GENESIS 29

Jacob Falls For Rachel

1 Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of Kedem. **2** When he looked, he saw a well in the field. He also saw that there were three flocks of sheep lying by it, for they watered the flocks out of that well. However, there was a great stone over the opening of the well. **3** When the shepherds gathered the flocks there, they rolled the stone from the opening of the well and watered the sheep. When they finished, they put the stone back to its place over the opening of the well.

4 Now Jacob said to them, "My brothers. Where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran."

5 So he asked them, "Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?"[i] And they said, "We know him."

6 Then he asked them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. Look! Here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

7 Then he said, "Look. It is yet high day. It is not time to gather the livestock. Water the sheep and take them back to the pasture."

8 But they said, "We cannot[ii] until we gather all the flocks together, and after they roll the stone from the well's mouth. That is when we water the sheep."

9 While he yet spoke with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them. **10** 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 to the well, rolled the stone from its opening, and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother.

11 Then Jacob kissed[iii] Rachel, lifted up his voice, and wept. **12** When Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son, she ran and told her father. **13** It came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him. He embraced him, and kissed[iv] him, and took him to his house. Then he told Laban all these things.

14 Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh."

So Jacob stayed with him for about a month.[v] **15** Then Laban said to him, "Because you are my relative, why should you work for me for nothing? Tell me. What should your wages be?"[vi]

16 Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. **17** Leah was tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful[vii] and well-favored. **18** And Jacob loved Rachel. So he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."[viii]

19 Then Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel. Those years seemed like but a few days to him because of the love he had for her. **21** Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife.[ix] The time of my service is over. I want to marry her."

Laban's Deception

22 So Laban gathered all the men of the place together and made a feast. **23** It came to pass in the evening, that he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him. So Jacob had sex with her. **24** Laban also gave Zilpah, his maid, to his daughter Leah to be her female servant.

25 It came to pass, that in the morning, Jacob realized that he had married Leah.[x] So he said to Laban, "What covenant[xi] trickery you have done to me! I said that I would serve you for Rachel. Why have you tricked me?"

26 Then Laban said, "We do not do this in our country. We do not give the younger before the firstborn. **27** Fulfill her covenant[xii] week, and we will give you this[xiii] blessing as well for the service which you will serve me for another 7 years."

Seven More Years

28 And Jacob did so. He served Laban seven more years to fulfill her covenant.[xiv] Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to marry as well. **29** Laban also gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.

30 And Jacob also went into Rachel. He also loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked for Laban for seven more years. **31** Now when Yahveh saw that Jacob hated Leah, He opened her womb. But Rachel was barren. **32** Then Leah conceived and gave birth to a son. She called his name Reuben[xv] because she thought, "Surely Yahveh has looked on my affliction. Therefore, my husband will love me now."

33 Then she conceived again and gave birth to a son. She thought, "Yahveh has heard how my husband hated me. Therefore, He has given me this son also." So she called his name Simeon.[xvi]

34 Then she conceived again and gave birth to a son. She thought, "Now I will be united[xvii] with my husband because I gave birth to three sons for him." So she called his name Levi.[xviii]

35 Then she conceived again and gave birth to a son. She thought, "Now I will praise Yahveh Yeshua."[xix] So she called his name Judah.[xx] After this, she stopped having children.

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i Terah (Gen 11:27-32) was the father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. Nahor was the father of eight including Bethuel. Bethuel was the father of Laban (Gen 25:20) and Rebekah. Haran was the father of Lot. So, Laban was Jacob's uncle. Jacob was Laban's nephew.

ii Two or three women could have done what Jacob did by himself. It wasn't that they could not do this. It was they had agreed not to do this.

iii This was not a sexual kiss. It was the kiss of greeting — like a parent-child hug (Gen 27:26).

iv This was not a sexual kiss. It was the kiss of greeting — like a parent-child hug (Gen 27:26).

v This is great hospitality. This isn't only because of custom. Laban had certainly heard about rich Abraham. He knew that Jacob would get a sizeable inheritance.

vi That is a polite way to say that the free visit is over. It is time for you to earn your keep.

vii The Hebrew יְפַת־תֹּאַר means beautiful in form. This is rather unnatural. It is understandable why many translations simply says "beautiful."

viii This shows great character. We never know who or what we really are until we come to these big moments.

ix In the customs of the land, they are promised or betrothed in marriage. This is a legal binding even though they do not live together and enjoy mutual sexual relations.

x Jacob gets his first lesson in retribution. He is getting back what he did to Esau. Jacob is reaping what he sowed.

xi The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

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xiii The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. This Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav** also links to an **Aleph**-**Tav**. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

[xiv] The Hebrew וַיְמַלֵּא שְׁבֻעַ זֹאת means "he fulfilled her week." The Hebrew זֹאת is a Zayin-**Aleph**-**Tav**) means to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

[xv] Rueben means "Look! A son." The words רָאָה and בְּעָנְיִי together (he hath looked on my affliction) sound somewhat like Reuben.

[xvi] Simeon (שִׁמְעוֹן) means "heard."

[xvii] The Hebrew לָוָה (*law-vawh*) means attached, joined to, or united. *Law-vawh* sounds close to Ley-vee.

[xviii] The Hebrew לֵוִי (*ley-vee*) means joined to.

[xix] The Hebrew is אֶת־יְהוָה. A maqqeph joins the **Aleph**-**Tav** with "LORD." It unmistakably points to Jesus (See footnote to Rev 1:8). Reasonable options are "Yeshua, Yahveh" or "Yahveh Jesus." See the article "The **Aleph**-**Tav**."

[xx] Judah (יְהוּדָה) means "praised." It is very close to the name of Yahveh (יְהוָה).