

In the Beginning

Genesis 29:1-35

- We've all heard the saying "life isn't easy" right! Well what I've found is **what life does to us** often depends a great deal on **what life finds in us**, and with Jacob we'll see this very principle play itself out. In the next **3** chapters we'll see Jacob spend **20** years in the house and care of his scheming, slick, idolatrous uncle Laban, and there he'll learn some of the most painful lessons that in the end will help mold and shape him into the man God wanted him to be all along,

V1-35

- **V1-3** Isaac Jacob's father had sent him away to his uncles house to find a wife so that he doesn't marry a woman of the Canaanites like his brother Esau who by the way wants to kill him. Jacob had known all about the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac but it wasn't until he's traveling in the wilderness all alone with his brother Harry on his trail to kill him that he truly has an encounter with God that has caused him to make the Lord his God > **Gen 28:12-22**.
- This story is very much like us, as God reveals Himself to us, but it takes a while for us to surrender to Him, and afterward the Lord has to grind some things out of us, hopefully it doesn't take **20yrs**, and even then He still from time to time has to wrestle us to the ground just as He will Jacob. So this is an important story for us to pay close attention to as we see the disobedient human heart at work and we see the love, patience, mercy, and grace of God prevail over it.
- **V4-9** it has taken Jacob **2-3** months to get to his destination "**Paddan Aram**" but he is finally here just as God had promised him, and like his grandfather's servant who met his father's bride Rebekah at a well so he meets his future bride Rachel at a well also. This is important fellows that when looking at qualities for a wife and lifelong companion take note of where you find her and what she is doing before she meets you, that will tell you a lot about her character.
- Jacob finds her working and coming to the well, also notice she is called a shepherdess meaning this wasn't just something she happened to do this is what she did every day, take care of stinky, unintelligent, helpless sheep, so that meant she knew how to be tender and when to be stern. **V10-13** that stone that covered the well was heavy so much so that typically the shepherds would wait for everyone with sheep to come so that they didn't have to move the stone but once before putting it back over the well, but Jacob he moves it all by himself.
- So overcome with emotion of God's timing God's provision that would bring him to this well at this time exactly when Laban's household would come to water their sheep, and he kisses Rachel and lifted up his voice and cries. During all this he is able to get out to her who he was and why he's come and that causes Rachel to take off running to her father to tell him what has happened, Laban upon hearing the story runs and finds Jacob and hugs him and gives him a kiss.

- **V14-19** Laban initially has Jacob stay with him a month and no doubt Jacob is doing his share of the work around the house and Laban approaches Jacob with an opportunity for him to stay longer, and Jacob offers to work for **7yrs** in order to have Rachel as his wife. The number **7** in scripture is symbolic of “completion” so after **7yrs** is complete Jacob expects to receive Rachel as his wife and go on his way and start his life, so Laban agrees to the terms and a deal is struck.
- Jacob’s in love, he believes he’s hit the jackpot, were told that Rachel is beautiful, a hard worker, and willing to go with him, but notice we don’t read anything about Jacob being drawn to her spiritually, it’s all in the natural. Jacob has met God, he’s gone from knowing about the Lord to actually knowing the Lord, but instead of seeking Him for the most important decisions of life he’s making deals without praying or seeking, and he is going to pay an awful price in the end.
- Unbeknownst to Jacob Laban is setting him up, he allows Jacob to think that he can get what he wants without going through the normal channels, what do you mean? In this culture Jacob knew that the older always has first choice of everything which is why he tricked his brother into selling him his birthright earlier, and normally the eldest is the one who marries first, but thinking Laban has made an error in speaking too quickly Jacob pounces on it and agrees to it. This was a generous offer by Jacob and to his credit we do see that Jacob was willing to wait as **7yrs** was an unusually long time even in that culture to work without pay to fulfill a dowry.
- **V20-22** this might seem romantic but it also reveals Jacob’s weaknesses, for as he’s watching Rachel Laban is watching him and Jacob doesn’t even know it. Laban knew Jacob’s father Abraham was a Godly man for his servant told his family all those yrs ago how God had chosen him and led him and blessed him in all that he did > **24:35-36**. So while Jacob’s eyes are on Rachel instead of being on the Lord, Laban has hatched a scheme to keep him working for him.
- **V23-27** the ole switcheroo as Laban replaces Rachel with Leah, Jacob could always outsmart the other person to get what he wanted but now he’s met his match in uncle Laban, as the man who deceived his father is now deceived by his father in law > **Gal 6:7-8**- is an inescapable truth that “**we will reap what we sow**”. Laban tells Jacob in order to keep tradition he had to trick him into marrying Leah first, but he will still give him Rachel as long as he serves another **7yrs**. In one night Laban has made Jacob a polygamist, God never sanctioned this He tolerated it and it always led to grief and strife, in fact later in **Lev 18:18** he banned men from doing this.
- **V28-30** now you see one woman loved while another is being unloved, just like Jacob’s mom favored him while Isaac favored Esau and the friction it caused bad choices repeat itself. **V31-35** sadly here is another principle that even though Jacob didn’t love her he still was willing to have sex with her, but God looked on Leah and had mercy on her knowing that she is not loved like her sister he blesses her and look what’s considered a blessing (**children**). Her son’s names meant a **son, hearing, attachment, praise**, she hoped that a child would make Jacob hear her, draw closer to her, and praise her, but it didn’t, even though she seemed to know God.