

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing St.
Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 22

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Chapter 29

INTRODUCTION

Life is filled with joy and sadness, victories and failures, fulfilment and disappointments. But the people of God in Christ Jesus know that whatever the circumstances and consequences in life, the LORD has a purpose for them. The LORD has clearly declared that not one good thing would He withhold from them whom He has bought with the precious blood of His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus—*For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly* (Psalm 84:11).

This goodness and greatness of the LORD God is evident in Genesis 29. In particular were His dealings with Jacob and Leah. He had reiterated the covenant promises, which He made with Abraham and Isaac to Jacob at Bethel. In this chapter we witness the way that God patiently prepare and transform His servant. As for Leah who was physically less beautiful than her sister

Rachel, and was less loved by Jacob, she received mercy, compassion and blessings from the Lord.

This chapter has many practical hints for us as we purpose to live out the faith that we profess before the world.

OUTLINE

A. Jacob's Arrival at Haran (29:1-8).

1. Jacob continued his journey to Haran (v.1).
2. Jacob arrived at a well in Haran (vv.2-3).
3. Jacob enquired of the shepherds who gathered at the well (vv.4-8).
 - a. He asked about Laban (vv.4-5).
 - b. He was informed that Rachel, Laban's daughter was coming to the well (v.6).
 - c. He told the shepherds to water the sheep and move on (vv 7-8).

B. Jacob's Meeting with Rachel (29:9-14).

1. Rachel shepherded her father's sheep to the well (v.9).
2. Jacob saw Rachel, rolled the stone away and watered her flock (v.10).
3. Jacob kissed Rachel and wept (v.11).

4. Jacob introduced himself to Rachel (v.12a).
5. Rachel was delighted and informed her father (v.12b).
6. Laban welcomed Jacob (vv.13-14).

C. Jacob's Employment by Laban (29:15-20).

1. Laban proposed that Jacob work for him and be paid (v.15).
2. Laban had two daughters (vv.16-17).
 - a. Leah, the elder, had weak eyes.
 - b. Rachel, the younger, was beautiful and more favoured.
3. Jacob loved Rachel (vv.18-20).
 - a. He asked for the hand of Rachel in return for seven years of service (18).
 - b. Laban agreed (19).
 - c. The seven years seemed but a few days (v.20).

D. Jacob was deceived by Laban (29:21-30).

1. Jacob, having fulfilled the seven years of service, asked for Rachel's hand (v.21).
2. Laban threw a wedding feast (v.22).
3. Laban gave Leah instead to Jacob (vv.23-24).

4. Jacob discovered the deception the next day (25).
5. Laban's explanation and offer (vv.26-27).
 - a. Laban gave the excuse that it was the custom to marry off the elder first (v.26).
 - b. Laban offered Rachel to Jacob if he would work for another seven years (v.27).
6. Jacob was given Rachel and fulfilled the second seven-year service (vv.28-30).
 - a. Laban gave Rachel to Jacob (v.29).
 - b. Jacob served for another seven years (v.30).
7. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah (v.30).

E. The LORD Blessed Leah (29:31-35).

1. The LORD saw that Leah was less loved (v.31).
2. The LORD blessed Leah and Jacob with four sons (vv.32-35).
 - a. The first son, Reuben (v32).
 - b. The second son, Simeon (v.33).
 - c. The third son, Levi (v.34).
 - d. The fourth son, Judah (v.35).

COMMENTARY

The Co-operative Will of The Lord

The cooperative will of the LORD protected and led Jacob to the well in Haran. In verse 1, it was reported that Jacob “went on his journey” but the literal translation from the original Hebrew stated that “Jacob lifted up his feet.” Jacob had just been assured by the LORD God of His blessings and protection; that he would return to Canaan, and that his descendants would be as “the dust” spreading to the four corners of the earth, and that “all the families of the earth be blessed.”¹ Jacob actually travelled no less than four hundred miles. The LORD was faithful to His Word. He protected Jacob and made his journey less eventful but surely no less pleasant insofar as Jacob was concerned because of the LORD’s promises to him. The joy of the LORD is his strength. Indeed, his heart lifted up his feet!

Jacob Came to the Right Well

Jacob came to the right well. Undoubtedly there were other wells but he came to this particular well which was material to the purpose of his mission. **Nothing happens by chance to the people of God.** Jacob inquired concerning Laban from the shepherds who were gathered at the well. He had a favourable reply, and was told that Rachel was on her way to the well with her father’s flock. It was not unusual for

women to tend sheep in those countries. Why did not Laban’s sons shepherd his sheep? Laban had sons (31:1). In all probability they had other flocks to tend. Now the well was covered by a large stone. The shepherds had to wait for all the flocks to gather and then with the combined strength of the shepherds, they would remove the stone. Jacob tried to get the shepherds to water their sheep and move on so that he could be alone with Rachel but to no avail.

Jacob Went into Action

Jacob went into action. When he saw Rachel, he was emotionally touched. He thought of his mother. The usage of “mother” was used three times—*his mother’s brother*. Without any hesitation, Jacob single-handedly removed the stone from the well. That speaks a lot about his physical strength. He was no “sissy” after all. Not only did he remove the stone, but he also watered Rachel’s flock. Then he kissed Rachel and wept. He was overwhelmed by the thought of being with his mother’s kindred after being alone for some time. How good is the LORD. He then introduced himself to Rachel. Rachel was elated to find that he was her cousin. She quickly ran home to break the news to her father Laban. Laban too was thrilled as evidenced by his running to meet Jacob. Laban warmly welcomed Jacob who gave him an update about Rebekah, his sister, whom he had not seen for many years. While it was reported that Jacob told Laban all these things, it is unlikely that he told him about his schemes and deception. Jacob stayed for a month.

