

Genesis 29:1-14 Jacob Meets Rachel at Paddan-Aram (plain of Aram, northern Mesopotamia) (today it is on the border of southeastern Turkey and northern Syria).

Gen 29:1 So Jacob went (**Literally picked up his feet, hurried**) on his journey and came to (**arrived at**) the land of the people (**or sons**) of the East (**eastern peoples**) (**Paddan-Aram (plain or fields of Aram near the city Haran)**).

Jacob was traveling from Beersheba in the south all the way close to Haran (Paddan-Aram) in the north. This was roughly 500 miles on foot. To "pick up one's feet" emphasizes the sheer stamina, determination, and quickened pace required to cross the vast desert.

Remember previously Genesis 28, Jacob was fleeing for his life from his angry brother Esau who he had deceived. He was alone, terrified, and slept with a rock for a pillow. However, that night God gave him the incredible vision of the ladder to heaven and promised to protect him, bless him, and bring him back safely.

Notice: we don't see Jacob in prayer or asking God for help? Like Abrahams servant
Correlation passage:

Gen 24:10 Then the servant (**of Abraham**) took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.

Gen 24:11 And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

Gen 24:12 Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham."

Gen 24:13 "Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

Gen 24:14 "Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'--let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

Gen 29:2 And he(**Jacob**) looked, and saw (**in the distance**) a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying (**resting**) by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on (**covering**) the well's mouth.

The well was covered and protected by a large stone to keep it usable

Gen 29:3 Now all the flocks would be gathered there (**and line up, as there custom, agreement**); and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and (**afterward**) put the stone back in its place, on the well's mouth.

Gen 29:4 And Jacob said to them (**3 shepherds**), "My brethren, where are you from?" And they (**shepherds**) said, "We are from Haran."

Gen 11:31 And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there.

Gen 11:32 So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

Gen 29:5 Then he(**Jacob**) said to them (**shepherds**), "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor (**Abraham's brother**), (**Hebrew word for son can also mean descendant or grandson, actually in this case he is his grandson**)?" And they (**shepherds**) said, "We know him (**Yes we know Laban**)."

Nahor (Abraham's brother) married Milcah. They had a son named Bethuel (**Gen 22:20–23**). Bethuel was the father of Rebekah and Laban (**Gen 24:29**). Rebekah is Jacob's mom and is Laban's brother.

Gen 29:6 So he(**Jacob**) said to them(**shepherds**), "Is he well (**at peace**)?" And they(**shepherds**) said, "He(**Laban**) is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."

Remember your mission, don't get sidetracked

Gen 28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

Gen 28:2 "Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Gen 28:3 "May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples;

Gen 29:7 Then he(**Jacob**) said, "Look, it is still high day (**overhead, midday**); it is not time (**too early**) for the cattle (**specifically refers to small livestock—primarily sheep and goat**) to be gathered together (**in their folds before night**). Water the sheep, and go and feed them (**in the pasture**)."

Jacob seems to be confused as to why multiple shepherds are just sitting, waiting by a closed well with their sheep during prime grazing hours.

Gen 29:8 But they(**shepherds**) said, We cannot (**water the flocks**) until all the flocks (**arrive and**) are gathered together, and they (**the shepherds**) have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

The shepherds' response to Jacob **“We cannot (water the flocks)”** wasn't just about physical strength removing the stone; but it was also about custom and protocol. As a community working together, local shepherds had to ensure the water, sometimes being very limited, was divided equally and fairly. It was very common to have strict rules otherwise the strongest shepherd would claim the well or steal all the water, or a single careless person would leave it uncovered, ruining the well for everyone (Gen 26:15–22; Exo 2:15–17 and 21:33–34)

Water was incredibly scarce and valuable. A massive stone was put over the mouth of the well to prevent dirt, sand from storms, wild animals from falling into the well, things entering, theft or vandalism that might ruin or take all the clean water.

Gen 29:9 Now while he(**Jacob**) was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's (**Laban**) sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

Gen 29:10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel (**his cousin**) 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 (**or uncle**).

Gen 29:11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel (**showing family affection on the cheeks, as a greeting**), and lifted up his voice and wept.

Gen 29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he(**Jacob**) was Rebekah's son (**Laban's sister**). So she(**Rachel**) ran and told her father (**Laban**).

We know Rachel had been told about her relative Rebekah, who married a wealthy relative, what an amazing testimony of God's grace.

Gen 29:13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son (**Rebekah's son**), that he(**Laban**) ran to meet him(**Jacob**), and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him(**Jacob**) to his house. So he(**Jacob**) told Laban all these things (**recounted his story, how he was related**).

Gen 29:14 And Laban said to him(**Jacob**), "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he(**Jacob**) stayed with him(**Laban**) for a month.

During the month Jacob probably helped with the chores, duties, he probably was very helpful and smart and God's hand was upon Him.

Genesis 29:15-30 Jacob is Deceived by Laban, Marries Leah first and then Rachel

Gen 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me (**or work**) for nothing (**it is not right**)? Tell me, what should your wages be?"

Laban knew Jacob came from a wealthy family.

Mat 1:2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob ...

Laban did not know how much he would have to pay him?

Jacob had servants that did the hard work back home; now Jacob was the servant.

Gen 30:27 And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake."

Gen 30:28 Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."

Gen 30:29 So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me.

Gen 30:30 "For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also (want to) provide for my own house?"

Gen 29:16 Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder(**older**) was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

Gen 29:17 Leah's eyes were delicate (**weak, dull or bad eyes**), but Rachel was beautiful of form (**figure**) and appearance (**a lovely face and well favored**).

