



Trusting God in the Disappointments

(Genesis 29:31-30:43)

The New Testament uses this phrase in [Galatians 6:7](#), "A man reaps what he sows." The Old Testament uses this phrase in [Numbers 32:23](#), "Be sure your sin will find you out." Jacob is still reaping the consequences of his trickery in this chapter. Yet, God is faithful to him and his family.

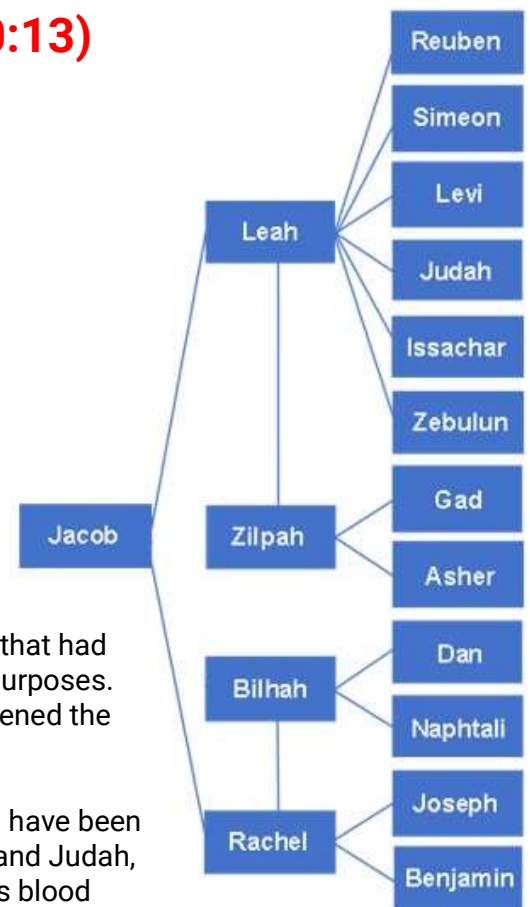
1. The Sons in the Family (Genesis 29:31-30:13)

Reuben (29:32) – See, a Son
 Simeon (29:33) – Heard
 Levi (29:34) – Attached
 Judah (29:35) – Praise
 Dan (30:6) – Judge
 Naphtali (30:8) – My wrestling
 Gad (30:11) – Troop or Fortune
 Asher (30:13) – Happy
 Issachar (30:18) – Wages
 Zebulun (30:20) – Dwelling
 Joseph (30:24) – may He add – "Lord, give me another one."
 Benjamin (35:18) – Son of the right hand

Dinah (30:21) - judgment, vindication (Leah seems triumphant)

v.31 – "Of first importance we see that despite the sin and polygamy that had engulfed Jacob's marriage, the Lord had begun to work out his own purposes. God himself had closed beautiful, much-loved Rachel's womb and opened the womb of her lowly, unloved sister."¹

v.34-35 – "[I]f Leah could have seen down the generations, she would have been astonished at how blessed she was, because her last two sons, Levi and Judah, would respectively father the *priestly* and *kingly* tribes of Israel. Leah's blood would flow in the veins of **Moses and Aaron and David and Christ the Messiah!**"²



¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 374–375.

² *Ibid.*, 375–376.

2. The Superstition in the Family (Genesis 30:14-24)

(30:14) - What boy number one found was an aphrodisiac-cum-fertility drug—a love potion. According to Genesis scholar Gordon Wenham, “The mandrake (*Mandragora autumnalis*) is a perennial Mediterranean plant that bears bluish flowers in winter and yellowish plum-sized fruit in summer. In ancient times, mandrakes were famed for arousing sexual desire (**Song of Solomon 7:13**) and for helping barren women to conceive.”

Significantly, the Hebrew word translated “mandrakes” is almost the same as the Hebrew word for “love” (**Proverbs 7:18; Song 1:2; 4:10; 5:1**). Many ancients called mandrakes “love apples” or “May apples.”

The power of mandrakes was and is superstitious and not scientific. But what is clear here is that Rachel and Leah believed the mandrake myth and thus the mandrakes became coins for a desperate bargain.³

“It is impossible also to avoid noticing what seems to be a declension in Leah’s spiritual life from the time of the birth of her fifth son (**30:17-21**). In connection with the first four the Lord’s hand was very definitely perceived, but now there is no longer any reference to the Covenant Name Jehovah, and the expressions indicate what is almost only purely personal and even selfish as two sons and a daughter are born to her.”⁴

3. The Strategy of the Father (Genesis 30:25-43)

V. 34-35: Laban removes the very animals that would likely fall to Jacob and puts a 3-day’s journey between Jacob and his sons.

Yes, Jacob becomes successful, but the method is still deception and sad to read. Jacob has been mistreated by Laban for 20 years, but he should trust God to make things right. He is trying to outwit Laban with his own tricks.

*He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end. (Job 5:13)
The wicked man ... makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made. (Psalm 7:14, 15)*

Applications:

1. Even in the turbulence of this blended family, you can see God still working. God sees how preferential Jacob is to Rebekah and how scorned Leah is, therefore He shows His blessing to Leah. Leah acknowledges God’s working through the names given to each of the sons. God can still work through difficult family dynamics.

2. God’s discipline may be sent to prune us. **John 15:1-7** tells us the Jesus wants His disciples to be fruitful. Pruning helps us to grow, if we will let it. In the moment, we may want something good, but God has something better in store. He may be preparing us for what He has prepared for us.

3. Our disappointments may become God’s appointments. One fascinating detail about this chapter is though Jacob loved Rachel intensely, the Messiah would come through Leah. The Levites would come through Leah. Leah came into Jacob’s life through Laban’s deception, but God turned that disappointment into His appointment. Trust God in the disappointments.

³ Ibid., 377.

⁴ W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1953), 277.