

Genesis - Lesson 29

Genesis Chapter Genesis 29

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Memory verses for this week: *Joh 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.*

Introduction: We continue our study on the book of Genesis this week as we study about the years of reaping for what Jacob had sown in his home land. Although Jacob was chosen of God, he had not walked according to God's will. Jacob the supplanter meets Laban the schemer, and what a match they made. Jacob has to learn that the way of the transgressor is hard. Yet, in spite of it all, Jacob was kept by the Lord.

I. Jacob Arrives in Haran

Gen 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.

Gen 29:2 And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.

Gen 29:3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.

Gen 29:4 And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we.

Gen 29:5 And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.

Jacob travels into the land of the people of the east and meets the shepherds at a well. This 500 mile journey seems to have been uneventful after his experience at Bethel. I think after the encounter with God in the dream we studied last week, Jacob knew surely that God was with him. It says in verse 2 that he arrives at the well and finds the well covered with a large stone over the well's mouth. Nothing is said of Jacob praying, as the servant of Abraham. Any day we need to pray, but when traveling like he was, it is crucial that we pray for God's guidance. When the servant went to fetch a wife for Isaac from the home land, he prayed for success and God certainly gave him his desire.

Gen 24:15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

At the well, Jacob inquires of the shepherds and they say they were of Haran and he asks if they know Laban and they say they do.

In Barne's notes on the bible, he speaks of the journey that Jacob made.

Jacob arrives at the well of Haran. "The land of the sons of the east." The points of the heavens were defined by the usage of practical life, and not by the standard of a science yet unknown. Hence, the east means any quarter toward the sunrising. Haran was about four degrees east of Beer-sheba, and five and a half degrees north. The distance was about four hundred and fifty miles, and therefore it would take Jacob fifteen days to perform the journey at thirty miles a day. If he reached Bethel the first night, he must have traveled about fifty miles the first day. After this he proceeds on his journey without any memorable incident. In the neighborhood of Haran he comes upon a well, by which lay three flocks. This is not the well near Haran where Abraham's servant met Rebekah.

It is in the pasture grounds at some distance from the town. On its mouth was a large stone, indicating that water was precious, and that the well was the common property of the surrounding natives. The custom was to gather the flocks, roll away the stone, which was too great to be moved by a boy or a female, water the flocks, and replace the stone. Jacob, on making inquiry, learns that Haran is at hand, that Laban is well, and that Rachel is drawing nigh with her father's flocks. Laban is called by Jacob the son of Nahor, that is, his grandson, with the usual latitude of relative names in Scripture Gen 28:13. "The day is great." A great part of it yet remains. It is not yet the time to shut up the cattle for the night; "water the sheep and go feed them." Jacob may have wished to meet with Rachel without presence of the shepherds. "We cannot." There was a rule or custom that the flocks must be all assembled before the stone was rolled away for the purpose of watering the cattle. This may have been required to insure a fair distribution of the water to all parties, and especially to those who were too weak to roll away the stone.

Gen 29:6 And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.

Gen 29:7 And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.

Gen 29:8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

Rachel, Laban's daughter, is mentioned by the shepherds. She was bringing them his sheep in to water and feed them. They tell him that the rock on the well will not be removed to water the sheep until all were gathered together.

Gen 29:9 And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.

Gen 29:10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Jacob meets Rachel in verse 9. She comes with her father's sheep. We cannot believe that Jacob just happened to go to the right well, or that Rachel just happened to come to that well. This was God in His providence working. Jacob boldly rolls away the stone. It

seems certain that the legal water rights had something to do with all of the shepherds coming and then the stone being removed.

Gen 29:11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

Gen 29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.

Gen 29:13 And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.

Gen 29:14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

Jacob kissed Rachel and wept. Apparently Jacob is homesick. Note that his mother is mentioned 3 times in verse 10. Thoughts of mother, home and this beautiful relative warmed the heart of Jacob. The bible says we speak from the abundance of the heart, and apparently Jacob's heart was on home. He identifies himself as being Rebekah's son, so Rachel runs and tells her father. Jacob comes running out to meet Jacob and they go back to Laban's house and they spend a month of visiting and relaxing.

