**Family Matters: Blended and Blessed Genesis 29: 30-35** FBC Canton Sunday am November 1, 2026

**Introduction: Sin is the problem in marriage, not patriarchy. Genesis 3**




**I. The Damage of the Unsanctified. V. 30-35**

**a. Polygamy not the original design. Polyandry is unheard of in the bible.**

i. There are many people in this family that need the Lord and because they do not turn to him, as always it produces massive hurt. All of which can be redeemed.

**b. Jacob the heel-catcher.**

i. Swindler from birth…birthright stolen, blessing stolen, mommas' boy, death threats from daddy's favorite.

ii. Runs away from problems. Led by his mother instead of holy spirit.

iii. Bum rushes on Rachel

**c. Laban the deceiver.**

i. Meets the ultimate swindler in Laban, his uncle…step.

ii. Gets baited and switched in possible drunken stupor into marrying Leah, instead of Rachel. Works 14 years total, acquires 2 more women as wives…Zilpah and Bilhah.

iii. He created jealousy, and rivalry between the sisters and the handmaids.

**d. Leah the codependent.**

i. What we don't know:

1. We don't know if she knowingly went along with her dad or that she was hoodwinked, or forced into this marriage.
2. We don't know if was ever loved by Jacob.

3. We know nothing except she was the older sister, and apparently not quite as pretty as Rachel.

ii. What we do know:

1. We do know she was seen and heard by the Lord.
2. We do know God opened her womb=fertility is something she didn't struggle with, but Rachel did.

**e. You cannot make your family the source of your identity and security. Ephesians 1**

**a. Reuben: Only God can fulfill your need for love.**

i. not your spouse, nor your kids.

**b. Simeon: Only God can fulfill your need for security.**

i. not leverage over your spouse.

**c. Levi: No number of kids can make someone love you.**

**d. Judah: Only in sanctification can you find satisfaction.**

## II. Blended and Blessed!

**a. Sanctification, cooperate with the Spirit's work=Unity. Romans 8**

**b. Blended complicates, but grace overcomes. James 4:6**

1. In God's word.
2. In God's church.
3. In small group bible study.
4. In accountability.

**c. Generational favoritism devalues worth. Genesis 1: 27-31**

Abraham's lies, his weakness to go along with his wife's sin of impatience for a child led to favoritism

Isaac lied and had a favorite son, Rebekah did too.

Jacob had a favorite wife and a favorite son.

**d. Circumstances of birth do not limit future.**

**i. Reuben=Adina. I Chronicles 11:42**

1. Adina is listed among the valiant warriors who supported David: "Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him."

**ii. Simeon=Warrior spirit. Numbers 1:22-23**

1. "From the sons of Simeon: their genealogies according to their clans and families, every male twenty years of age and older, everyone who could serve in the army, those registered to the tribe of Simeon numbered 59,300."

**iii. Levi=Moses**

**iv. Judah=David.**

**Conclusion: You don't need a new family, you need a new you in your family.**

Topical Encyclopedia

The Tribe of Reuben, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, is named after Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob and Leah. As the firstborn, Reuben held a position of prominence among his brothers, but his actions led to a loss of his birthright. Despite this, the tribe played a significant role in the history of Israel, particularly during the wilderness wanderings and the settlement in the Promised Land.

2. Adina: A Notable Warrior

Among the notable figures from the Tribe of Reuben is Adina, a warrior mentioned in the context of King David's mighty men. Adina is recognized for his valor and leadership, serving as a captain among the Reubenites. His mention in the Scriptures highlights the martial prowess and the contributions of the Reubenites to the military efforts of Israel.

3. In 1 Chronicles 11:42 , Adina is listed among the valiant warriors who supported David: "Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, chief of the Reubenites, and thirty with him." This passage underscores Adina's status as a leader and his role in commanding a group of thirty warriors. His inclusion in this list of mighty men signifies his importance and the respect he garnered among his peers.

