

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (June 4, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Someone takes advantage of another and then the tables turn. There are number of ways we put it ... “they’re getting what they deserve,” “ain’t payback something,” “a dose of their own medicine.” With that it seems some semblance of justice has been restored in the world. Most of us are uncomfortable when underhanded, evil, self-serving deeds, go unpunished. We demand justice. But do we really want justice? We are happy enough when we get away with something we shouldn’t have done ... as long as others get what’s coming to them. Jacob had cheated, stolen, lied, to get what he wanted. His brother and father were his victims. Now the tables turned and Jacob was deceived. The price he paid ... 14 years of labor. 14 years lost. 14 years without contact with his parents or his brother. This may have been valuable time. Time to reflect. Time to consider a different approach to his life, his faith, his relationships. It may take years ... but then we discover Christian faith is about second, third, fourth ... and many more, chances. New beginnings!

The Deceiver Deceived (Genesis 29:1-27 Some verses omitted below)

Between last’s week sermon, when Jacob cheated his older brother Esau out of the family blessing, and this week’s message, Jacob’s parent’s (Isaac and Rebekah) sent their young son back to the city where their relatives still lived. They sent Jacob away for his own safety, and with the hope that he would find a wife among the daughters of his uncle Laban.

29:1 “Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. (verses 2-3 omitted here)

4 Jacob said to them, ‘My brothers, where do you come from?’ They said, ‘We are from Haran.’ 5 He said to them, ‘Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?’ They said, ‘We know him.’ 6 He said to them, ‘Is it well with him?’ They said, ‘It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!’ (verses 7-8 omitted here)

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came 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 wept aloud. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father. (13-15 omitted here)

16 Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. 18 Jacob

loved Rachel. And he said, ‘I will serve you seven-years for your younger daughter Rachel.’ (verse 19 omitted here) 20 So Jacob served seven-years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, ‘Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed.’ 22 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. 23 But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. 24 (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) 25 And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?’ 26 Laban said, ‘It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven-years.’”

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What reason is given for Jacob’s escape? (Read 27:41-28:9)
2. What does this passage tell us about Jacob? About Laban?
3. What does this passage tell us about Jacob’s love for Rachel?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. What does “Jacob served seven-years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days ...” mean? Discuss.
5. What does “we will give you the other also” (verse 27) mean?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

6. Share an enjoyable memory of visiting relatives. What do you remember? If you have no positive memories, discuss that.
7. Why do people go back to places they’ve lived, connect with old friends, share stories about old times? Do you? Discuss.
8. What did Jacob gain from deceiving his brother and father? Did he need to deceive them to gain God’s blessing?
9. Have you ever felt such love for another person, for a baby, a friend, for a place or a cause, that time seemed “a few days.”
10. Have you ever cheated someone and gotten away with it?
11. Discuss the difference between justice and mercy. Which do you hope for, want, expect from God, and others? Discuss.

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you trust Him for both justice and mercy. Pray that God will reveal your shortcomings and reveal His mercy. He walks with you each day because He loves you.