

Genesis Chapter Twenty Nine

Genesis 29:1-8

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. And Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." And he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep." And he said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."

- This was a long journey to make alone and on foot.
- He has received God's promise concerning his future—so he continues the journey with hope.
- Three flocks—probably an indication that three shepherds are present
- Consider how often the topic of wells comes up—both with Abraham and Isaac
- He does not find the well—or run into Rachel 'by luck'—but divine providence. (finds out his location from the herdsmen)
- Years before when Abraham's servant had come looking for a bride for Isaac—he stopped and prayed. Don't see this response with Jacob.
- In Laban—Jacob meets his match—and will be disciplined by the Lord.
- These herdsmen dependent on good conditions—not highly motivated—they wait until enough arrive to move stone easily. Jacob displays strength—accomplishing the task alone.

Genesis 29:9-12

While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came about, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went up, and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of Laban his

mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.

- Shepherding seems to be gender neutral. Very few references to shepherds where it is not predominantly male.
- Three references to his mother—perhaps Rebekah had shared her own stories of Paddan-aram with her sons.
- Jacob moves stone by himself—shows that he is different than the others. He waters Laban's flock—in story of Rebekah—she waters the servant's camels.

Genesis 29:13-15

So it came about, when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month. Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

- Laban would have recalled Abraham's servant coming with wealth and riches to gain a bride for Isaac.
- Question posed to Jacob –about wages—first inkling to his future circumstances.
- In gaining the blessing of the first-born, from Isaac, it was to 'be served'—rather than the one who serves. Jacob is about to receive his discipline for his own ways.
- Jacob has fallen into the hands of a crafty schemer—about to reap what he has sown.
- Laban does not intend to treat Jacob as a perpetual guest—but looks to gain from him.
- Jacob is about to learn submission from a human master. He is about to learn patience and faith required to inherit the promises.
- Jacob willing to pay any price to gain Rachel (Esau had been willing to pay any price for some stew)

Genesis 29:16-20

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

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 to him but a few days because of his love for her.

- Serving seven years is a generous offer. Jacob knows what he wants and is ready to demonstrate high value he places on Rachel.
- Laban's agreement—not actually a true consent/covenant.
- Isaac had been fooled—one son for the other—because he couldn't see the difference—same situation here.
- Leah=weary
- Rachel=a ewe; beautiful

Genesis 29:21-30

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her." And Laban gathered all the men of the place, and made a feast. Now it came about in the evening that he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her. Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came about 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 with you? Why then have you deceived me?" But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place, to marry off the younger before the first-born. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." And Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.

- Job 4:8—those who plow iniquity—sow trouble—harvest it
- In Laban's treatment of Jacob—we see the deceiver deceived
- Sowing and reaping—major principle (Pharaoh orders every Hebrew son to be drowned in Ex 1:22—then he dies by drowning—Ex 14:28)
- Jacob the younger—deceived father—pretending to be the elder son—now the elder daughter of Laban is given in the younger daughter's place.
- It is later forbidden to marry two sisters in each other's lifetime. (Lev 18:18)
- Zilpah=flippant mouth
- Bilhah=languishing; decrepitude

Genesis 29:31-35

Now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the Lord has seen my affliction; surely now 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." So she named him Simeon. And 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 he was named Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise the Lord." Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

- Recall how God looked upon Hagar—taking note and blessing in light of her rejection. God demonstrates mercy to the despised one. The Lord's timing is involved in the births.
- Unloved=hated; neglected
- Leah—the unloved becomes mother to kingly (Judah) and priestly (Levi) tribes.
- Leah takes comfort in bearing her sons—but names reflect her sense of rejection, isolation, and lack of love.
 - Reuben=see, a son
 - Simeon=hearkening
 - Levi=joined
 - Judah=he shall be praised