

Old Testament Men and Women of Faith *“Jacob and Laban’s Two Daughters”*

1. Genesis 29: A dysfunctional family...
 - Jacob encounters Rachel at the well. Love at first sight.
 - Working for Uncle Laban - Verses 16-18
 - A deceiver gets deceived. A honeymoon surprise - Laban did to Jacob what Jacob did to Isaac.
 - Four women: Rachel, Leah, Zilpah, Bilhah – from these four women would come the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - Leah gives birth to Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Though Jacob had chosen Rachel, God had chosen Leah. One of Leah's sons was Judah (v. 35), while Rachel was the mother of Joseph (30:24).

2. Genesis 30: Who can have the most children?
 - Family conflict – who is the favored wife? Verses 1-2: “When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, ‘Give me children, or I'll die!’ Jacob became angry with her and said, ‘Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?’” God “opening and closing the womb.”
 - Children from Bilhah: Dan, Naphtali
 - Children from Zilpah: Gad, Asher
 - The mandrake trade: Verses 14-21 - Leah gives birth to Issachar and Zebulon and the only daughter: Dinah. The mandrake is a root, called “love-apples” in Hebrew. They were thought (and still are among some peoples) to increase fertility in women. Because Leah had the mandrakes, she knew Jacob would have relations with her, believing there was a greater likelihood she would become pregnant.
 - Rachel finally gives birth to Joseph who will become a central figure yet not in the Messianic line.
 - Jacob and Laban’s sheep: verses 25-43 – selective breeding - Jacob’s wealth increased.

3. Genesis 31: Jacob and his “crew” leave Laban
 - Rachel steals the household idols. Verse 19: “When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods.”
 - Laban encounters Jacob and his family: Verses 22-55
 - Why did Rachel steal the household idols? Rachel’s deception: “Like father like daughter...”
 - The “Mizpah” covenant – not a nice thing!



Next time: Jacob Reunites with Esau and Retribution for Dina