II. Laban and Jacob make an Agreement

Gen 29:15 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?

Jacob agrees to serve for Rachel. Laban agrees that Jacob can work and serve him and wants to know what his wages should be. Jacob had wanted honor and others to serve him, now the tables are turned. Be sure your sin will find you out the bible warns us.

Gen 29:16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

Gen 29:17 Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.

Gen 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

Gen 29:19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.

Gen 29:20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

Laban had been blessed with two daughters, Rachel and Leah. Leah was the older daughter. Jacob offers to serve, because of his love for Rachel. He had no dowry to offer, so he must serve. The crafty Laban agrees. Perhaps there is not greater motive for service than love. In our Christian service to God, we do it not in order to obtain or maintain our salvation, but because we love the Lord.

Love is the greatest motive for service. It says Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and that their love made seven years seem like just a few days. Service for God will not be dreaded, if we love Him. This is one of the great love stories of the Bible, but it is marked by tragedy and sin.

Gen 29:21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.

Gen 29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

Gen 29:23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

Gen 29:24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.

Gen 29:25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

Gen 29:26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

Laban now deceives Jacob. He asks for his wife after having worked for the seven years which they had agreed upon. Laban prepares an elaborate deception to poor Jacob. Instead of giving him Rachel as was the original agreement, he gives him Leah, the older daughter. Jacob finds out too late, that he has been deceived. Under modern marriage customs, such deception would be easily detected. But their customs made it easy to deceive. He finds out the hard way, the rights of the firstborn. Remember how he deceived his father, now he is the victim of an elaborate deception himself.

Matthew Henry said this about Laban's Deception

The base cheat which Laban put upon him when he was out of his time: he put Leah into his arms instead of Rachel, Gen 29:23. This was Laban's sin; he wronged both Jacob and Rachel, whose affections, doubtless, were engaged to each other, and, if (as some say) Leah was herein no better than an adulteress, it was no small wrong to her too. But it was Jacob's affliction, a damp to the mirth of the marriage-feast, when in the morning behold it was Leah, Gen 29:25. It is easy to observe here how Jacob was paid in his own coin. He had cheated his own father when he pretended to be Esau, and now his father-in-law cheated him. Herein, how unrighteous soever Laban was, the Lord was righteous; as Jdg 1:7. Even the righteous, if they take a false step, are sometimes thus recompensed on the earth. Many that are not, like Jacob, disappointed in the person, soon find themselves, as much to their grief, disappointed in the character. The choice of that relation therefore, on both sides, ought to be made with good advice and consideration, that, if there should be a disappointment, it may not be aggravated by a consciousness of mismanagement.

Gen 29:27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

Gen 29:28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to

wife also.

Gen 29:29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.

Gen 29:30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Not being totally unreasonable, Laban gives Jacob Rachel one week later. Some believe that he had to work seven more years then receive Rachel, but verse 28 is pretty clear that a week later Rachel became his wife. Jacob then had to serve Laban seven more years for Rachel.

Gen 29:31 And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

Gen 29:32 And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.

Gen 29:33 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.

Gen 29:34 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.

Gen 29:35 And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

Having one wife may cause a few problems, having two wives seems to be certain to bring conflict. Polygamy was practiced in the Old Testament, but never with the approval of God. In every case, we see that it produced conflict, heartache and sin. Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon all furnish examples of the result of this evil.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What was the scene when Jacob arrived at Haran?

There were shepherds abiding their herds there near a well.

2. Who did he inquire about?

He asked if they knew Laban, his uncle.

3. Describe the meeting of Jacob and Rachel.

She brings in her sheep to be watered and fed at the appointed time.

4. How long did Jacob abide with Laban before any transaction took place?

He stayed with them 30 days.

5. How long did Jacob agree to serve Laban for Rachel?

7 years

6. How did Laban deceive Jacob?

Instead of giving him Rachel, he gives the older first born Leah as his wife.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.