

Genesis
Chapter 29:1-30

I do have to warn you. The next two chapters are really wild. As we will learn how Jacob will be renamed Israel. And with the name we have the twelve tribes of Israel. Which means that Jacob will have twelve sons.

That's all I will say for now.

Let's get started in this weeks study.

† *Gen 29:1-8 1 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 2 And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. 3 Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.*

4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5 Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." 6 So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." 7 Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." 8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

Jacob was around 77 at this time, and where had he returned too? Haran.

Does that name sound familiar?

Let's go back in time in our study, back to chapter 12.

† *Gen 12:4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

Do you remember this portion of scripture? This was where we first meet Abraham (or Abram as he was called then). God had just told Abram to leave Haran and go to a new place, which we now know as Israel.

It's interesting that Jacob was about the same age as his great-grandfather Abraham when he left Haran. God told Abraham to leave, but his descendants found a way back even though it was around 400 miles away.

Sometimes as kids we say, "I'll never be like my parents". But as we grow up we find out what they were teaching us was for our own good, so we start to change our tune and

maybe even say, *"I hope I can be like my parents"*.

There was a purpose for Jacob returning to Haran and even his uncle Laban. And as we will read Jacob was there for quite a while. Not just a few days or even months. No he will be there for over 14 years.

Do you feel like you're stuck in your job, or even where you live? Maybe you desire to leave but every time you try an obstacle gets in the way and you just can't. Maybe God has a purpose for where you are, whether at your job or where you live.

I remember a time a several years back when there was an opening at my job that I applied for. I thought that this job was for me because it was what I really wanted to do, and I would be making more money. I was qualified for this job and I prayed about it and left it up to the Lord.

To make a long story longer, I didn't get the job. In fact someone who was less qualified got the job. I was a little disappointed, but I knew it was in God's hands and He knew what was best for me.

Well a few months later another job similar to this one opened up and was even better with even more pay. I knew for sure this was the one for me. After all, I thought that was why the Lord didn't allow me to get the first job. Once again I prayed about it and left it up to the Lord, and once again, I didn't get the job. I admit I was disappointed again, but the Lord was my comfort, because by faith I had to believe that God knew what He was doing.

Eventually I was transferred to another department because the one I had worked for closed down. No pay increase, just a job change. It was a new and challenging job for me. And when the end of the year came along and I got my review, I was shocked at the increase in pay and even a promotion was given to me. It wasn't because of me but the Lord.

If I had my choice, I would still chosen one of those other jobs over this one. But I had a peace with this the job I was doing, because I know it's where God wanted me. That's where my comfort is. It's in knowing that God is in control of my life and He will always take care of my family and me. For me it's not about what work I am doing any longer, but how does the Lord want to use me where He has me.

So Jacob returns to Haran and he asks about his uncle Laban who we found out is fine. Jacob also meets his future wife at this time. But then I'm getting ahead of the story.

† ***Gen 29:9-12 9 Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 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. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 12 And Jacob told Rachel***

that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

Remember the last few studies we learned that Jacob was Rebecca's favorite? Here we see that Jacob is just like his mother, by watering the flock of his future wife and father-in-law Laban. Remember Rebecca did the same thing when Abraham's servant went to find a wife for Isaac.

† ***Gen 24:19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking."***

I've asked this before and I will ask it again. What are you teaching your children or even your grandchildren? We saw that Rebecca taught Jacob to be a servant, but she also taught him how to deceive others, even his own brother.

So what are you teaching your children?

Do you tell them not to watch R rated movies, but you do?

Do you tell them to wait until you are married to have sex, but you are sleeping with someone?

Do you teach them to love the Lord your God, but you date someone of another faith or religion?

"But we are in love. I believe God brought us together," you may be saying.

This is what God says about dating a non-believer or someone of a different faith or belief in God.

† ***2 Cor 6:15-18 (NLT) 14 Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can goodness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? 15 What harmony can there be between Christ and the Devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? 16 And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said:***

"I will live in them and walk among them.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

17 Therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord.

Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you.

18 And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

You may think it's all right or that God has told you it was all right. But God will NOT go

back on, or against His word. God will not change His mind on what He says just to make you happy.

"How do I know if this relationship is wrong?" you ask.

Does this relationship bring glory to God? Does it cause you to worship and praise Him?
Does this relationship bring you to church and have you serve others in the church?
Is he or she willing to wait until you are married to have sex?
Do you spend more time with your hands all over each other than in God's word?

Tough questions, but if you really want a marriage and/or relationship from God, then they are questions you have to ask.

I know for me in my past, I was out for only one thing from a woman. But it is very different with my fiancé. This is one of the first relationships I have had that did not involve sex at all. We spend time in God's word together and we also spent time in prayer together.

