as many of the stories of Genesis do, these births foreshadow the coming victory of Joseph in redeeming his brothers, and they point further out to a son - Jesus - who would be supernaturally born to redeem all the family of God.

Outline: 3 Sets of 4 children

I. The children of the FIRSTBORN . (29:31-35)

- A. REUBEN = "Look, a son!"
- B. SIMEON = "The Lord has heard"
- C. LEVI = "Attached"
- D. JUDAH = "Praise"

Key phrase: "Because the LORD..."

II. The children of the SLAVE women. (30:1-13)

- A. For Bilhah:
 - 1. Dan = "Judged"
 - 2. NAPHTALI = "Wrestlings"
- B. For Zilpah
 - 1. GAD = "Good fortune"
 - 2. ASHER = "Happy"

Key phrase: "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

III. The children of RACHEL. (30:14-24)

- A. What's with the MANDRAKES? (Song of Songs 7:13)
 - 1. Viewed as FERTILITY medicine.
 - 2. Proven to be INEFFECTIVE.
- B. For Leah
 - 1. ISSACHAR = "Wages"
 - 2. ZEBULUN = "Honor"

3. DINAH = "Judgment"

C. For Rachel

1. JOSEPH = "Increase"