Genesis

**Sibling Rivalry Never Gets Old (29:31-30:24)**

*From a study of Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis, Paul Kretzmann’s Popular Commentary of the Bible, and the Lutheran Study Bible*

## **“If…Then He Will Love Me” (29:31-30:24)**

* It goes beyond preference
  + Jacob HATED Leah
    - Who is the hatred truly towards?
      * Yet Jacob still takes care of Leah
      * Not a “lust” thing.
    - Deuteronomy 21:15-17
    - Matthew 6:24
  + What has Leah done to deserve this?
    - History repeats itself
    - It hurts her
      * The silent cry
    - Poor Leah was harassed by these sorrows and this grief; she was sad and pained that she was despised by her lord. But listen to Moses, who says: “THE LORD SAW, etc.” No one else sees it. God has regard for and blesses the downcast, weeping, odious, and saddened woman; but He humbles the one who is proud.[[1]](#footnote-1)
    - שְׂנוּאָה points out the contempt suffered by those who are despised and cast off, and observe carefully that God is called One who has regard for the שְׂנוּאִים, that is, for those who are scorned and cast off. Only let them not despair. The Holy Spirit writes this for the consolation of the afflicted, namely, that God blesses and exalts Leah, so that she conceives and gives birth.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* A time for children.
  + Reuben (Leah)
    - Deuteronomy 26::7
    - Luke 1:48
    - Reuben means “See, a son”
    - For this reason Leah adorns her son with this name Reuben as a public testimony against those who despised and hated her. It is as though she were saying: “Now you see that I have not been cast off by God. God has not despised me as you have despised me. רְאוּ, see; רָאוּ, they have seen the son. Behold, you have the son; observe him. For God has had regard for me. To you I was שְׂנוּאָה. I am naming him Reuben in order that you may cease from hatred and contempt.[[3]](#footnote-3)
  + Simeon (Leah)
    - If the first child does not bring the desired attention…
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for heard.
    - The Lord not only sees, but hears the cry of His children.
  + Levi (Leah)
    - If the first two do not bring the desired attention…
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for attached.
      * How’s this for a child’s reminder of what his name means.
      * Where is Leah’s hope?
        + “Who does the Lord want you to love, Jacob?”
  + Judah (Leah)
    - “Okay… the first three didn’t work as I had hoped.”
      * “This time I will praise the LORD!”
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for praise.
* Two ways of looking at Leah’s plight.
  + The Trials of Leah (Lyra’s commentary)
    - She was despised by Rachel
    - Neglected by her husband
    - Regarded as a foreigner and outsider
    - Cast off by God
      * She was a pawn in all of this!
  + YET, we have evidence of God’s consolation (Luther’s addition)
    - Against Rachell’s contempt, the Lord has regard for her humility.
    - Because she was being neglected by her husband, the Lord hears her prayer.
    - The Lord grants that her husband is still joined to her.
    - Because of the four sons, she is no longer looked down upon or despised, but praises God and gives thanks!
      * We, too, should follow this example and learn that after a trial God is wont to grant liberation and consolation in rich abundance.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Rachel feels slighted.
  + Instead of being thrilled for the household…
  + Proverbs 14:30
  + “Give me children, or I shall die!”
    - A bit on the dramatic side?
    - 1 Kings 19:4
    - Job 3:1-3
    - 2 Corinthians 7:10
  + What can Jacob do about it?!?
    - Genesis 31:36
    - In this manner we see that in these sordid matters the greatest virtues shine forth, namely, outstanding faith, completely certain hope, and unconquerable patience toward God and toward men.[[5]](#footnote-5)
  + The life of a servant
    - Just as Leah was a pawn in their father’s game…
      * And just as we had seen before (Genesis 16:4)
    - Take Bilhah
      * Not a lust thing
      * No woman will do even this, for she will rather do without offspring than concede the glory of motherhood and the bed to a maidservant. This is a wonderful state of mind. A similar example has been described above (Gen. 16:2) in the case of Sarah, namely, that they yielded their conjugal honor to maidservants. No woman will do this according to the flesh; it is a work of the spirit by which she was aroused. She thought: “I, too, want to be a mother, even though I must give up all the glory of the couch and of motherhood for a time.”[[6]](#footnote-6)
* Another round of kids
  + Dan (Rachel/Bilhah)
    - Dan means judged
      * Lamentation 3:59
  + Naphtali (Rachel/Bilhah)
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for wrestling
    - Luther contends that Naphtali means “One who has been changed.”
      * Rachel is now catching up with her sister
* A logistic issue arises from the text
  + How could Jacob beget 12 children in seven years?
    - Years 1-4, Leah bears four
    - Could the remaining eight be born in three years?
      * Luther doubts
        + Attributes this to a literary style that employs anticipation