Historical Context and Significance

The Tribe of Reuben settled on the eastern side of the Jordan River, in the region of Gilead. This location placed them in a strategic position, often serving as a buffer against eastern

invaders. The Reubenites, along with the tribes of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were known for their pastoral lifestyle, raising livestock in the fertile lands of Gilead.

Adina's leadership and military capabilities would have been crucial in defending these territories and maintaining the security of the Israelite settlements. His role as a chief among the Reubenites suggests that he was not only a warrior but also a figure of authority and influence within the tribe.

Legacy and Reflection

The mention of Adina in the biblical narrative serves as a reminder of the diverse contributions of the tribes of Israel to the nation's history. While the Tribe of Reuben may not have held the same prominence as some of the other tribes, figures like Adina demonstrate their commitment to the collective well-being and defense of Israel.

Adina's account, though brief in the biblical text, reflects the broader themes of loyalty, courage, and leadership that are celebrated throughout the Scriptures. His example encourages believers to recognize the value of each individual's contributions to the community and the importance of standing firm in one's duties and responsibilities

# The Bible Says
# Genesis 29:31-35 Meaning

When we look at Genesis 29:31-35, we see God's kindness toward *Leah*, who was the less favored wife of Jacob. *Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.* (v. 31) This declaration shows that God recognized Leah's plight and responded by allowing her to conceive. *Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me"* (v. 32). In the ancient Near East (around the early 20th century BC, when Jacob lived), childbearing was a source of great honor, and Leah's hope was that the birth of *Reuben* would strengthen her bond with Jacob. Although she *was*

*unloved*, God demonstrated His care and reminded her that acceptance did not ultimately depend on human favor.

The birth of *Simeon* and *Levi* further revealed Leah's yearning for Jacob's affection: *Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." So she named him Simeon* (v. 33). *Leah* recognized God as the One who heard her cries, highlighting her growing faith. *She conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named Levi* (v. 34). Even as she longed for greater closeness in her marriage, each new *son* provided a sign that God was working mightily in her circumstances. Leah's children became foundational to the future tribes of Israel, including the Levites, who would later serve as priests under the covenant established at Sinai.

Finally, Leah's focus shifts profoundly with the fourth *son*. *And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.* (v. 35) By naming her *son* *Judah*, which sounds like a Hebrew term for "*praise*," *Leah* placed her heart on worshiping *the LORD* rather than pinning her hopes solely on human relationship. Historically, *Judah* became a crucial tribe in Israel's lineage, as from Judah's descendants would come King David (around 1010-970 BC) and, ultimately, Jesus the Messiah according to later genealogies in the New Testament.

## C. Jacob's first four sons born through Leah.

**1. (Genesis 29:31) God's gracious love for Leah.**

**When the LORD saw that Leah *was* unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel *was* barren.**

a. **When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved**: God's compassion on Leah is touching. She was truly the innocent party in all of this mess. God can bring comfort and blessing to a wife and meet her needs even when the husband acts in an ungodly manner.

i. "Wretched Leah sits sadly in her tent with her maid and spends her time spinning and weeping. For the rest of the household, and especially Rachel, despises her because she has been scorned by her husband, who prefers Rachel and is desperately in love with Rachel alone. She is not beautiful, not pleasing. No, she is odious and hated… There the poor girl sits; no one pays any attention to her. Rachel gives herself airs before; she does not deign to look at her. 'I am the lady of the house,' she thinks, 'Leah is a slave.' These are truly carnal things in the saintly fathers and mothers, like the things that usually happen in our houses." (Luther, cited in Boice)

b. **When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb**: God was good to Leah, even when her husband wasn't, and her sister wasn't.

i. Isaiah 54:5 says, *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name*. Husbands are responsible to care for their wives. Yet when they do not, God can meet the needs of a hurting wife, needs that may be neglected by the husband.

