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**Day 13 - January 13**

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**Period of the Patriarchs (2100 -1525 BCE)**

***Jacob Marries and has Children***

***Laban and Jacob Outsmart Each Other***

**Readings: *Genesis 29:1-30:43***

***Reflections:***

- Once again the issue of water in a dry land and the importance of wells is a part of the story. The story of Jacob's love for Rachel is well known and represents one of the great love stories of Scripture. I love how honest Scripture is and how well it portrays his love for her. Like Rebekah Rachel is a real worker, a shepherdess. She is not a stay at home, pampered woman, but a go out and work, get the job done sort of person. Also she is beautiful and lovely in form or had an attractive body. We will see within the story of Israel the freedom to just say things the way they were. Jacob's love for her makes time fly. Seven years of work for the person you love is truly no big deal.
- Jacob the deceiver is deceived by Laban. He does reap what he sows yet God is there redeeming it and advancing his purposes through it. Leah is provided for and although not loved as Rachel is loved, still participates in the foundation of the nation of Israel.
- Why Jacob doesn't figure out that Leah is the right person until morning is an obvious question. Was he drunk? Did ancient lingerie include a veil? It is hard to imagine that he slept with her and then realized it is the wrong woman but that is what it says. The fact that Leah has weak eyes has puzzled commentators. She must have had something that visually looked a bit funny in her eyes or weak eye muscles.
- Anyway, he does get Rachel a week later but has to commit to another seven years. What love! Again he has no problems with this.
- The story quickly turns to the birthing of the twelve sons and the twelve tribes of Israel. The pairings switch to comparing two women instead of two men. It is interesting that the Messiah will come from Leah's side although in the short term Rachel will give birth Joseph, the messianic figure of the family and the most blessed of all the children.
- The whole battle of the women and the maid servants to have more kids than the other is hard to imagine these days but anyways, there it is. The notion of many children was both a

sign of blessing but also helped secure the status of the women with their husband as well as within the polygamous household.

- The story ends with the birth of Joseph who will become a prominent figure in the story and a kind of foreshadowing of Christ. He is the most cherished of the twelve sons and reveals again God's heart for Rachel in establishing her as Jacob's primary wife.
- The battle of deception continues with Jacob and Laban. The whole spotted sheep thing may seem weird to our culture but again God blesses Jacob within his cultural context. It is like God uses everything, good and bad and even weird to bless the one who will be a part of his salvation plan. As we will see, God is not content just to bless Jacob outwardly. He wants to bless Jacob by ultimately changing his heart. This is the most powerful and lasting blessing God will give to Jacob and one that foreshadows what God will do through the coming of Christ.