

17-18 Bible Study #30

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Genesis 29-32

Genesis 29

- **Genesis 29:1-12**

- The author is making sure that we know that *Jacob* went east
- When *Jacob* saw a well, we know that wedding bells are not far off
- We hear about the shepherds gathering their flocks to water them at the well
- Then we met *Rachael* (*Laban's* daughter) who brought her father's flock to the well

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- *Jacob* rolled back the stone from the well, watered her flock and gave her a kiss
- *Rachel* ran and told her father about *Jacob* *

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- **Genesis 13-25**

- *Laban* (*Jacob's* uncle, the brother of his mother) ran to meet, embrace and invite his sister's son to his home
- Then *Jacob* stayed in *Laban's* house for a month
- *Laban* asked *Jacob* what he should be paid to work for him
- *Laban* had two daughters; *Leah* the oldest, and *Rachel* her younger sister
- *Jacob* fell in love with *Rachel* and agreed to work for *Laban* for seven years in order to marry her

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- Once again “seven years” meant that they were entering into a covenant
- *Laban* “tricked” his son-in-law by switching his daughters on the wedding night
- How did *Laban* pull off the switch?
 - It was night, they were living in tents, most likely, only lit by candles
 - Most likely both daughters were of similar stature
 - Leah was veiled for the wedding ceremony, as was the custom
 - After a big meal, most likely with much wine, it was fairly easy to make the switch
- The next morning *Jacob* discovered that he had married *Leah**

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- **Genesis 29:26**

- We hear a reference to “first born” three times in the passage about *Esau* and *Jacob*
 - Genesis 27:19
 - Genesis 27:32
 - Genesis 29:26
- This phrase unites the entire narrative
- Look at the wordplay of what happened here
 - In the darkness the first-born was switched for the younger
 - Earlier the blind father (Isaac) was tricked by his younger son
 - Here the bride’s father (Laban) tricked Jacob (the trickster)

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- As the story progressed, *Jacob* continued to be “tricked” many times
 - Jacob’s sons tricked him into believing that his favorite son Joseph was killed by a wild animal by covering his coat with blood*

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- **Genesis 29:27-30**

- *Jacob* was asked by his father-in-law to complete the seven day wedding feast
- Then we were also introduced to *Leah's* maid, *Zilpah*, who was given to her by her father
- *Jacob* had one wife (*Leah*), but was still seeking *Rachael* as his second wife
- *Jacob* agreed to work for *Laban* for another seven years for the hand of *Rachel*
- In the next few verses we will see how *Jacob* ended up with two wives and two concubines, all of whom bear him children
- It will be very important to keep track of these events*

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- **Genesis 29:31-35**

- *Leah* bore Jacob four sons: **Reuben** (#1), **Simeon** (#2), **Levi** (#3) and **Judah** (#4)
- She also bore the only daughter named *Dinah*
- *Rachael* was delayed in bearing sons (barren), but finally gave him *Joseph* and later *Benjamin*
- Knowing these events gives us a leg up on the rest of Salvation History
- This will be very important when we meet the *Samaritan* woman at the well in **John 4**

Genesis 29 (Cont)

- Many of the events in **John 4** will not make sense unless we understand this background
- We also will need to know the genealogy of *Levi* who had three sons:
 - Gershom
 - Kohath – Amram – Moses and Aaron
 - Merari

Genesis 30

Genesis 30

- **Genesis 30:1-13**

- Here we go again – *Rachel* was barren so she gave *Jacob* her maid *Bilhah*
- *Bilhah* gave *Jacob* two sons: ***Dan*** (#5) and ***Naphtali*** (#6)
- *Leah* got jealous and gave *Jacob* her maid *Zilpah* who was given to her by *Laban*, her father (**Genesis 29:24**)
- *Zilpah* gives *Jacob* two sons: ***Gad*** (#7) and ***Asher*** (#8)*

Genesis 30 (Cont)

- **Genesis 30:14-24**

- Since it appeared that *Leah* was no longer able to conceive her first son, *Reuben* went and found mandrakes in the field for his mother
- A mandrake was the root of the mandrake plant that grew in the desert
 - The roots look like a big knot of sweet potatoes
 - For some reason they were believed to have fertility qualities even though consuming a large quantity of them could prove poisonous
 - No one know why they were perceived in this way except they may have looked like a baby

Genesis 30 (Cont)

- *Rachel* who was barren demanded the *Leah* give her some of her son's mandrakes
- *Leah* agreed to give *Rachel* some of her mandrakes after *Rebekah* allowed *Jacob* to sleep with *Leah*
- *Leah* then gives *Jacob* two more sons and a daughter: ***Issachar*** (#9), ***Zebulun*** (#10) and *Dinah*
- God then lifted *Rachel's* barrenness and she gave *Jacob* his favorite son' ***Joseph*** (#11)
 - *Rebekah* will die in childbirth with **Benjamin** (#12) in **Genesis 35:18***