**2. (Genesis 29:32) The birth of Reuben.**

**So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."**

a. **She called his name Rueben**: The first child born to Jacob, through Leah, was named **Reuben** by Leah, meaning *Behold, a son*. This was her statement to Jacob and all others that the LORD had **looked upon my affliction**.

i. Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob; he was the logical one to inherit the promise God had made to Abraham and passed on to Isaac and then to Jacob.

b. **Now therefore, my husband will love me**: Jacob, even though he did not love Leah, still was willing to have sex with her. This demonstrates a principle that is still true, that a man will often be willing to have sex completely apart from love, and only a foolish woman regards the willingness to have sex as proof of love. Leah was not the first, nor the last, to live under this problem of male nature.

**3. (Genesis 29:33) The birth of Simeon.**

**Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I *am* unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." And she called his name Simeon.**

a. **She called his name Simeon**: The second child born to Jacob, through Leah, was named (by Leah) *Simeon*, meaning *Hearing*. Leah hoped all would notice that the LORD had heard her.

b. **Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved**: Apparently, the birth of Reuben did not turn the heart of Jacob towards Leah. She was still aware he did not love her, though he still was willing to have sex with her.

i. Of course, Jacob and Leah were married, so there was nothing *sinful* in sexual relationship. But this plainly shows that Jacob, like most any man in the flesh, was able and willing to have sex with someone he did not love.

ii. A 1995 survey asked the following question: "Have you ever had sex with a woman you have actively disliked?" 58% of men answered "yes."

**4. (Genesis 29:34) The birth of Levi.**

**She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi.**

a. **Therefore his name was called Levi**: The third child born to Jacob, again through Leah, was named **Levi**, meaning *Attachment*. Leah still lived in the hope her husband Jacob would love her and become attached to her through the birth of these sons.

b. **Now this time my husband will become attached to me**: The pain in the heart of Leah was just as evident as the hardness of Jacob's heart, and as evident as his attitude towards his wife Leah.

**5. (Genesis 29:35) The birth of Judah.**

**And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.**

a. **She called his name Judah**: The fourth son born to Jacob, again through Leah, was named **Judah**, meaning *Praise*. Apparently, Leah stopped naming her children to reflect the pain and longing in her heart. At this point, she focused on God and could praise Him.

b. **Now I will praise the LORD**: To some extent, and for some period of time, Leah allowed the LORD to meet her need, and she could now praise God. Leah knew the LORD better, driven to Him by the neglect of her husband.

i. Leah, though she was neglected by Jacob and despised by Rachel, had a great purpose in God's plan. The two greatest tribes came from Leah, not Rachel: Levi (the priestly tribe) and Judah (the royal tribe). And most importantly, the Messiah came from Leah, the less-attractive sister who was neglected and despised but learned to look to the LORD and praise Him.

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**References:**

1. Boice, James Montgomery "Genesis: An Expositional Commentary" Volumes 1, 2, and 3 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1987)
2. Leupold, H.C. "Exposition of Genesis: Volumes 1 and 2" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976)

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Now here we find the case of polygamy but even as we read of it, we see the difficulties that exist in a polygamous relationship as there begin to develop jealousies and rivalries and so forth among the wives.

Several years ago in a Sociology class at Orange Coast College, the professor of the class asked if we could see any advantage to polygamy. And of course, I was an older student in the class; most of them were young and unmarried. And they couldn't see any advantages in polygamy but I raised my hand and said, "Well, I can see some advantages in polygamy". I mean, I actually can foresee there could be some advantages in polygamy. You marry a wife that's a real sharp secretary, you send her out to make the living and you know, you get enough of them working, you can just kick back and just enjoy it. But though I can see some advantages or possible advantages to polygamy, I can also see enough disadvantages that I would be discouraged from ever trying to have such a relationship.

