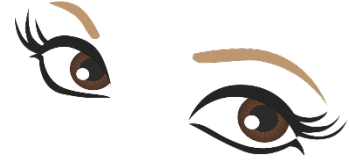


Leah – Seeing the Whole Picture

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Pondering Question: What do you remember about Leah's story?

I. Introduction

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a -⁴ Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away.

- ❖ A picture of perseverance in the midst of deception
Often seen as a love story where love doesn't quit
- ❖ God's faithfulness to Jacob in spite of a deceitful world.
- ❖ I felt that it was unfair to Leah – She was cheated and given a second best by God, being unloved and unwanted.

II. Journey to See

- ❖ Genesis 29:30-31
³⁰ Jacob then consummated his marriage with Rachel also, and he loved her more than Leah. Thus, he served Laban another seven years. ³¹ When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he made her fruitful, while Rachel was barren.
- ❖ Customs of Birth Order – Both Jacob and Rachel were second born.
- ❖ 1st born legally received family leadership, inheritance and blessing.
- ❖ Leah and Esau were the 1st born and would possibly have been married under normal circumstances.

- ❖ Jacob had taken Esau's position as 1st born legally, when he bought the birthright for the bowl of food.
- ❖ When Jacob took the 1st born position he then needed to marry Leah who was a 1st born.
- ❖ God's choice was to carry forward the Abrahamic blessing through Leah.

III. The Switch

- ❖ Jacob fell in love with Rachel and agreed to work for Laban for 7 years to have her.
- ❖ Laban disguised Leah as Rachel just as Jacob disguised himself as Esau to trick Isaac into blessing him.
- ❖ Did they both agree to this? Did Rachel help in the deception?
- ❖ It was custom that the bride be completely veiled in extravagant dress, unrecognizable, unveiling only in the bridal chamber in the dark.
- ❖ Willing or not it happened that in the morning Jacob was married to Leah and not Rachel and agreed to work another 7 years to marry Rachel.
- ❖ Genesis 29: 25-28
 - ²⁵ When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"
 - ²⁶ Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. ²⁷ Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."
 - ²⁸ And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

IV. The Fruit of the Women

- ❖ Children – Leah had the most.
- ❖ Rachel
 - Joseph – God's choice to save Israel in a time of drought.

- 2 judges from Manasseh; Gideon (Judges 6:11-88:35) and Jephthath (Judges 11:1-12:7)
- Ephraim's line has Joshua who led the people into the promised land

Pondering Question: What is the fruit of Leah's life?

V. Part 2 – The Fruit of the Women

- ❖ Where did David come from? Judah - Where did Jesus (Yeshua) come from? David
- ❖ Matthew and Luke trace him through Judah and therefore Leah
- ❖ The house of David was really through Joseph, who was not Yeshua's real father. Some use the Luke explanation of the line as being Mary's which would put both Joseph and Mary in the line of David.
- ❖ We are told that Elizabeth was a relative.
- ❖ Both Zacharias and Elizabeth were from Aaron's line.
Luke 1:5 “⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.”
- ❖ Aaron was a Levite also coming from Leah. And if Mary was a relative it is possible that she also came from that line.
- ❖ It is shown that on both sides of the family Jesus is a descendant from Leah's offspring.

VI. Leah

- ❖ Genesis 29:16-17 ¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷ And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face.
- ❖ The Hebrew word rakkot meaning soft, delicate or tender.
 - Some translators understand it in the sense of Beautiful eyes. Leah had beautiful eyes or tender eyes while Rachel was beautiful in figure and face.

- Often translated as weak eyes.

Pondering Question: So why is it important for us to be told that she had eyes that were rakkot?

- ❖ Genesis 29:31 (NASB) ³¹ Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.
(KJV) ³¹ And when the LORD saw that Leah was **hated**, He opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.
 - This sometimes indicates an order of preference and not an absolute
- ❖ God noticed that Leah was unloved or not loved as much so He gave her children and left Rachel barren. Leah had God's favor and He multiplied her fruit.

Pondering Question: Where have you felt less than? Ignored or overlooked? What did you do about it? Where was your focus?

