**THE GOD OF PADDAN ARAM (Jacob Builds His Family)**

**Genesis 29:1-30:43                                                                      Lesson 20**

Key Verse 29:35a **35**She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” So she named him Judah.[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29-30&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-831e" \o "See footnote e)

1. **Read 29:1-30. How did Jacob meet and marry Rachel? How does this reveal his human faithfulness and character? (29:20,30) Read 29:31-30:24. Describe the struggle between Leah and Rachel. What was the results of this struggle?**
2. God led Jacob to Laban’s house (his uncle) in Paddan Aram. Paddan Aram is now East Turkey and Northwest of Iraq. It takes 500 miles from Beersheba to Paddam Aram.
3. Jacob met Rachael, a shepherdess, while he was talking with shepherds who came to water their flock. When Jacob realized that God had led him to Paddam Aram and met Rachel, he must have been very emotional. He wept loudly…the expression of his affection.

Jacob loved Rachael. So, he worked 14 years to marry Rachael. Seven years seemed to be a few days for him.

Laban deceived Jacob. He gave Leah to Jacob instead of Rachael the first night. Jacob didn’t realize until the next morning because the room must be dark or veiled for the bride. Leah means ‘cow’ and Rachael means ‘ewe’. They were all shepherd family.

Jacob was a man of determination and resolution. Once he determines, he accomplishes no matter how cost or risk he may take. Jacob worked for 7 years more for Rachael.

1. Leah and Rachael struggled to receive Jacob’s love. So they competed through children’ bearing.
2. As a result of their struggling, Jacob got 11 sons and 1 daughter.
3. **Name all the eleven sons of Jacob with their mother. What does each name reveal about Leah and Rachel’s desire and struggle? Describe the atmosphere in Jacob's home.**
4. 1. **Reuben**: the Lord has seen my misery From Leah

2. **Simeon**: the Lord heard that I am not loved Leah

3. **Levi:** my husband becomes attached to me: Leah

4**. Judah**: This time I will praise the Lord Leah

5. **Dan**: God has vindicated me Bilhah: Rachael’s servant

6. **Naphtali**: I struggled with my sister and I won Bilhah

7. **Gad:** What good fortune! Zilpah: Leah’s servant

8. **Asher**: How happy I am! Zilpah

The episode of mandrake: The root of plant which look like man’s personal part. Women believed that they would become pregnant when they eat mandrake. ---superstitious.

9. **Issachar**: God rewarded Leah

10.**Zebulun**: God honored me Leah

\* Dinah: A daughter was born Ge 30:21 Leah

11. **Joseph**: God takes away my disgrace Rachael

12**. Benjamin**: Ge 35:15-17 Son of South Rachael died in her childbirth

Jacob’s home was full of spirit of competition: jealousy and sadness. Tension between two sisters. There had no peace in Jacob’s family.

1. **What can you learn from the human and spiritual struggles of Leah and Rachel? How did God use these struggles to accomplish his own purpose? (28:14, Ro 8:28)**

Leah and Rachael competed and struggled each other to gain Jacob’s love and affection. So they gave birth 12 children**. God used their selfish desire to lay the foundation of 12 tribes of Israel. In other words, God used their struggle and selfishness to accomplish his purpose.---to make Jacob a father of many nation.**

**28**And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A28&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28145a)] have been called according to his purpose.

In In **Matthew 2**: Cesar Augustine issued a decree that all Jews must go to their own town to make a census. So Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to register. But God used Cesar’s selfish desire to accomplish God’s purpose: to let Jesus, the Messiah, be born in the town of David, Bethlehem. Joseph was the descendant of King David. Pro 16:9 says that man plans his course, but God is the one who determines each step.

We learn **God’s divine sovereignty over human history.**

1. **Read 30:25-43. After 14 years, what new contract did Laban make with Jacob? How did Jacob become wealthy? What can you learn about the God of Jacob in Paddan Aram**?
2. Jacob realized that Laban cheated him and changed wages ten times. (31:7) Jacob wanted to go back home with his family.
3. Laban knew that God blessed him through Jacob and Jacob was a hardworking man. Laban wanted to make new contract with Jacob. Jacob’s suggestion was his wages might be the inferior spotted and speckled animals.

Jacob worked hard to make his own wealth. He used all wits and skills to increase his flock and herds. His way is a superstitious way, but it worked because God was with him. Jacob became very wealthy.

When Jacob left his house, he was empty-handed. But now he had 4 wives, 12 children, and lots of herds and flock. God answered Jacob’s plea and fulfilled his promise with Jacob.