And so we find that here there is really no strong biblical injunction against it. It was something that was accepted in that culture at that time. And of course, it came to its maximum under Solomon. But by the time we come to the New Testament and the purposes of God are more clearly defined, when the church is developed, polygamy is definitely prohibited. And those who were to be the overseers of the church were to be husbands of one wife and keeping their homes. And this was still in a time in which mistresses and courtesans and so forth were widely accepted in the Grecian culture and in the Roman culture.

So problems did develop; jealousies and all, Rachel, whom he loved more than Leah; yet, even in that you have a difficult situation. That it's going to create hurt feelings. That's going to create difficult living.

> but Rachel was barren. But Leah conceived, and she bore a son, and she called his name [look, a son]: for she said, The LORD hath looked upon my affliction (Gen 29:31-32);

She sees that he doesn't love me so much as he loves my sister. So look, a son.

> now therefore my husband will love me (Gen 29:32).

Isn't that rather pathetic? She senses a lack of love from Jacob and she's hoping now that I've born him a son, now will he love me? And reaching out for love. As I say, it's just the tragic by-product of this polygamous relationship.

> And she conceived again, and bore another son; and she said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated (Gen 29:33),

And that word "hated" should not be taken literally; I was loved less. He didn't really hate her but he didn't love her as much as he loved Rachel.

he hath therefore given me this son: and so she called his name Hearing (Gen 29:33).

Which the Lord has heard me so she called his name, I've been heard or hearing.

And she conceived again, bore another son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined to me, because I have had three sons for him: and so she called his name Joined. And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Praise; and she left off bearing (Gen 29:34-35).

So the names of the boys were actually indicative of her desires to be accepted, to be loved, and they probably were born within a year of each other.

**JACOB IS DECEIVED**

Now notice what Uncle Laban is doing—

**And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.**

**And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.**

**And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?**

**And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn [Gen. 29:23–26].**

At the marriage ceremony in those days, the woman was veiled, heavily veiled, so that she couldn't be seen. Poor Jacob didn't see the girl he was getting until the next morning. Lo and behold, it wasn't Rachel—it was Leah! At the moment he saw he had been tricked. I wonder if he didn't recall something of his own father when he, Jacob, had pretended to be the elder. He deceived his father, and that was the reason he had to leave home. You see, God does not approve of that type of conduct. The chickens are now coming home to roost. Jacob pretended to be the elder when he was the younger. Now he thinks he's getting the younger and he gets the elder. The tables are turned now, and it has become an awful thing for Jacob. To Jacob it is a criminal act that Laban has done, but notice how Uncle Laban passes it off. He is an expert at this type of thing. He tells Jacob that there was a little matter in the contract, a clause in the fine print, that he had forgotten to mention to Jacob. It was a custom in their country that the elder daughter must marry first, and the younger daughter could not marry until the elder daughter was married. But Uncle Laban is willing to be very generous in his dealings; so he has an offer to make.

**Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years [Gen. 29:27].**

This week, you see, is another seven years. Uncle Laban is getting his money's worth, isn't he? And poor Jacob is really going to school. But he is taking two wives which he shouldn't have done. He will be in trouble before it is over.

**And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also [Gen. 29:28].**

Uncle Laban made Jacob serve twice as long as he originally agreed to. Seven years was long enough, but, believe me, *fourteen* years is a long time! This arrangement gave Jacob two wives.

You may be thinking, *Well, since this is in the Bible, God must approve of polygamy*. No, God does not approve of everything that is in the Bible—that may startle you. For instance, God didn't approve of the devil's lie. God didn't approve of David's sin, and He judged him for it. But the *record* of both events is inspired—literally, God–breathed. In other words, God said through the writer, Moses, exactly what He wanted to say. The thing that is inspired is the record of the words God gave to Moses to write down in this Book we call the Bible. In Genesis 29 God gave an accurate record: Jacob did have two wives, and it tells us the way it came about. That is where inspiration comes in. It does not mean that God approved of everything that is recorded in the Bible. Certainly God disapproved of Jacob's having more than one wife.

