

Leah's Servant Zilpah Bore Jacob a Son and Leah Named Him Asher

30: 9-13

DIG: How do you think the maidservants felt about all this? What do you think Jacob was feeling? Bliss? Sadness? Confusion? Does Ya'akov seem like the head of his household or a pawn in the hands of his two wives? Who is the decision maker here?

REFLECT: When have you competed in the wrong way? How can you escape such a vicious cycle? Has jealousy ever had a positive outcome for you? Is it healthy? What can you do instead? How can you ask the Lord to help you in that regard?

As if in competition, Rachel gave Jacob to Bilhah, her maidservant to sleep with so that Bilhah could bear children for her. Consequently, Bilhah bore two sons for Rachel. Leah, however, was not yet ready to accept defeat. Two could play at this game! When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and legally gave her to Ya'akov as a wife (30:9). That Jacob was one busy guy. He now has four women on his hands. Gentlemen, let me state the obvious. We were only created to love one.

Leah's servant Zilpah bore Ya'akov a son (30:10). Then Leah said: What good fortune! In Hebrew that is *bagad*, or literally with fortune. So she named him **Gad**, meaning good fortune or fortune has come (30:11). The name **Gad** was associated with a pagan god of luck. But Leah, no doubt, used the word as merely an expression of her good fortune, in the form of a fifth son.⁴⁸¹ It was like calling him "Lucky." It seems that Leah did not think of **God** in connection with the birth of this son, or her next one.

Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son (30:12). Then Leah had a sixth son and said: How happy I am! In Hebrew it is *beashri*, literally with my happiness. The women will call me happy or *ishruni* from the same root. So she named him **Asher**, meaning happy (30:13). All women will call Leah happy because of the child Asher whom she bears, but all generations will call Mary blessed because of the Child she will bear, a Child who will bring salvation to all the nations (Luke 1:50 and 55). But for now, Leah, who had not been worthy of marriage for so long, now had six sons. She was overjoyed.

Keeping score, these two sons are Jacob's seventh and eighth children, four mothered by Leah: **Reuben**, **Simeon**, **Levi** and **Judah**; two by Rachel's maidservant Bilhah: **Dan** and **Naphtali**; and two more by Leah's maidservant Zilpah: **Gad** and **Asher**. Advantage Leah.