Gen 29:18 Now Jacob loved (**had fallen in love with**) Rachel; so he(**Jacob**) said, "I will serve you (**Laban as a hired hand**) seven years for (**the privilege of marrying**) Rachel your younger daughter."

It was customary in that culture for a prospective husband to give the bride's father a gift. Jacobs's gift was seven years' wages.

Laban's dishonesty and God Blessing Jacob

Gen 31:41 "Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.

Gen 30:25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country.

Gen 30:26 "Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you."

Gen 30:27 And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake."

Gen 30:28 Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."

Gen 29:19 And Laban said, "It is better that I give her (**in marriage**) to you, than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me (**and work for me in return to have her in marriage**)."

Gen 29:20 So Jacob served (**worked**) seven years for Rachel (**to have as his wife**), and “they seemed only a few days to him”, because of the love he had for her (**was so strong**).

True love, Gods grace and Godly vision give us the stamina to endure long, grueling seasons of waiting and hard work without growing bitter and lazy.

Lam 3:25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.

Gen 29:21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled (**my work has been completed**), that I may go in to her (**marry and love her**)."

Gen 29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men (**people**) of the place (**invited all the neighbors**) and made (**or prepared**) a feast (**a wedding feast was usually a lavish event that lasted about seven days**). (**In ancient Hebrew culture, a mishteh (the word used for feast, has with it drinking or to drink) was not just a dinner; it was specifically a "drinking banquet" where wine flowed heavily for hours, often lasting up to seven days. As the groom, Jacob would have been the guest of honor and expected to drink heavily. Laban's premeditated scam to work he needed a combination of complete physical darkness, a heavily veiled woman, and a mind dulled by a massive drinking feast, it is the only realistic way the deception could have succeeded until sunrise.**

If Jacob was sober, he likely would have noticed differences in Leah's voice, words, stature, or mannerisms.

Gen 29:23 Now it came to pass in the evening (**when it was dark out**), that he(**Laban**) took Leah his (**oldest**) daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her (**and Jacob consummated the marriage with Leah, not Rachel and did not know it**).

Usually the bride was placed inside the designated bridal chamber ahead of time. In ancient Eastern customs, the bride did not participate in the public drinking feast with the groom and the local men. Instead, she was escorted separately to the dark tent or room by her father to wait for her new husband. Usually in that culture the bride would not be heavily drinking or drunk, but would act according to the obedience of her father, and possible fear.

Gen 29:24 And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his (**oldest**) daughter Leah as a maid (**female helper servant**).

Gen 29:25 So it came to pass in the morning, that behold (**Jacob woke up and discovered**), it was Leah (**who was in bed with him**). And he(**Jacob**) said to Laban (**outraged**), "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you (**seven years**)? Why then have you deceived me (**trick and betray me, like this**)?"

Jacob's sin of deception has come back to haunt him now the deceiver has been deceived. Remember Jacob deceived his father and manipulated his brother.

God's law of sowing and reaping is real and true

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Gal 6:8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Num 32:23 "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

Application: Shortcuts, lies, and manipulation might bring short-term gains, but they always rot the foundation of your future.

Gen 29:26 And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country (**I cannot break our custom, our practice**), to give the younger (**daughter in marriage**), before the firstborn (**oldest daughter**).

Gen 29:27 "Fulfill her week (**complete my oldest daughter's bridal week**), and we will give you this one (**younger one, Rachel**), also for the service, which you will serve with me, still another seven years (**in exchange for having her also as your wife, bride-price**)."

Gen 29:28 Then Jacob did so (**complied, agreed**) and fulfilled her week (**and also agreed to work an additional seven more years for Rachel**). So he(**Laban**) gave him, his (**younger**) daughter Rachel as wife also (**now being Jacob's second wife**).

Rachel did not get her own formal wedding feast, she was essentially shortchanged. The entire town knew Laban had just pulled a deceptive stunt on Jacob. Laban got what he wanted another 7 years of free work in exchange for his second daughter.

Gen 29:29 And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid (**to be her female helper servant**).

Gen 29:30 Then Jacob also went in to Rachel (**consummated his marriage, loved her**), and he also loved Rachel (**much**) more than Leah. And he served (**worked**) with Laban still another seven years.

Genesis 29:31-35 Jacob has Children

Gen 29:31 When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved (**literally hated**), He opened her womb (**God enabled Leah to have children**); but Rachel was barren (**remained childless and could not conceive**).

The unfair treatment of Leah causes the Lord to favor her and give her children.

Psa 127:3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward (from the Lord).

Deu 21:17 "But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

Gen 29:32 So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben (**See or look, a son**); for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction (**humiliation and suffering**). Now therefore (**or surely**), my husband will love me (**since I, by God's grace have given him a son**)."

Husbands are responsible to care for their wives. God can meet the needs of a hurting wife, especially when neglected by her husband.

Deu 26:7 'Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression.

Deu 26:8 'So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders.

Psa 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.

1Pet 5:5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

1Pet 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

1Pet 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Gen 29:33 Then she(**Leah**) conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved (**hated**), He has therefore given me this son also (**a second son**)." And she called his name Simeon (**probably means God hears or one who hears**).

Gen 29:34 She(**Leah**) conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me (**show me affection**), because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi (**probably means being attached or feeling affection for**).

Gen 29:35 And she(**Leah**) conceived again and bore a son (**forth son**), and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah (**Praise**). Then she stopped bearing (**children at that time**).