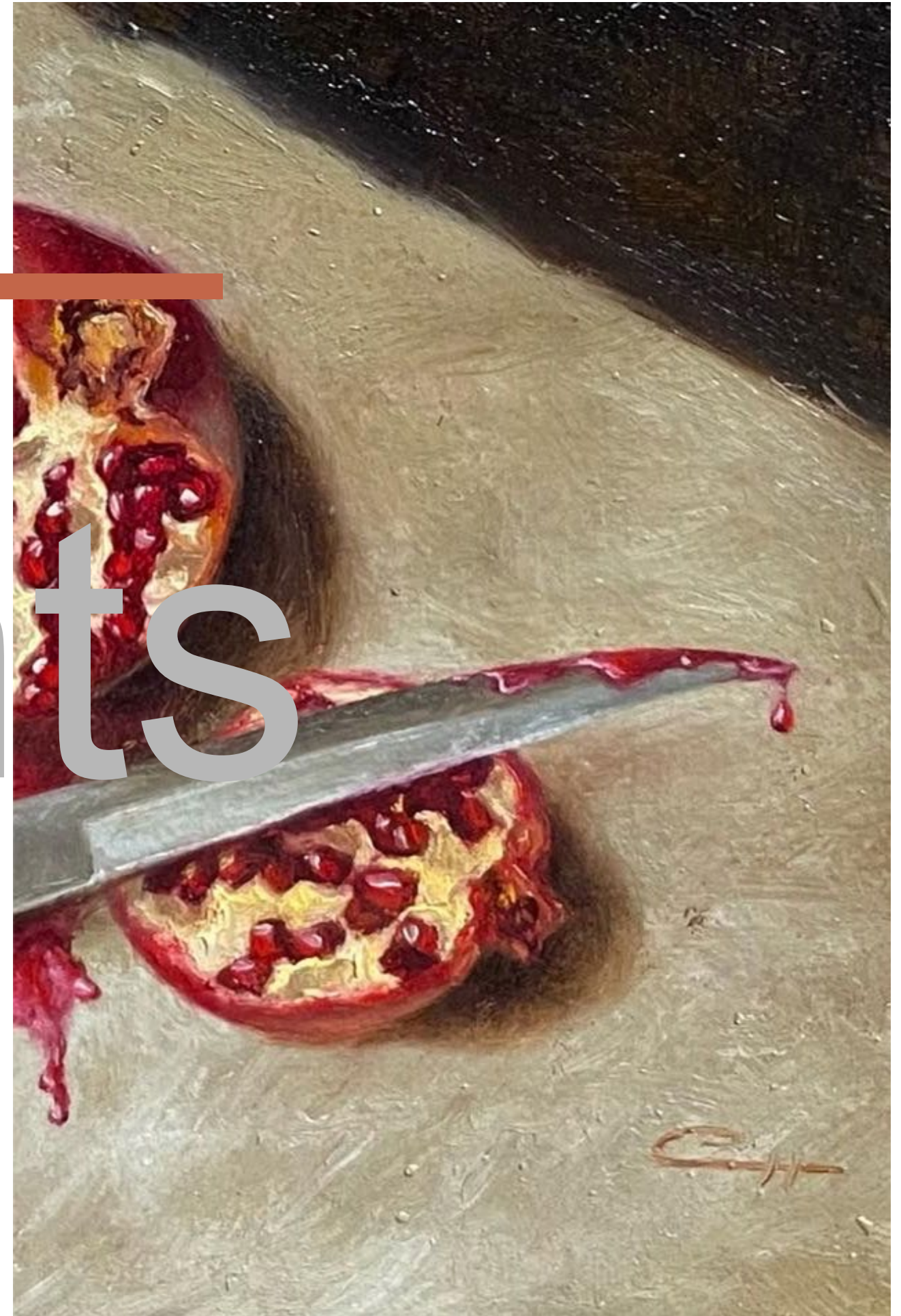


Come Follow Me - Genesis 24-33

# Conflict & Covenants

ESTHER HI'ILANI CANDARI



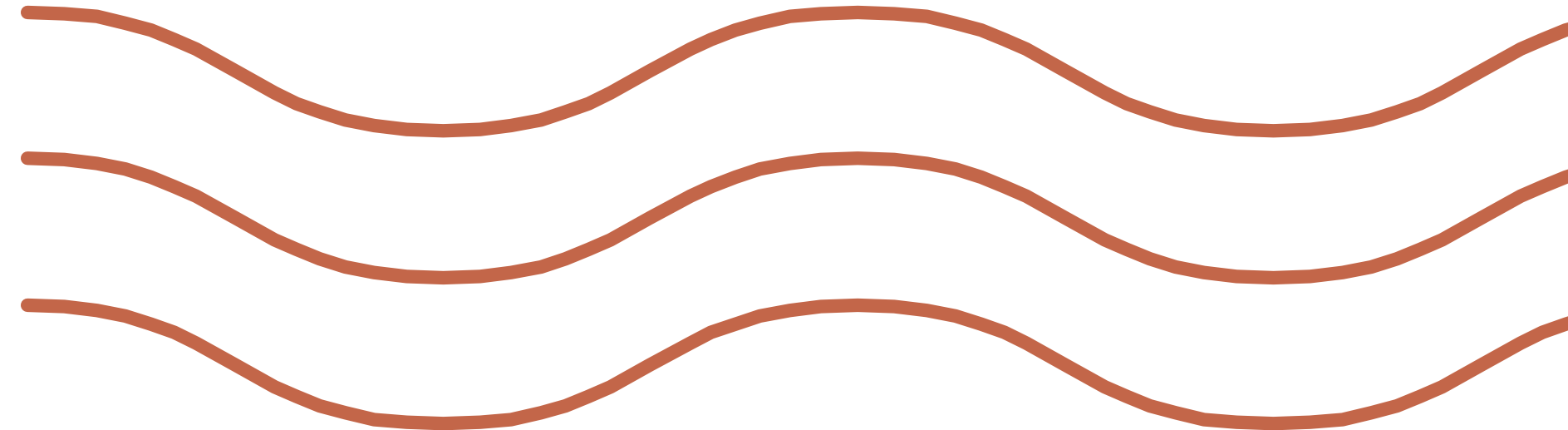


# A Prayer For Questions



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As academics and disciples we are on a journey of questions, not quest for absolutes that lead to systemized perfection. We perpetually seek to ask new, insightful, and actionable questions. Today I am not here to present conclusions but rather to propose postulations with the intent of catalyzing you to inquire. Today may we, together, seek to be present not prescient.








# Considering Their Lens

How did the political landscape of the original writers of the Hebrew Bible affected their perception and interpretation of divine guidance?

How did the racial tensions of the time influence their narratives?

How did the harsh landscape of Mesopotamia and the challenging lifestyle of nomads influence these people's perception of divinity and mercy?







# Considering Their Lens

How did the ideological views of early European translators affect the rhetoric they presented in their translations or 'edits'?







# Considering Your Lens

How do the Protestant roots of the Restored gospel influence your assumptions about the Biblical world?

How does your racial background and artistic exposure influence your imagination of Biblical civilizations?

How do your personal experiences gender/sexuality influence your perception of gender roles/relationships?








# Considering Your Lens

Your lens is not inherently bad, but it is inherently limited, which means your learning is limited.

By pushing yourself beyond your lens you expand your opportunities for growth and learning.

By recognizing the lens and fallibility of religious/historical figures/writers it allows us to recognize and learn from our shared humanity. Ultimately, it allows us to move beyond their limitations.





# Oaths, Signs, Covenants

## GENESIS 24

### The Servant of Abraham

We begin this portion of the narrative with a covenant, lower case “c”. The covenant between the Abraham and his servant, which is developed upon in the servant’s covenant with God.