VII. A competition between the two sisters developed

<u>Leah's Children</u>	<u>Rachel's through Bilhah</u>
Re'uven (Reuben) meaning See a Son (She believed the Lord saw and had mercy)	Dan meaning God has vindicated me
Shim'on (Simeon) meaning to hear or be heard - Because the Lord has heard	Naphtali meaning struggles - Wrestling with her sister
Levi meaning Joined or attached	<u>Rachel's own</u>
Yehudah (Judah) meaning this time I will praise the Lord	Yosef (Joseph) meaning increase - Praying that the Lord will add another son to her
	Ben-oni meaning son of my sorrow.
	Benjamin meaning son of the right hand

<p>Yissakhar (Issachar) meaning reward for God has given me wages</p> <p>Zevulun (Zebulun) meaning dwelling – God’s gift - with my husband</p> <p><u>Leah’s Through Zilpah</u></p> <p>Gad meaning to go about - How fortunate</p> <p>Asher meaning Happy am I</p>	
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Pondering Question: Do you notice anything interesting between the two sets of names that may reflect the attitude of the two women?

- VIII. Why would God use a weak eyed or tender eyed woman over beautiful Rachel?**
- ❖ God often delights to take the least likely and shine through them.
 - ❖ A matter of character?

God’s choice was to carry forward the Abrahamic blessing through Leah.

IX. The progression of Leah’s vision

Unwanted by the man she was married to Leah naturally focused on the needs and desires she was experiencing. But that changed over time.

- ❖ Reuben –(See a Son) Leah is aware that the Lord has seen her troubles. The focus is on the trouble she is experiencing. Because of God’s blessing she had an expectation that her husband would look at and to her.
- ❖ Simeon – (Because the Lord heard) She believes that the Lord has heard she was unloved and responded. She senses His favor. In the midst of her rejection, she is aware of God.

- ❖ Levi – (Joined or attached) Her desire is still to get the love of her husband. Her focus is still on her own needs. Levi is the father of the priestly line. The Levitical tribe chosen to draw close to God and represent Him to the rest of Israel. It was too far into the future for her to know. But her focus is beginning to shift.
- ❖ Judah – (Praise) “This time I will praise the Lord” She was growing in character and understanding. Now she began to find pleasure and fulfillment in God’s love for her. This is the child who would directly lead to God’s son. This child of praise was what God was after and why she was the intended wife of Jacob.
- ❖ Galatians 5:5-6 - ⁵ For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love

X. Rachel’s Progression

- ❖ She was a lot like Jacob, a schemer and manipulator.
- ❖ She is the first to give her servant to Jacob in order to be “vindicated”
- ❖ God didn’t work that way with Sarah and Abraham’s life would He do so now?
- ❖ She demands and bargains to get what she wants.
- ❖ Genesis 30: 1-2
Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die.” ² Then Jacob’s anger burned against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”
- ❖ Genesis 30:14-15
¹⁴ Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.” ¹⁵ But she said to her, “Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son’s mandrakes also?” So Rachel said, “Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.”

- ❖ In Chapter 31:30-35 we see more of Rachel's character. She steals her father's idols. 30 Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?" 31 Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. 32 The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. 33 So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and she sat on them. And Laban felt through all the tent but did not find them. 35 She said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household idols.
- ❖ She steals, lies to both Jacob and her father and nearly dishonored her husband except for the help of deception to hide it.
- ❖ This is a foreshadowing of Israel's straying from God.
- ❖ Jacob's vow called for death to the one who might have stolen the idol and Rachel soon dies in childbirth.

XI. Conclusions

- ❖ Leah is the one Jacob requested to be buried with (Genesis 49:29-31).
- ❖ In the end Leah's desire was fulfilled. God's vision for her was more far reaching than her own.
- ❖ Leah needed to see things from God's point of view.
- ❖ Hebrews 12:1-2 - Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus,

the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Discussion and Pondering for application:

- 1. Are we also short sighted, weak in our understanding?**
- 2. Do we focus on the immediate needs or desires or do we look for and focus on what God wants to accomplish?**
- 3. Is our character as the Bride of Christ (Yeshua) developed into loyalty, love and faithfulness?**
- 4. How often do we try to manipulate God, or our husband, to get what we want, when we want it?**