Hysteron proteron

Table

Description automatically generated

* + Joseph would come next in line, but first in Jacob’s heart
    - For Rachel is puffed up more by the birth of Joseph alone than Leah is by the birth of four sons[[7]](#footnote-7)
    - Therefore Leah is troubled. She thinks: “Wretched woman that I am! Now I have been humiliated a second time. My offspring is neglected. Besides, my husband has become estranged from me.”[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Back to Leah
  + Gad (Leah/Zilpah)
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for good fortune
    - The root word is also attributed to girding for war/battle
    - But it is pointed out clearly how they despised the pleasure of intercourse and were aflame with the desire to become mothers of the Promised Seed. About this they contended with each other to the point of envy.[[9]](#footnote-9)
  + Asher (Leah/Zilpah)
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for happy
    - Luke 1:48
* Treated like a piece of meat
  + Reuben (8/9 years old) finds mandrakes
    - The Vulgate and other interpreters have translated it with “mandrake,” which, as is commonly supposed, is produced from the urine of hanged thieves. Thus authors tell many other foolish stories in their descriptions of these mandrakes, but these stories are nonsense pure and simple which may have originated among the Jews.[[10]](#footnote-10)
    - Of what consequence is it to relate how a lad brings mandrakes and two sisters quarrel about their husband and exchanging the bed?[[11]](#footnote-11)
      * Therefore one can see in these women how they fight, not out of lust but out of love and desire for offspring, to which end they know they have been created. Therefore they want their womb, breasts, hands, and all their members to serve God. Although they already had children before, yet they bore in mind that children are mortal and that it could happen that they would be deprived of them. Therefore if one woman had had even a hundred children, still she would always have desired more, for they had in view the promised descendants to whom the preaching they had heard from their husband pertained.[[12]](#footnote-12)
  + Issachar (Leah)
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for wages/hire
    - Leah’s womb is open again
    - Born in the 10th year of their marriage
  + Zebulun (Leah)
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for honor
    - Still a desire to be recognized by Jacob
  + Dinah (Leah)
    - Name relates to judgment
* God remembers Rachel
  + Genesis 8:1
    - Not an aspect of the Lord forgetting people/promises
    - We forget and wonder if God forgets about us when things go bad.
    - All about God’s timing.
    - the fact that God does not immediately give what we pray for—this happens because He wants to be sought and to be taken by storm by insisting beyond measure, as the parable of the unrighteous judge teaches in Luke 18:2 ff.[[13]](#footnote-13)
  + Joseph is born
    - Sounds like the Hebrew word for taken away
      * The Lord has taken away her shame
      * The boy himself will be taken away in the future.
* The blessing of children
  + But the purpose of marriage is not to have pleasure and to be idle but to procreate and bring up children, to support a household. This, of course, is a huge burden full of great cares and toils. But you have been created by God to be a husband or a wife and that you may learn to bear these troubles. Those who have no love for children are swine, stocks, and logs unworthy of being called men or women; for they despise the blessing of God, the Creator and Author of marriage.[[14]](#footnote-14)

1. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge29.31&off=3009), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 315–316. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge29.31&off=6161&ctx=n+it+sprouts+forth.%0a~%D7%A9%D7%82%D6%B0%D7%A0%D7%95%D6%BC%D7%90%D6%B8%D7%94+points+out), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 316. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge29.32&off=3229&ctx=ltogether+pleasing.+~For+this+reason+Leah), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 317–318. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge29.35&off=4791&ctx=d+and+gives+thanks.+~We%2c+too%2c+should+foll), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 321. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.2&off=8141), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.4&off=72&ctx=cob+went+in+to+her.%0a~No+woman+will+do+eve), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.9-11&off=1612&ctx=maidservant+to+him.+~For+Rachel+is+puffed), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 343. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.9-11&off=1969&ctx=thood+was+expected.+~Therefore+Leah+is+tr), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 344. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.9-11&off=17186&ctx=+is+enough+for+me.%E2%80%9D+~But+it+is+pointed+ou), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.14-16&off=1330&ctx=+of+hanged+thieves.+~Thus+authors+tell+ma), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.14-16&off=3051&ctx=more+worth+reading%3f+~Of+what+consequence+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.14-16&off=9982&ctx=ted+to+be+fruitful.+~Therefore+one+can+se), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 355–356. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.22-24&off=8464&ctx=to+you%E2%80%9D+(9%3a23).+But+~the+fact+that+God+do), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 5: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 26-30*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw05?ref=Bible.Ge30.22-24&off=13964&ctx=e+toil+of+marriage.+~But+the+purpose+of+m), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 5 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 363. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)