### Covenants with a “c”

Ordinances require a covenant, these are “the” Covenants within organized religion. Alternately, the creation of covenants are not dependent on ordinances.



Rebecca At The Well, by Alexander Neumann



# Oaths, Signs, Covenants

## GENESIS 24

### Question:

What covenants have you made in your life outside of the ordinance bound ones?

What personal covenants could you make that would improve your relationships with those around you and God?



Rebecca At The Well, by Alexander Neumann



# Veils of Division

## Genesis 24

### Individuality

In drawing her veil, Rebecca emphasises her individuality and agency in preparation for entering into a covenant.

- Lauren Eichler Berken

### Distrust

The drawing of a Rebecca's veil is a foreshadowing of the distrust and lack of vulnerability she would model in her relationship: traits that would lead to division and sorrow for the family.

-Rabbi Adam Lavitt



'Isaac and Rebecca,' by Friedrich Bouterwek



# Veils of Division

## Genesis 24

### Question:

How do you bring your best and most authentic self to a collaborative relationship?

### Question:

What cultural practices, expectations, or ideologies lead you to instinctively distrust those with whom you should and could be counselling with?



'Isaac and Rebecca,' by Friedrich Bouterwek



# Open Hearts & Wombs

## GENESIS 25

### Barrenness As The Natural State

The mainstream reading of stories of infertility frames infertility as a state of abnormality or brokenness, as do most contemporary Judeo-Christian cultures.

Alternately, close readings of the collective narratives gives grounds for a historical cultural perception of barrenness as the neutral or natural state. The womb was naturally closed and must be opened through the will of God. Just as the natural heart is closed and must be opened through the grace of God.



Cosmic Womb Energy, by Kallen Mikel



# Open Hearts & Wombs

## GENESIS 25

### Questions:

What assumptions do you make about the paradigms of ancient Hebrew culture?



Cosmic Womb Energy, by Kallen Mikel



# Open Hearts & Wombs

## GENESIS 25

### Settling for Spiritual Pottage

Oftentimes the story of pottage is framed as a trading of the lasting and spiritual for the fleeting and the temporal. What if it could be a lesson in trading the prepared and easily digestible for the challenge of seeking our full birthright of knowledge and power?

### Esau “Complete”

One way to translate the name Esau is “whole/complete”. This name implies an outlook of pride and disregard for self-improvement.





# Open Hearts & Wombs

## GENESIS 25

### Questions:

In what ways do you settle for spiritual pottage?

In what ways do you assume you are complete?





# Coexistence and Conflict

## GENESIS 26

### Fear Fuels Self Sabotage

In their bid to keep Isaac down, the Philistines damage the life giving resources of the whole community by “stopping up” the wells. This phrase parallels the phrase used for a hardening of the heart.

“When we try to gain power over each other, we act out of a belief that we do not have shared goals and must fight for sustenance, fight to be seen, to be heard.”

- Rabbi Adam Lavitt





# Coexistence and Conflict

## GENESIS 26

### Room For All

Esek - A conflict between two separate parties. An “Us” vs “Them” dichotomy.

Sitnah - “enmity” connected to Satan in the paradigm of the devil being an inner adversary rather than an exterior one.

Rehovot - “Wide Spaces”





# Coexistence and Conflict

## GENESIS 26

### Room For All

“[Jacob states,] ‘Now God has made room. Made room in the land for me and the Philistines.’ ..He moves out of the ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentality, making his understanding of ‘we’ a Wide Space that includes both him and the Philistines, he reclaims a bigger vision, a kind of faith that the wells are deep enough, his heart spacious enough, to extend care to all who dwell in the land. ”

- Rabbi Adam Lavitt





# Coexistence and Conflict

## GENESIS 26

### Questions:

What wells are you stopping up in your life in an attempt to make a point or “keep someone in their place”?

What can you do to better view your resources as “Rehovot”?