Following this, Laban proposed to employ Jacob. Laban must have recognised Jacob’s skill as a herdsman,

¹ KJV Genesis 28:13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

so he tried to find some way to keep him. Laban offered to pay him wages. Jacob loved Rachel and wanted her as his wife so he suggested that he served seven years for Rachel. This was the custom of the eastern people. The bridegroom must in a manner, buy the girl whom he intends to marry, from her father. The custom is still prevalent among the Bedouins. The prospective bridegroom must give camels, sheep, or horses. Little did Jacob know that he would meet his match in intrigue and deception.

Laban Tricked Jacob

Laban tricked Jacob. Jacob loved Rachel so much and he was so happy that the seven years breezed by. It seemed to him but a few days. The day came when he completed the seven years. He asked Laban for Rachel. Accordingly Laban threw a wedding feast and invited his friends. The wedding celebration lasted one week. At the end of the week, Laban took Leah, instead of Rachel, to the bridal chamber. That night Jacob consummated the marriage. But in the morning he found out that his wife was not Rachel but Leah. How could this be? Did not Jacob know? Laban brought Leah to Jacob when it was in the evening (nightfall). It was dark. Moreover, Leah was veiled. That was the custom then. Jacob was cheated! Did he remember how he cheated his elder brother of his blessings? This is a good illustration of God's law of retribution. What a man sows that he must also reap. What a man do against others, the same will happen to him.²

² KJV Isaiah 33:1 Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou *wast* not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou

Laban proposed that Jacob serve another seven years for Rachel. Jacob could have exposed Laban's deception. But he did not. It would bring shame to the family and he would be affected too. He showed some good sense and self-control. Jacob complied. Rachel became his wife. He had two wives who were sisters, Leah and Rachel.³ Jacob played favourite -- he loved Rachel more than Leah. The text states that Leah was hated (v.31). The word "hate" is not used in its absolute sense. It is used comparatively as it was reported earlier that Jacob loved Leah less (v.30).

The LORD Sees, Hears and Acts

The LORD sees, hears and acts.
The LORD saw that Jacob cared and loved Leah less. The LORD had compassion for Leah. The LORD blessed Leah and "opened her womb"

shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; *and* when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

KJV Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Other examples: Pharaoh, King of Egypt, gave orders that every son of the Hebrews should be DROWNED (exod 1:22) and so in the end HE was himself drowned (Exod 14:28). Korah caused a cleft in the Congregation of Israel (Num 16:2,3) and so God made a cleft in the earth to swallow him (Num 16:30). Adoni-bezek (Judges 1:6,7). Ahab caused Naboth to be slain and dogs came to lick his blood (1 Kings 21:19); accordingly when he died, and the dogs licked up his blood (1 Kings 22:38). Haman prepared a gallow for Mordecai, but he was hanged from it (Esther 7:10). Saul of Tarsus stood by and the consented to the stoning of Stephen, and later we read that at Lystra the Jews stoned Paul (Acts 14:19) this is the more noticeable because Barnabas who was with him escaped.

³ According to the Mosaic Law this was forbidden (Leviticus 18:18 Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex *her*, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life *time*). .

(31). Leah conceived. She named her firstborn son Reuben, which means “see, a son.” Subsequently, she gave birth to Simeon, which means, “to hear;” next Levi, which means, “attached;” and then Judah, which means, “praise.” The names given by Leah were significant in that they tell us about her feelings. When Reuben was born she was proud that she had given Jacob a son! The name Simeon related that the LORD had heard her plight. Levi expressed her hope that her husband would become attached to her. Judah implied that she was full of praise for the LORD.⁴

PRACTICAL VALUE

There are a few practical hints for Christian living. The most comforting thought and reality is that the LORD God hears, sees and acts for the good of His people. God is ever present in our hour of greatest dejection and need. He blessed and comforted poor Leah. He transformed and built Jacob’s character. The LORD taught Jacob to be patient. He had to work for fourteen years for Rachel. Being cheated by Laban was a bitter reminder to him of how he had cheated his brother Esau! One should live by faith AMEN

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DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

Monday;- Genesis 29:1-8; Psalm 121:1-8; Matthew 7:7-12.

Tuesday: Genesis 29:9-14; Exodus 2:13-22; Matthew 5:16.

Wednesday: Genesis 29:15-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13. 1 Peter 3:1-6.

Thursday: Genesis 29:21-30; Galatians 6:7-10.

Friday:- Genesis 29:31-35; Exodus 3:7-10; Hebrews 4:13-16.

Discussion Questions

1. In the light of Jacob’s experience in Bethel, it is reported that he “lifted up his feet”. What does that tell us about the providence of God?

⁴Baldwin, 126.

2. What evidences are there that he did not come to the well by sheer chance or luck?

3. What did Jacob do when Rachel came to the well that is impressive?

4 It is reported that Jacob “told Laban all these things” (v.13). Do you think that Jacob told Laban about the part he played in deceiving Isaac and Esau?

5 How do we know that Laban warmly welcomed Jacob?

6. In what way is the usage of the word “serve” (v.15, 18, 19) significant?

7. Jacob’s seven years of servitude “seemed unto him but a few days.” Why?

8. Jacob was tricked by Laban. What did Jacob learn from the experience? What biblical truth is illustrated by his experience?

9. It has been said that before God uses His servant He will prepare him. In what way was the LORD God preparing Jacob in the matter of his marriage with Rachel?

12. What do we learn about the LORD our God in this chapter.

10. Is it possible for Jacob to love both Leah and Rachel the same?

13. Describe one practical hint for our living faith from this chapter.

11. How would we evaluate the character and conduct of Leah in the face of adversities?
