

Day 26 - THURSDAY: November 17th

Genesis 29

Genesis 29:1-35 NKJV

So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 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. 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. And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." 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." 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." Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 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. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 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. 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. And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month. Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance. Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her. Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my

wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. 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. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. 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?" And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years. When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

Daily Deep Dive:

I believe this chapter reads pretty clearly, but I'll make just a few quick comments and then we will read the UCG reading program on this chapter:

Verse 11 – We shouldn't read this "kiss" as something passionate and improper.

This was an expression of affection and friendship. We see Jacob kissed by Laban in verse 13.

Verse 14 – Sometimes it's easy to miss passages of time in the bible. Jacob works for Laban as free labor for a month before asking to marry his daughter.

Verse 27 - When I was a kid, I thought Jacob worked 7 years and was tricked into marrying Leah and then worked another 7 years to be able to marry Rachel. This is not the case. Jacob got to marry Rachel at the end of one week (marriage feast/week). Then after marrying Rachel continued to work an additional 7 years for her.

Verse 31 – 35: We've previously discussed the great difficulty of barrenness but also how Leah viewed the love that children would gain her with Jacob. Both women's trials are sad and difficult.

The UCG reading program:

"Jacob's arrival in Padan Aram gives us a revealing look at him. From his conversation with the shepherds gathered at the well, we may observe that Jacob was polite, sociable and knowledgeable of the business of herding. Jacob's life "in tents" was not cloistered—he was, as previously stated, civilized and refined, and most likely skilled in the family business. Moreover, Jacob was no pampered weakling. For when he saw Rachel, he went and rolled the stone off of the mouth of the well—and well stones were massive circular stones of considerable weight. Also, notice verse 10's triple reference to "Laban, his mother's brother." Some commentators have taken this pointed emphasis to indicate that Jacob's mind at this point may have been more on attempting to ingratiate himself into the favor of Laban through a favorable report from Rachel, and less on the woman herself. Of course, the tenderness of verse 11 should demonstrate a genuineness of feeling regarding his meeting up with close relatives. That is only natural. Still, putting all the evidence together, it would appear that Jacob is a cultured, sociable, business-savvy and physically imposing man who, though at least sometimes genuine in feeling, is not always genuine in his dealings with others—that he is often looking for a way to further his own ends.

God is about to embark on a long course of knocking Jacob down to a more humble self-appraisal—using Laban as a significant tool in the process. Jacob may have been a smooth operator in Canaan, able to run the family business and outwit his elder brother, but he can in no way compare to the devious Laban. Jacob has unknowingly met his match. When Rachel brought her father the news of Jacob's arrival, Laban ran to meet him—perhaps naturally happy to see a visiting relative (verses 13-14) but also, knowing the type of person Laban is, surely thinking back on the gifts that were given for his sister Rebekah (Genesis 24:30). Jacob stayed with Laban for a month, and during that month two things happened: Jacob fell in love with the beautiful Rachel, and Laban observed it. Now Laban had a way to get Jacob into his service; he may have even begun planning something when Jacob "told Laban all these things" (verse 13), which no doubt included the reason for his journey to Haran.

Sensing his opportunity, Laban asked an apparently magnanimous question: “Shall you serve me for nothing because you are family? Name your wages” (compare verse 15). Jacob asked for Rachel, as Laban had no doubt anticipated. Laban set Rachel’s price at seven years’ service, which Jacob happily rendered. But on the wedding night, Laban substituted Leah for Rachel. Jacob’s senses and wits may have been dulled by festive drinking (perhaps urged on all the more by Laban). Jacob was further blinded by the darkness of the nuptial tent—darkness probably arranged as part of Laban’s conspiracy, which appears to have involved Zilpah (verse 24). Leah herself must have kept silent, probably on orders from her father. In any event it is clear that Jacob did not realize he had slept with the wrong woman until the morning (verse 25). Laban’s reply when an angry Jacob confronted him: “It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.” *Firstborn*—the word must have been like a dagger in Jacob’s ears, for in his own family, as we earlier read, Jacob had contrived to gain for himself the birthright and blessings that normally would have gone to his own fraternal twin brother, Esau, the firstborn. Jacob’s deviousness was now coming back to haunt him. For committing to another seven years’ service Jacob obtained Rachel the following week, but the die was now cast for a divided, unhappy household. Jacob was reaping what he had sown.” [END]