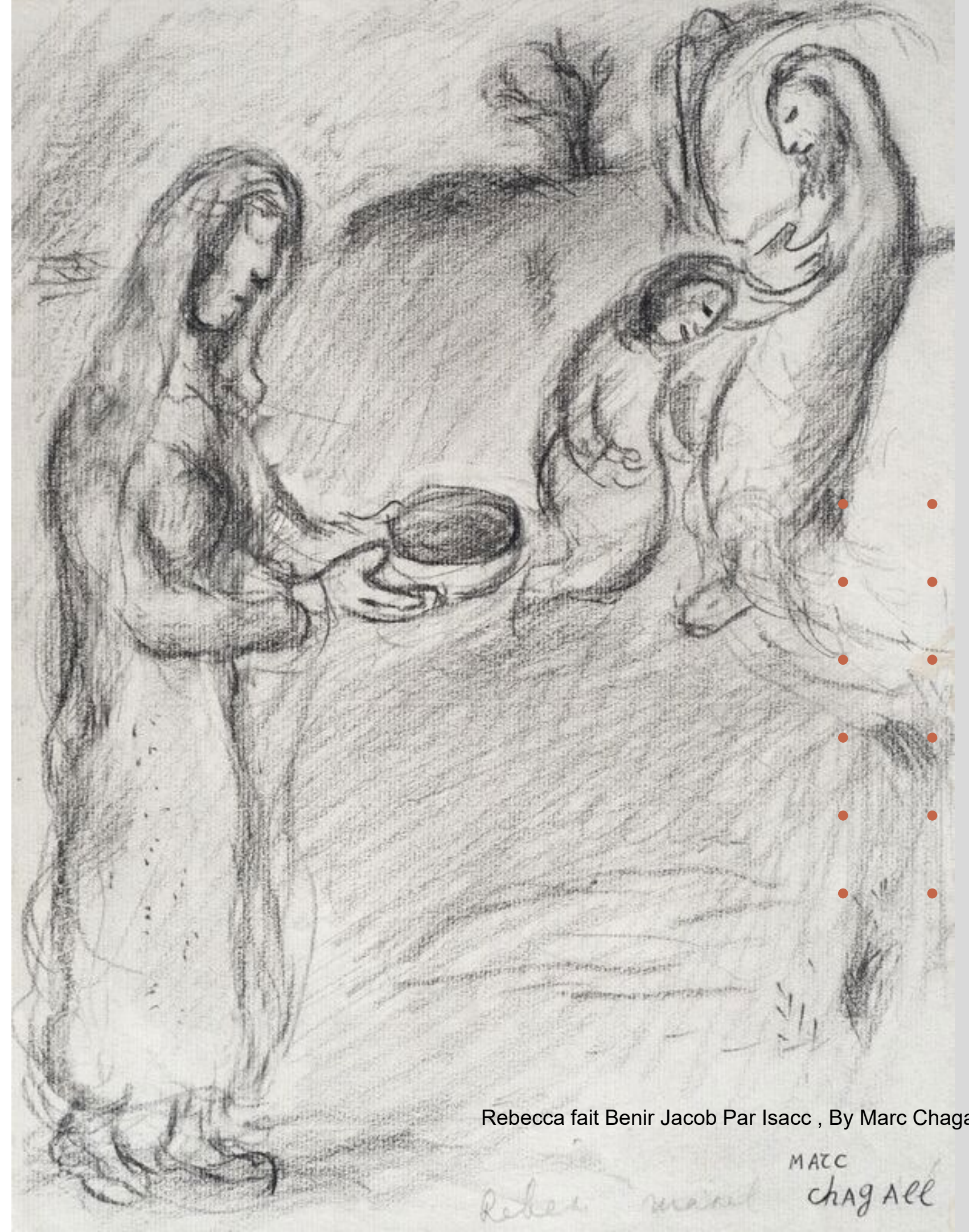
# A Woman's Revelation

## GENESIS 27

### What Was the Root of Her Hesitation?

For some reason, Rebecca felt she could not be open with Isaac about the revelation she had received concerning her sons. Scholars have put forth many conclusions for what those reasons may be, often stemming from cultural expectations she may have challenged with her prophecy.