After all, we all want to be accepted by someone of the opposite sex. But don't you want to be accepted by someone who loves the same God as you do. Someone who has given their life to Jesus and that you can teach your children about Jesus with together?
If you settle for anything less, then you are not waiting for God's best for you.

So Jacob waters Laban's sheep for Rachael and then he kissed her.

"He what? Boy he's a fast mover isn't he?"

No he wasn't. You have to once again think of the culture and what this represented. This was not a passionate kiss like a husband or wife or like you would see in a movie. It would be like seeing one of your relatives and giving them a hug and kiss on the cheek.

Then Rachel got all excited and went and told her father Laban, that his nephew Jacob was here.

✠ Gen 29:13-14 13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

Here Laban runs to meet Jacob and showed him the family affection, bringing him to his house, and Jacob tells him all about his (Laban's) sister Rebecca and the family. He probably told him about why he was there, so Laban puts him up for a month.

"Wait, I thought you said Jacob was there for over 14 years?" We are not through yet.

✧ **Gen 29:15-20** 15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?" 16 Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance. 18 Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." 19 And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

Jacob must have been a hard worker. Remember back in past studies we learned that Laban was greedy. But here Laban wants to pay Jacob for his work. And what was Jacob's desire for pay? Rachel.

But it does mention that Laban had two daughters; the first-born Leah, and her sister Rachel.

Leah means: *Wear or tired.*

Rachel means: *Sheep or ewe.*

Another interesting thing is that Jacob's name means "*one who follows*", but God will change his name to Israel which means "*God prevails*". Jacob will have twelve sons, which will be known as the 12 tribes of Israel. And these twelve sons will be from numerous women. Leah meaning "*tired*"; Rachel meaning "*sheep*"; Rachel's handmaid Bilhah which means "*old*" or "*confused*" and finally Leah's handmaid Zilpah which means "*drooping*" or "*uncertain*".

Next week we will look more closely at these twelve babies' and see each one in its tribe of Israel. (I told you the next few chapters are wild.) But even though they are from different women with different meanings to each name, which may affect each tribe, God will lead them and prevail in the lives of the children of Israel.

It also mentions that Leah had "*tender*" or "*delicate*" eyes. So what does this mean? The original meaning is "*soft*" or "*weak*" which could mean that she may have had poor eyesight. But I also heard a teaching that said that she possibly had blue eyes, which was not common, because the people of this culture had brown or dark eyes.

So why would Jacob want to work for seven years for Rachel?

It was customary to give a dowry to the family of the woman you were to marry. This was in case you chose to divorce her. What you gave them in this dowry would compensate for the return of their daughter and the fact that they would now have to provide for her again. Kind of like paying alimony in advance.

But since Jacob had nothing to give for the dowry, he chose to work it off for seven years.

It also says that these seven years seemed like only a few days to Jacob because he loved Rachel so much. But this is what true love does. It doesn't take short cuts to get anything. It doesn't think of itself.

Satan offered Jesus short cuts,

† *Matt 4:8-10 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "*

† *Matt 27:42 "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.*

But because of Jesus' true love for us, He chose not to take it.

If you are in a relationship, or you see something that you want and your thought are, *"I just can't wait, I got to have it now."* That is not love for something or even someone; it's lust and/or covetousness. If it's true love, and from God, it will be worth the wait, and the wait won't seem that long.

✠ *Gen 29:21-30 21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. 23 Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. 24 And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. 25 So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" 26 And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 "Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." 28 Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. 29 And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. 30 Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.*

Jacob deceived his father and in return he himself was deceived by Laban. A lot of questions come up about this, like how could Jacob not know it wasn't Rachel, or wouldn't he know when they walked down the aisle?

Remember this culture was different then ours. They didn't have the usual church type wedding that we think of when we hear of marriage. There was no walking down the aisle.

In fact, weddings lasted a whole week, that's 7 days.

What would happen is that, her father and mother would bring the woman into the man's tent in the evening, and they would consecrate the marriage there. Then the feast would continue all week, that is the meaning of "Fulfill her week".

Jacob was deceived because Laban never told him about the custom they had of the first-born woman being married before any others. Jacob thought he was working for Rachel. In fact that was the agreement.

But Jacob could not really argue with Laban, because he knew deception all too well himself. So Laban says to Jacob, *"If you want Rachel too, just work another seven years and she is yours."*

Jacob agrees, but he doesn't have to wait seven more years. The agreement is that you can have her after the marriage is done with Leah (the 7 days) then you can have Rachel too. But you have to stay and work another seven years.

One of the closing statements is that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. We will see what happens next week because of this favoritism

May God richly bless you in all that you do this week and may you share God's love with others!