

Case Study: Leah – Seeking Love From The Wrong One

Description

Leah is a metaphorical “ugly step-child” in the word, in that she is often talked about, never in a good way, oftentimes ignored in history, and definitely unappreciated by believers. Leah is the oldest daughter of Laban, the older sister of Rachel, and 1st wife Jacob. She is the mother of 7 children, 6 of those sons being the father of tribes of Israel, and specifically the mother of Judah, which is the tribe that God foretold that his son, the Messiah would come from. In order to give a complete picture of Leah we’ll look at several passages in scripture to build the complete picture of a person that was blessed of God, but looking for love and validation in all the wrong places.

17 Leah's eyes were weak and dull looking, but Rachel was beautiful and attractive.
18 And Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, I will work for you for seven years for your younger sister.
25 But in the morning [Jacob saw his wife, and] behold, it was Leah! And he said, What is this?
26 And Laban said, It is not permitted in our country to give the younger [in preference to the older].
27 Finish the [wedding feast] week [for Leah]; then we will give you [Rachel] the next week.
28 So Jacob complied and fulfilled [Leah's] week; then [Laban] gave him Rachel his daughter.
29 (And Laban gave Bilhah his maid to Rachel his daughter to be her maid.)
30 And Jacob lived with Rachel also as his wife, and he loved Rachel more than Leah.

Genesis 29:17-18,25-30 AMPC

No other place (that I can recall) in the Bible introduces someone by describing their appearance in a negative way except for here with Leah. What it does, is sets the tone for why Jacob possibly chooses Rachel over her, and for Laban’s actions later. We fast forward seven years from that initial encounter, and we have the wedding for Jacob and Rachel. Laban chooses to deceive Jacob, and place Leah in the marriage bed at the end of the day so that they would consummate the marriage physically, and Jacob would therefore be required (if he was a man of honor) to take Leah as his wife. Can you imagine the emotions and mental state of Leah who has not been the receiver of Jacob’s affection over those seven years, and then to be thrust by her father on the wedding night into the bed with Jacob to become his wife without his consent, and possibly without her consent either. I could speculate that Leah possibly desired Jacob, and his affection, or a relationship with him, and her father being aware of that facilitated this arrangement, but the text doesn’t say it. Laban’s reason is that their custom required the older daughter to be married before the younger one. Place yourself in Leah’s shoes where you are married because of a technicality, not love or choice. Insult to injury, your “husband” is furious at the thought that you have been betrothed to him instead of your sister. You experience your “honeymoon week” most likely in rejection, knowing that the heart of the person you’ve been given to is with someone else, and that you’re on borrowed time. What do you do for love and acceptance from a broken place.

31 And when the Lord saw that Leah was despised, He made her able to bear children
32 And Leah became pregnant and bore a son and named him Reuben [See, a son!];

Genesis 29:31-32 AMPC

God sees ALL. I state that because God saw what Leah experienced, he knew her heart, he heard her prayers, he heard the words and saw the actions of those around her, and he doesn't forget. This moment is less about Jacob, Rachel, and Laban, and more about a God who doesn't abandon or forget those who are wronged, and only have him to trust in. God allows Leah to conceive and birth a son, Jacob's firstborn, and I need you to key in on her response

she said, Because the Lord has seen my humiliation and affliction; now my husband will love me.

genesis 29:32

Leah does right in acknowledging that she is seen by the Lord, BUT she reveals where her ultimate desire is.....Jacob's love. Don't read what I'm not writing, it is natural to desire the love and acceptance of others, especially spouses, and family/relatives, but it is wrong when we elevate that above God's love. We must be aware of and work to maintain a healthy and proper perspective of our relationship with God and others. I have no idea what Leah's childhood was like, or her interactions with men that may have shaped how she viewed herself, but what is clear is that she placed a higher value on standing with Jacob, then with God. What can happen in your life when you take your gifts from God and lay them at the feet of someone else's approval? You will allow others to undervalue and diminish the move(s) of God in your life. Leah was neglected, disrespected, undervalued, and emotionally abused, BUT she was not forgotten by God. In fact, we later see that Leah was outlived Rachel, and was likely with Jacob until he arrived in Egypt with the rest of the family. God enabled her not only to birth multiple children, but to see numerous miracles and his faithfulness.

Reflection Time

How do you see yourself, and where do you place your value? Are you loving or seeking approval from a place of brokenness. Do you believe that God sees you, and if so how does that impact how you live your life? Where/how have you sought love in the past or present? Pray for a proper perspective of God and self so that you aren't looking for affirmation and/or love from all the wrong places.

Category

1. Case Studies

Tags

1. April 2024
2. Case Studies
3. Genesis
4. Jacob
5. Leah

6. Old Testament

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Author

guytonjj

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