Whatever the cause, this deception created ripples of grief for the whole extended family.



Rebecca fait Benir Jacob Par Isacc , By Marc Chagall



# A Woman's Revelation

## GENESIS 27

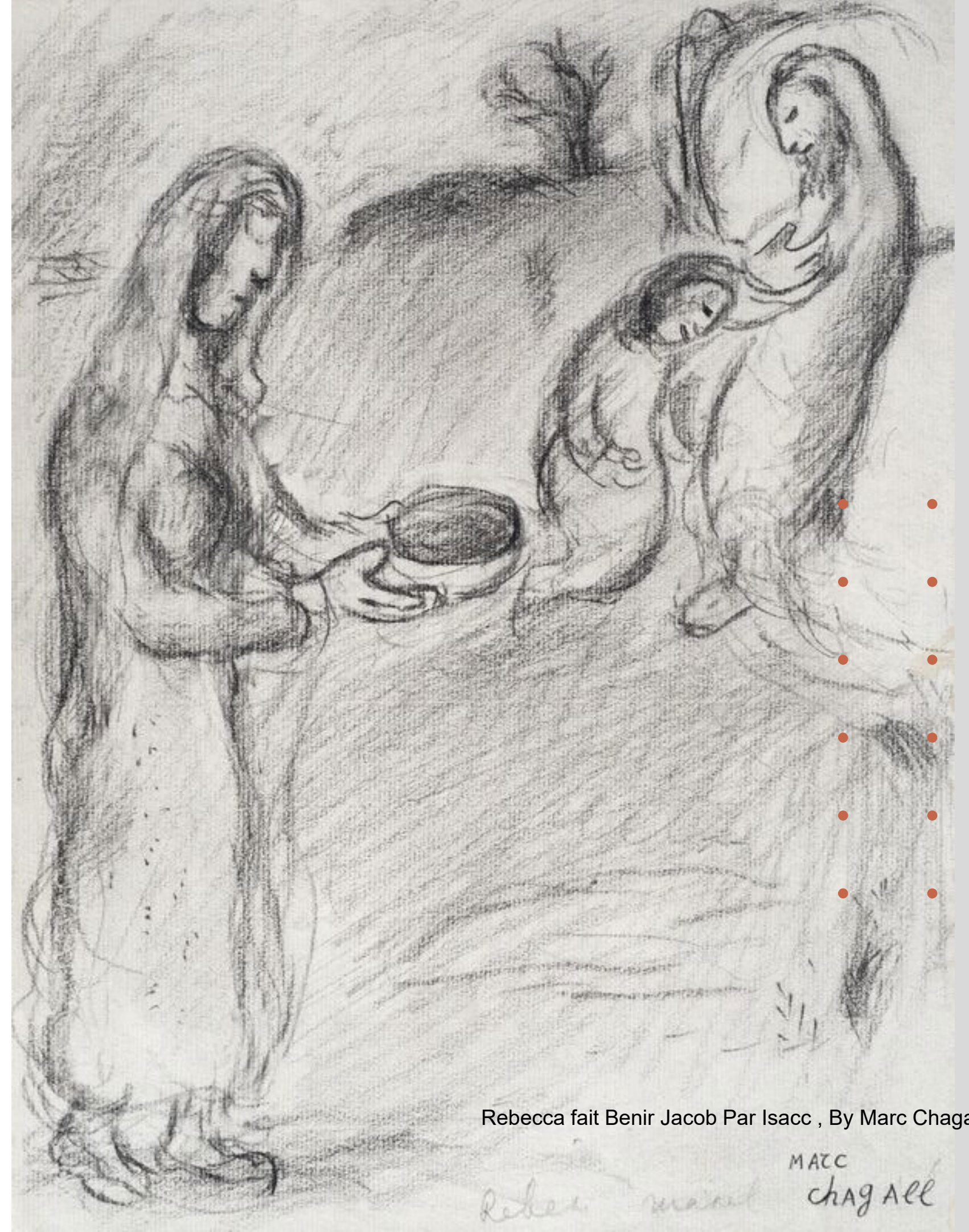
### Questions:

For everyone:

What cultural expectations/ideologies do you promote that may undermine women's opportunity to seek revelation and exercise prophecy within their stewardships?

