

## **Jacob's Many Children**

Genesis 29:31 - 30:24

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God saw that Jacob loved Rachel, but did not love Leah. So God allowed Leah to have children, but prevented Rachel from becoming pregnant. Leah gave birth to four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

Rachel was jealous. She pleaded with Jacob, "Give me children, or I will die!"

But Jacob said, "Am I God? I'm not the one keeping you from having children!"

Rachel told him, "Take my maid, Bilhah, and sleep with her. She will bear children for me." Bilhah had two sons: Dan and Naphtali.

Then Leah gave her maid, Zilpah, to Jacob. Zilpah had two sons: Gad and Asher.

One day, Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought them home to his mother, Leah. Rachel asked if she might have some of them, believing they would induce fertility. But Leah said, "Isn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now you want to steal my son's mandrakes, too?"

Rachel said, "Give me some of the mandrakes and I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight." The bargain was struck.

That evening, when Jacob came in from the fields, Leah said, "You are sleeping with me tonight! I have bought you."

Leah gave birth to two more sons: Issachar and Zebulun. Later she gave birth to a daughter, Dinah.

Then God finally allowed Rachel to become pregnant. She gave birth to a son and named him Joseph.