

## **Lesson 8**

### **The Girl No One Wanted**

#### **The story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, from Genesis 29 - 30**

*The Jesus Storybook Bible - pgs.70-75*

Genesis 29:17 tells us, “Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful.” The point is clear. Leah was physically unattractive and undesirable and, as a result, it was very unlikely that she would ever be married. Rachel, on the other hand, was beautiful. Jacob has clearly set his heart on Rachel in an inordinate way. He is willing to do virtually anything to get her. This makes Jacob a complete pawn in Laban’s hands.

Later it leads to a favoritism of Rachel over Leah that created enormous pain in the family for years to come. Not only does Leah feel rejected, but Jacob comes to love Rachel’s children far more than Leah’s, which sows poison in the individuals’ hearts and in the corporate life of the family for generations.

In Genesis 29:31 – 35 we see the most pathetic description of a woman yearning for the love of her husband. Leah was used to being ignored as the unattractive and ungainly older daughter. But being married to a man who did not love her made the rejection far more poignant and traumatic. So she kept having children, saying, “Now, maybe my husband will finally love me!” But she is continually disappointed.

But look at the comfort of Genesis 29:31: “When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive.” This is more than simply an evidence of God’s merciful compassion. It is that — but much more. First, it reinforces the biblical theme that God particularly loves the outcast, the rejected, the outsider. God chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, the weak things to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:20 and following).

God’s own Son came as a poor man, a man who was rejected and killed. He brought salvation in the way of suffering and death, not achievement and power. But secondly, God gives Leah the most astonishing gift of all. The final child to be born in this passage is her fourth son — Judah.

All commentators notice something strange about Leah’s statement when he is born. She stops singing songs of lament and gives an undiluted note of praise, almost defiantly so: “This time I will praise the Lord” (29:35). The writer of Genesis knows that Judah is the one through whom the King will come. Not beautiful, loved Rachel, but unattractive rejected Leah becomes the “mother” of our Lord.

Why? Because even at this early stage, God is foreshadowing the true nature of his salvation. It is the way of the cross, of repentance, humility, unselfishness, sacrifice. So here we have the birth of the royal line through the rejected wife. In this way Genesis continues the pattern of inversion. In this generation, it is the son not loved (Jacob) and the wife not loved (Leah) who bear the messianic seed into the world.

The gospel turns things upside down. The weak are really the strong. The repentant are the righteous. The people who think they are righteous are rejected. The cross is a victory.

**Memory Verse**

Genesis 50:20

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good."

\*\*\*Lesson taken from *The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*, written by Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas.

If you do not have a copy of The Jesus Storybook Bible, we will have them for purchase in Cranmer Hall for \$10.