Genesis 30 (Cont)

- **Genesis 30:25-42**

- *Jacob* decided that it was time to return to his home in *Canaan* (the Promised Land)
- He and his father-in-law *Laban* decide on what part of the family wealth belonged to *Jacob*
- They agree that *Jacob* could have all the spotted, striped or black sheep and goats that were in *Laban's* flock
- *Laban* tricked his son-in-law by allowing his son to remove all these animals from the flock
- *Jacob* tricked his father-in-law by having the sheep and goats to reproduce in front of different colored rods to produce the colored sheep
- The irony was that this could not work unless it was done by the hand of God

Genesis 31

Genesis 31

- **Genesis 31:1-24**

- God told *Jacob* that it is time for him to return home (to the Promised Land)
- God blessed him amid a time of difficulty
- *Laban* continued to “*Jacob*” him
 - First by making him work seven years for Rachel
 - Then by working seven more years for her after tricking him into marrying Leah
 - He also continued to trick him over the portion of the flock that belonged to him

Genesis 31 (Cont)

- His wives fought with each other the entire time pointing out to the reader that things never go right when polygamy is practiced
- During his absence his mother *Rebecca* died
- Finally, he decided to returned home (he had been there for 20 years – **Genesis 31:38**)
- *Jacob* then out-foxed *Laban* by not telling the him (the *Aramean*)* that he was leaving
- Once *Laban* found out, he pursued him after he discovered that someone had stolen one of his family gods! *.

Genesis 31 (Cont)

- **Genesis 31:25-30**

- *Laban* told *Jacob* that he understood everything about his departure except for why he stole one of his household gods
 - Most likely a small figurine or statue of one of the gods of the region and/or their family
 - Many households had a small shrine area or sacred spot where they kept these little statues of the various gods of their people or family
 - Often these were fertility gods *

Genesis 31 (Cont)

- **Genesis 31:31-32**

- *Jacob* told *Laban* that he was afraid of what was going on and that was the reason he fled
- His fear was that *Laban* would take his daughters from him by force, so he fled without notifying *Laban*
- But when he heard about the family gods, he said that anyone who was responsible would be put to death
- He thought the accusation was silly because he would have no reason to take a pagan god
- But we can see that *Rachael* did not die at that point *

Genesis 31 (Cont)

- **Genesis 31:33-35**

- *Rachael* grew up in a polytheistic family and she wanted assurance of her fertility
- At this point she only had one son and she will die in childbirth of her second son
- She also hid these figurines under her saddle and indicated that she was menstruating to ensure her father would not search that area (blood made one unclean)
- Thus, she used the excuse of her fertility to lie to her father in order to protect these pagan gods
- The author is certainly telling us about this evil *

Genesis 31 (Cont)

- **Genesis 31:36-55**

- This section gives us the information about the covenant that *Jacob* made with *Laban*
- We see the covenantal language of a meal and the phrase, “between you and me”
- It also introduced us to two important biblical locations:
 - Galeed
 - Mizpah

Genesis 32

Genesis 32

- **Genesis 32:1-6**

- As *Jacob* returned home (to the Promised Land), he was met by an army of angels
- He called the place *Mahanaim*
- Unfortunately, he still had to deal with his brother *Esau*
- He must have wondered what *Esau's* disposition was at that point
- It looked like *Esau* was still angry with him
- If not, why would he have planned to meet him with 400 men? *

Genesis 32 (Cont)

- **Genesis 32:7-21**

- This news distressed *Jacob*, so he divided his family and flocks into two groups
- His plan was to ensure that at least one of the groups would survive if *Esau* destroyed the other group
- He prayed to God to deliver him from *Esau*
- Then he prepared gifts for *Esau* in hopes of appeasing him *

Genesis 32 (Cont)

- **Genesis 32:22-32**

- That night he sent his family across the *Jabbok* river, while he remained in place to meet *Esau*
- During the night he had a very, unusual encounter with an angel with whom he wrestled until morning
- *Jacob* refused to let the angel go until he gave him a blessing
- The angel then changed his name to ***Israel***
 - He will no longer be called the tripster but now will be known as the “wrestler”
 - *Isra* – to wrestle
 - *El* – God
 - *Israel* – he who wrestles with God

Genesis 32 (Cont)

- This summarizes the statement, “you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed
- *Jacob* then named that place *Penuel*, meaning “the face of God”