

IT'S NOT HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME

INTRODUCTION

Jesus came as King and Lord to conquer Satan, sin, and death. This family (Jacob's family) becomes the family of promise and it is solely due to grace. These people are not our heroes; they are our examples. We don't put our faith in them; we put our faith in JESUS.

DISCUSSION

Talk about some of the "crazy" that makes up your family. How or why, with all of their craziness, do you think that this family (Jacob's family) becomes the family of promise?

EXPLANATION (GENESIS 29:31-30:24)

When was the last time you got caught in a competition? What was it and did you lose your head (so to speak)? If so how?

APPLICATION (EPHESIANS 2:17-19)

Read 1 Peter 3:8-12. When things go wrong how can you do it gracefully? When things go right how can your life still display grace?

MISSION

How can you play to win and still be graceful? Do you have any examples of this? What is the best way to "seek peace" while not compromising the gospel? How do we best pursue the good for others lives?

HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Genesis 31 and ask the following Questions: Have you ever been used by anyone? How? What do you think it means to "be a blessing"?



PART 46 IT'S NOT HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME GENESIS 29:31-30:24

Job 6:8
Genesis 29:31-35
Genesis 30:1-24
Colossians 2:13-15
Ephesians 2:17-19

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

GC Christmas Parties
info@ourelement.org

The Hobbit Movie
4:30p, Tickets Sold Out

Christmas Eve Services
7, 9 & 11p

Christmas Cookie Exchange
Next Sunday, bring a dozen cookies to share!



ourelement.org/events

IT'S NOT HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME

Job 6:8 Oh that I might have my request, and that God would fulfill my hope...

Jacob starts the verses today with two wives and two concubines, and by the end, he will have children by all of them. This is not condoned, but it is redeemed by God.

In a way that calls to mind the beginning of the Abraham narrative, Moses introduces the central problem: the Lord opened Leah's womb, "but Rachel was barren." The text reminds us that it was the Lord who was behind Rachel's barrenness. In the preceding chapter (28:14), God had promised that Jacob's descendants would be more numerous than the "dust of the earth." Now Rachel, Jacob's intended wife, was barren. It is a narrative twist that Moses uses to show again that Jacob's plans have come to nothing, and it is God who comes through.

Jacob had planned to take Rachel as his wife, but God intended him to have Leah. In two major reversals in Jacob's life, we see a theme taking shape:

- Jacob sought to marry Rachel, but Laban tricked him.
- Jacob sought to build a family through Rachel, but she was barren

And it was who God opened Leah's womb.

Jacob's schemes, which had brought him fortune thus far, were beginning to crumble. No schemes, like Jacob's, will be sufficient to carry out the plans of God. God is teaching Jacob that he too will have to depend on God to bring about the divine blessing.

It looks like Jacob had chosen Rachel, but God had chosen Leah. In the conflict that ensued between Jacob and his two wives over the birth of their sons, the pattern is set for the remainder of the narratives in Genesis.

These are the names of the sons (and one daughter) and what the names mean:

- Reuben - misery.
- Simeon - stems from root that means God's providential care for the unfortunate
- Levi - means attached, like my husband will now be attached to me.
- Judah - means praise.



- Dan - means judged.
- Naphtali - means my struggle.
- Gad - means LUCK
- Asher - means happy
- Issachar - means wages or hired
- Zebulun - means honor.
- Dinah - means justice (daughter)
- Joseph - means may He add

One of Leah's sons was Judah, while Rachel was the mother of Joseph. Though all twelve sons are important, Joseph and Judah stand out in the narratives that follow. Both are used by God in important ways, but each has a different role to play in the accomplishment of God's blessing.

At the beginning it appeared that ultimately Judah, the son of Leah, was given the place of preeminence. Jacob's plan was for God to open the womb of Rachel, but God had opened the womb of Leah. All was not lost though, because God remembered Rachel and open her womb and gave her Joseph.

It seems that God had withheld sons from Rachel so that the descendants of Abraham would be built from Leah. Even after Leah had ceased bearing children, she managed to have two more sons and a daughter by Jacob. Just as Jacob had purchased the birthright for a pot of stew (Genesis 25:29-34), so also Leah purchased the right to more children by Jacob with the mandrakes of her son Reuben.

All the conflict and tension that will exist between Joseph and his brothers, and particularly Joseph and Judah, in the narratives that follow are anticipated and foreshadowed here at the beginning of their life.

The story is: we sin, we ruin ourselves, we all contribute to the to decay of the world, but Jesus saves us from ourselves.

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