

## **HARD LESSONS OF LIFE**

We are currently in a series of lessons entitled, Marriage and Family. We have been studying them from the adult life of Jacob. Last week we attended Jacob's wedding after seven years of working for the dowry of Rachel according to the customs of that day and world.

What Jacob was not aware of was a special custom of Mesopotamia regarding the marriage of the firstborn daughter. It will become a hard lesson of life learned for Jacob.

There are times in a believer's Christian way of life when there are hard lessons of life to learn.

But sometimes we make them harder than they need to be because of bad decisions based upon worldly thinking that are in opposition to the Directive Will of God. (Eph.4:20-24; Col.3:5-11).

<p><b>This lesson will study <u>four aspects</u> of Hard Lessons of Life of Jacob in Gen.29:25-35.</b></p>
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### **1. It is interesting that no one in the family or community told Jacob about this special Mesopotamia custom.**

Jacob's mother was married under this custom; her brother Laban knew it; Rachel or Leah didn't give him a heads-up, none of his co-workers suggested it.

- Sometimes we don't do our own homework, we let others do it and must accept the grade.
- Sometimes we don't pay attention to important wedding details because we are blinded by our focus on love and the honeymoon rather than on the wedding itself.

**REALITY AND FACT:** On Jacob's wedding day, Jacob married Laban's firstborn daughter – "Behold, it was Leah!"

It wasn't a surprise to anyone at the wedding, but to Jacob! Here is where the lessons can get harder or easier depending on Jacob's future choices.

### **2. Jacob can accept his wife as a gift of God's grace (Prov.18:22) or reject her, but it doesn't change her status as his only (monogamous) wife (Gen.2:18-25/ 2:22-24).**

Gods helped Jacob by removing all other options (Rom.8:28). Unfortunately, Jacob rejected Leah as God's gift for his life.

- Then Jacob chose bigamy over God's choice of monogamy. Then he chose Rachel over God's choice of Leah (Matt.1:2) [Judah by Leah] (Gen.29:35).
- Then he rejected the **Bethel theophany** [Jacob's Ladder] (Gen.28) and God's promises to him in (Gen.28:13-15). These were given prior to, and important to, this situation
  - (Matt.19:3-12) (Rejecting God's word produces hardness of hearts in marriage).

**Doctrinal principle:** God promises to give us what we need **not necessarily what we want.**

(Phil.4:19) "And my God will supply ALL YOUR NEEDS according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

### 3. **Jacob's course of bad decisions will result in more Hard Lessons of Life.**

Unfortunately, because of the position of the Divine Institution of the husband's marital authority over others, his bad choices will affect those under his authority (Leah and Rachel and later children).

These bad choices resulted in abusive behavior towards Leah - like bigamy with her sister as a starter. His abusive behavior started with their honeymoon and lasted seven years! (Gen.29:30-35)

From a worldly, human viewpoint, one might say Jacob had every reason for his bad behavior and bitterness. **Except Jacob** doesn't operate under worldly (Old Man Cosmos Diabolicus) thinking, he operates under godly (New Man Divine Viewpoint) thinking because he is a believer.

#### **What does God's word say about it?**

(Eph.4:31-32) "All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. [And] be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ."

Like your parents, my grandparents told me, "two wrongs don't make a right". Image when these two wrongs turn into a multitude of wrongs directed against a mate and children. This is the rest of the history of Jacob's family. "One might ask, "who is counting?" (Perhaps Leah, the offended?)

### 4. **Leah spoke some of the saddest words ever heard from a believer in an abusive marital relationship.**

(Gen.29:31-35) "When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he made her fruitful, while Rachel was barren. Leah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben; for she said, "It means, 'The LORD saw my misery; surely now my husband will love me.'" She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "It means, 'The LORD heard that I was unloved,' and therefore he has given me this one also"; so, she named him Simeon. Again, she conceived and bore a son, and she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, since I have now borne him three sons"; that is why she named him Levi. Once more she conceived and bore a son, and she said, "This time I will give thanks to the LORD"; therefore, she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing children."

Leah expressed her broken heart of marriage by naming her first three sons.

- **Reuben** (Gen.29:32)
  - "Because the **Lord has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.**"
- **Simeon** (Gen.29:33)
  - "Because the **Lord has heard that I am unloved,** He has therefore given me this son also."
- **Levi** (Gen.29:34)
  - "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons."
- **Judah** (Gen.29:35) **Note her 'New Man Divine Viewpoint thinking'**
  - "This time I will praise the Lord." "Therefore, she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing."
  - **Judah** was the seed in the messianic lineage (Matt.1:2; Rom.8:35-39).