

**January 17**

**Scriptures:** Read Genesis 30

**Key Verse:** “Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.”(Genesis 30:22)

## **Overview**

God, as the giver of life, is the One who is in control of opening or closing wombs. Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel were all barren, but God, in answer to their prayers, opened their wombs so they could conceive and bear children. When they did have children, it was evident to all that they were gifts from God. Children are truly gifts and blessings from the Lord.

When Rachel saw her sister Leah bearing children, she became jealous and cried out in desperation for Jacob to give her children. She was crying out to the wrong person, for even Jacob confessed that it was God who had kept her from bearing children (30:2). Then we find that, Rachel gave her maidservant, Bilhah to Jacob so that she might “have children by her”, actually meaning to be “built up by her” (30:3). In those ancient cultures, if the maidservant bore a child for her mistress, the child would be considered a legitimate child of that mistress and her husband. Bilhah had two sons for her. Yet Rachel; was not fulfilled; she had a burning desire and a longing to give birth and nurse a child of her own. She turned to the superstitious belief that eating mandrakes (a small orange-yellow fruit with a pleasant herbal smell about the plum, which grows in the wild) would bring her fertility, so she took them from Leah and, in exchange, agreed for Leah to sleep with Jacob that night. “God listened to Leah (she must have prayed), and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son” (30:17), then again she bore a sixth son, and then her seventh was a girl, Dinah.

Rachel still was barren, but then she finally cried out in prayer to the right Person and we are told, “God listened to her and opened her womb”. Finally Rachel conceived and gave birth to her long awaited son, Joseph, who became the greatest of his brothers. He was godly and used by the Lord, and Joseph became one of the most respected men in the Bible.

Once again, Jacob was back to his old tricks. He worked and extra six years for his father-in-law’s livestock, but deceived him and ended up taking the strongest of the cattle. However, Laban confessed that since Jacob had been with him, the Lord had blessed him.

In this passage, we have seen the blessedness of children in the home, for they are “a heritage from the Lord” (see Psalm 127). In today’s society, it is not viewed in the same way, thus the marriage institution has become degraded in many respects. Rather than wives desiring and being in the home to raise the children, we find many couples who do not even want children since they can be a “nuisance”. We believe the main reason for this is lack of trust and commitment to God. Couples would rather remain selfish and work hard within the society than to work hard at building a strong family life. Many do not want the responsibility that goes along with having children, but as we have learned, children are a gift from God and He will also give the means to take care of them. Our whole society, including believers, needs the spirit of repentance because of our deviation from godly ways.

## **Prayer**

Thank You, Lord, for Your gift of family. Grant us Your strength so that we may glorify You in our family.