

God Remembered Rachel and Opened Her Womb and She Gave Birth to a Son

30: 22-24

DIG: In what sense had God remembered Rachel? What significance did Joseph's name have for Rachel? What was the irony of childbirth for Rachel? How was Joseph's birth a turning point in the life of Jacob?

REFLECT: What has God added to your life lately? Are you grateful or resentful?

God remembered Noah (8:1) and then He also remembered Rachel (30:22a). Not that He had forgotten her, but He remembered her in the sense of *moving toward her in grace*. He listened to her prayers and opened her womb (30:22b). This will be the eleventh son of Jacob; four with Leah (**Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah**), two with Leah's maidservant Zilpah (**Gad** and **Asher**), two more with Leah (**Issachar** and **Zebulun**), two with Rachel's maidservant Bilhah (**Dan** and **Naphtali**), and now **Joseph**. Simply prodigious.

She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. There is no mention of mandrakes on her lips; she knew that ADONAI was at work in her life. She said: **God has taken away the disgrace of my barrenness (30:23)**. The Hebrew word for **has taken away** is *asaf*, and means *a removal of disgrace, in the past tense*. Once proud of her beauty and figure, she has been sufficiently humbled. Probably at his circumcision, she named him **Joseph**, which means *addition or he shall add, in the future tense*. The name combines two thoughts, first the idea of *asaph*, to take away, and secondly, *yosef*, which means to add. By naming him this, she was saying that *in the past God had taken away her disgrace*. And by faith, she was praying that ADONAI would *add to her another son in the future* because **Joseph** means *he shall add (30:24)*. Indeed, her hope was fulfilled, probably about fifteen years later, when she gave birth to **Benjamin**. At one time she felt that if she couldn't have children, she would die (30:1), but the reality was that in having children, she would die in childbirth (35:16-18). This was Jacob's twelfth, and last, child.

Ya'akov was ninety-three when **Joseph** was born, and his birth seems to be a turning point in his life. It prompted a desire for **Jacob** to return to his own country.