

# The Birth of a Nation

## A Study in Genesis 25-36

An Ancient Soap Opera  
Genesis 30:1-24  
March 14, 2021

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" - **Genesis 30:1**

### I. FAMILY CIRCUS

- Natural tensions arise in Jacob's family due to unnatural circumstances.
- Deep down, each character in this drama knows that it is God who is ultimately in control (Gen. 30:2, 6, 17, 20, 22).
- Although not unheard of in the Ancient Near East, the swapping of wives and concubines in order to achieve an inheritance is contrary to God's desire (Gen. 2:22-24; Matt. 19:1-9).
- Rachel's superstition concerning mandrakes not only reveals her pagan roots, but gives opportunity for Leah to conceive again (Gen. 30:17).
- Notwithstanding all the immoral and silly human maneuverings, God uses the occasion to increase his people. Seven more sons and a daughter are added to the patriarchs of Israel (Gen. 15:5, 17:4, 28:14).

### II. NOT ON WHAT IS SEEN, BUT WHAT IS UNSEEN...

- Pettiness and pride combine to make this narrative comical—if it were not so sad.
- These are people striving to make this life the ultimate source of their joy, which is impossible for believers (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 16:11, 41:12; Matt. 6:19-21; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:32-34; 1 Tim. 6:17-19).
- Like the patriarchs, we are seeking a new land...a better land (Heb. 11:13-16).
- We have a treasure in jars of clay. It causes us to fix our eyes beyond the grave (2 Cor. 4:1-18).

**KNOW:** The nation of Israel is growing from a few patriarchs/matriarchs to a family of peoples and will soon explode upon the scene. Human fickleness and self-reliance, although sinful, cannot keep God from fulfilling his promises. Nevertheless, our vision should go beyond the hopes that this passing world offers to us.

**DO:** Fix your eyes beyond the grave. Look to heaven for fulfillment, both then and now.

### Suggested Reading:

*Spiritual Mindedness* by John Owen (LifePoint Library #

*Heaven* by Randy Alcorn (LifePoint Library #236 ALC)

### Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

#### Please Read Genesis 30:1-24

1. Can you find the overall theme in this section?
2. Why so much stress on having sons for these sisters?
3. What is the underlying source of stress in this narrative?
4. What do you make of the superstitious mess related to the mandrakes? Why is this even recorded in Holy Scripture?
5. God does "remember" Rachel and she bears a son. Why is this important for the reader to know at this point?
6. Where is your source of joy?
7. How do we "fix our eyes on what is unseen?"