For women:

How do you damage yourself and your relationships by internalizing these limiting expectations/ideologies?



Rebecca fait Benir Jacob Par Isacc , By Marc Chagall

Rebecca fait Benir Jacob Par Isacc  
MARC CHAGALL



# Collateral of Culture

## Genesis 29

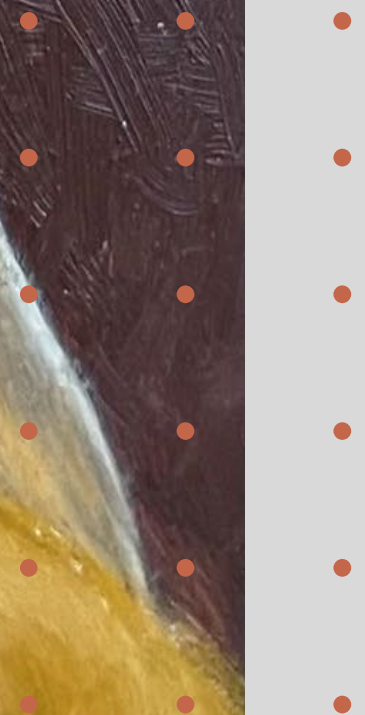
### The Collateral of Culture

According to the words of Laban, Leah was deceptively pawned off on Jacob because of cultural expectations surrounding marriage and birth order. Her joy was the collateral of culture.

### Opening of the the Womb

Leah, who clearly does not struggle with the same bareness as Rachel, is still described as having her womb opened by God. Supporting the idea that all wombs had to be opened.

*A Dowry of Grief, by Esther Hi'ilani Candari*





# Collateral of Culture

## Genesis 29

### Question:

In our rush to fulfil cultural expectations do we create dowries of grief for the young adults in our community?

What deceptive narratives do we consciously or unconsciously employ in an attempt to coerce preferred behavior?



*Jacob & Leah* by Bruce Hixson Smith



# Comparison, the Thief

## Genesis 30

### Unusual Circumstance Timeless Emotions

There is a lot of complexity to the relationship of Rachel and Leah, but there is one thing that is timeless, the strain of envy in the relationships of those we are in proximity to.

### Desperate for Solutions

Rachel turned towards the superstitions of her time and bartered whatever she could in her desperation to find solutions.



Of the Barren and the Fruitful, by Esther Hi'ilani Candari



# Comparison, the Thief **RACHEL & LEAH**

## Oppressor & Victim

“We must still be willing to question who the oppressors are but we must do so with a consciousness that we are all at different times oppressors as well as victims. Sarah, Hagar, Rachel, and Leah are all both victim and oppressor because they live within a complex power structure that both ignores their desires and rewards their complicity.”

- Reinhardt-Simpson 21



*Of the Barren and the Fruitful (Detail)*, by Esther Hi'ilani Candari



# Comparison, the Thief **RACHEL & LEAH**

## Questions:

How do you find yourself responding negatively towards your sisters/brothers because of pressures you feel to be, behave, or perform in a certain way?

When we look at situations where a “problem” needs to be solved and isn’t, do we consider the cost for that individual? Do we assume others always have the same resources and emotional reserves as us?