May I say to you, this man Jacob had plenty of trouble in his family from here on, and it all can be traced back to his own methods which he had used. The chickens are coming home to roost.

> **And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.**
>
> **And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me [Gen. 29:31–32].**

Leah is a sad person because she knows her husband loves Rachel rather than her. When she becomes the mother of Reuben, it brings joy to her heart, and she feels that Jacob will love her now.

Reuben is Jacob's firstborn, but he is not the one who will begin the line leading to Christ. Rather, it will be Leah's fourth son, Judah. Judah was the kingly line. David was in this line, and later on, the Lord Jesus Himself, according to the flesh, came from the line of Judah. Reuben lost his position as the firstborn because of his sin. Levi was the priestly tribe. Leah was the mother of some of the outstanding sons of Jacob.[1]

## Genesis 29: Leah and Rachel

### Genesis 29:1-3

*Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.*

Jacob continued his travels to Haran and his adventures with Laban begin.

### Genesis 29:4-12

*And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the*

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[1] J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Law (Genesis 16-33)*, electronic ed., vol. 2 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 147–50.

*sheep. And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.*

When Jacob watered Laban's flocks, a note of anticipation seems apparent: subsequent chapters show how Laban and his flocks prospered


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in Jacob's presence. In contrast with Laban's lazy shepherds, Jacob was generous, zealous, and industrious. He had a mission, a quest. That burning goal implanted by previous experience drove him to succeed.

## Genesis 29:13-19

*And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month. And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.*

Jacob's plan was to work seven years to have Rachel as his wife. Those seven years of work passed quickly for Jacob because of his love for her. Interestingly the wives of each of the first three patriarchs were beautiful: Sarah (Gen 12:11), Rebekah (Gen 24:15-16), and Rachel (Gen 29:17).

## Genesis 29:20-26

*And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for*

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*Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.*

Jacob's anger was to no avail. Now, as the object of trickery, he would understand how Esau felt. Laban offered a technicality of local custom: "the younger before the firstborn." Those words must have pierced Jacob! In his earlier days he, the younger, had deceptively pretended before his father to be the older brother. What a man sows he reaps (Gal 6:7).

## Genesis 29:27-29

*Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.*

Jacob's joyful prospect of marrying Rachel turned, by Laban's deception, into a nightmare. In Laban, Jacob had met his match and also his means of discipline. Jacob had deceived his own brother and father, and now was deceived by his mother's brother! Twenty years of drudgery, affliction, and deception lay ahead. Through Laban he received his own medicine of duplicity. But Jacob's tenacity shows that he counted these as minor setbacks. God took him, developed his character, turned the fruits of his deception into blessing, and built the promised seed, the nation of Israel.

("Week" of years is important to note regarding Dan 9:24-27.)

## Genesis 29:30-32

*And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.*


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Leah named her firstborn son **Reuben** (*re'uben*), indicating that "the Lord had seen her misery" (*ra'ah be'onyi*). Another wordplay joins it as (*ye'ehabani*) meaning "attachment" or now at last my husband will become attached to me. This naming showed her hope but also her consolation and faith. Jacob never saw her affliction, but God did (cf. "*Beer Lahai Roi*," lit., "the well of the Living One who sees me," Gen

16:14; 24:62; 25:11).

## Genesis 29:33-34

*And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.*

**Simeon** was so named because the Lord heard (*sama'*) that Leah was not loved. "God heard" was her testimony in faith to His provision (cf. "Ishmael," which means "God hears," Gen 16:15). **Levi** was named for her hope that her husband would become *attached* (*yillaweh*) to her.

## Genesis 29:35

*And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.*

**Judah** was her consolation and she would be satisfied to praise (*'odeh*) the Lord, for Judah means "let Him be praised." Leah exhibited genuine faith during her great affliction.

## Genesis 30: Sons of Jacob

## Genesis 30:1-3

*And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else*