*Of the Barren and the Fruitful (Detail), by Esther Hi'ilani Candari*



# Subversion & Separation

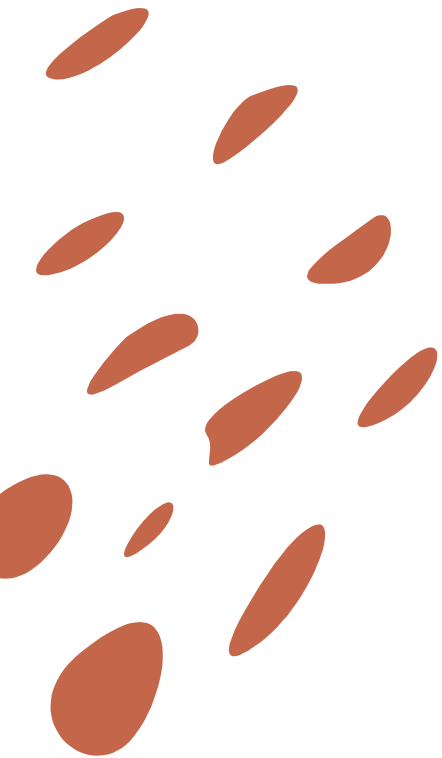
## Genesis 31

### Boundaries and Peace

When Jacob came to Rachel and Leah seeking their support in his efforts to break from Laban, their response is most likely metaphorical not literal. The Hebrew translation implies that they felt like financial assets not family members to their father and therefore were willing to break from the extended family group.

Jacob initiated peace by setting boundaries.

Rachel Derobe les Idoles de son Pere by Marc Chagall





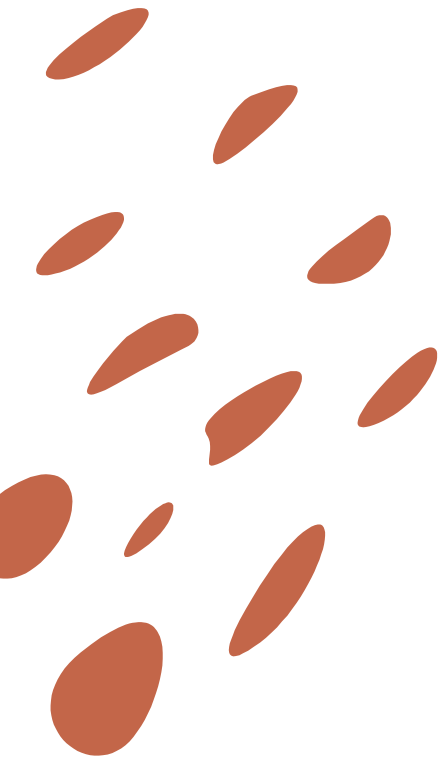
# Subversion & Separation

## Genesis 31

### Questions

What boundaries do you need to draw to establish peace?

Rachel Derobe les Idoles de son Pere by Marc Chagall





# Return & Reconciliation

## Genesis 32-33

### Wrestle With God, Reconcile With Man

Jacob wrestled with God before he was reunited and reconciled with Esau.

He had faced his inner conflicts and established his standing and covenant with God, he was able to approach his conflict with his brother in an open way.





# Return & Reconciliation

## Genesis 32-33

### Question:

In what ways do you need to wrestle with God before you attempt to reconcile with man?

The Meeting of Jacob and Esau by Francesco Paolo Hayez





# Covenants & Connections In Summary

## Binding

Throughout these narratives there are countless instances of spiritual and emotional binding.

Some promote progress, others prevent it. The act of binding oneself to another is not inherently good or evil, it is the intentions and execution that make it so.

But, without binding, there is no community, there is no progress, there is no body of Christ.





# Covenants & Connections In Summary

## Question:

How do we create bindings in our lives that improve rather than impede? That strengthen rather than constrain?





# Apply and Expand

## COVENANTS

How will you revisit and revitalize your view of covenants, what they are, and what they can do for you?

## CONFLICT

How will you utilize patterns modeled in these narratives to resolve conflict in a healthy and humble way?

## COMPASSION

How will you use your deeper insight into these stories to cultivate compassion for individuals past and present?





# Sources and Resources

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<https://www.jewishboston.com/read/closed-wells-closed-hearts/>

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