

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Genesis 29:15-30

LESSON: A BRIDE WORTH WAITING FOR –

January 3, 2016

HISTORY:

Life is made up of new beginnings, fresh starts, and brand new days. Every time we make a mistake we have to begin anew and get a fresh start. This was Jacob's experience except his mistake was not a small failure: Jacob had fallen flat on his face. He had literally ruined and wrecked his life. He had deceived and lied to his father to steal the blessing and inheritance from his brother Esau. Esau had threatened his life, and now Jacob was on the run. He had been forced to flee for his life to escape the wrath of Esau. He had lost home, family, friends, and all his property, and now he was all alone and destitute in the world, living in fear and separation from God. But the most marvelous thing had happened to Jacob. He had experienced an encounter with God. God had confronted Jacob and led him to make a new commitment; a vow that the Lord, the God of redemption and salvation, would always be his God.

29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. Jacob's journey takes him into the land of the people of the east. As he comes from the encounter with God in Bethel, he goes some 500 miles to Haran. This is an unusual way of referring to the inhabitants of Paddan-aram (Haran) in northwest Mesopotamia. In Genesis, however, the east is often associated with those who are expelled or move away from God's presence. Little does he know that Haran is going to be his home for 20 long years.

29:2 And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. Jacob now sees a well in the field. This was the watering spot for many flocks of sheep. Three flocks of sheep were lying beside it. The well's mouth was protected by a great stone.

29:3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. This is the gathering spot to water the sheep. As the flocks gathered, they would roll the stone away from the well's mouth, so the sheep can be watered. Then the stone is placed back. Perhaps this well of precious stored water could evaporate rapidly in the sun or be filled with blowing dust or some other reason.

29:4 And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. Jacob wanted to know where these brethren/shepherds were from. And they said from Haran.

29:5 And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. When Jacob discovers where the brethren/shepherds were from, he inquired about his uncle Laban, son of Nabor. And yes, they knew him.

29:6 And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. The brethren or shepherds not only knew Laban and his family, but they watered

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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their flock with Laban's daughter Rachel. Jacob asks them if Laban is well. He is inquiring about his only family in the area. They respond that he is well. Rachel is then seen coming to the well with the sheep. This seemed to be about noontime when she came, and watering time, was usually much later in the day.

29:7 And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. Jacob recognized that the sun was still high and not the time to water them. Perhaps there were many sheep that used water from the same well, so Jacob thought it would be best to go ahead and water them at that time, so they could take them back to the pasture, for there was still plenty of daylight left for feeding the sheep.

29:8 And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep. The shepherds were against that idea because it seems that all the flocks had to be there at the same time. ¹It seems at a certain time of day, they rolled back the stone and everyone watered their stock at that time. It might have been difficult to wait until the cooler evening to give water to them all, but they did. This was probably a law in the area to guarantee even distribution of the water or else to make sure there were enough shepherds around to roll the stone off the mouth of the well. The stone that covered the well was very heavy. It was fairly difficult for one man to move it alone. It was easier when more than one man moved it.

29:9 And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. While Jacob was speaking, Rachel came with her father's sheep.

29:10 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. Rachel was the daughter of Jacob's mother's brother, Laban. And when Jacob saw her with the sheep, he went closer and rolled back the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother.

29:11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. There was an astonishing kiss and a burst of tears from Jacob after seeing Rachel. He was so excited to see a family member. It was the custom for family members to greet one another with a kiss, but note, Jacob had not identified himself. He was still a complete stranger to Rachel. She didn't know he was a family member yet when he kissed her.

29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father. Jacob identifies himself to Rachel as her father's brother (better as kinsman) and that he was Rebekah's son. Rachel had heard her father speak of Rebekah, his sister. She ran and told her father.

29:13 And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. When Laban heard the news of his sister's son (his nephew) was there, he rushed to meet Jacob; greeted him with an embrace and a kiss, and brought him into his house. Jacob began to tell Laban all that had occurred.

¹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/Genesis/42.html>

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29:14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month. Laban accepted Jacob; being very glad to receive Jacob as his own flesh and blood. And he invited Jacob to stay which was in the space of a whole month.

LESSON: I. THE ARRANGEMENT MADE Genesis 29:15-20

29:15 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? Laban lets Jacob know that because Jacob was his kinsman (relative), he wasn't to work for nothing. So Laban asked what payment; wages did he want? He was probably glad for Jacob to stay and work because he had two daughters and he had hoped that one would marry Jacob. It was the custom of that day for the man to pay a gift or dowry to the family of his future wife. This was to compensate the family for the loss of the girl.

29:16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Laban, his uncle is the father of two daughters. The older one is Leah, and the younger one is Rachel. Leah means "weary." Rachel means "ewe", a female sheep.

29:17 Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. The description of the sisters portrayed Leah as tender-eyed which meant she² had dull bleared eyes. Leah's face was not ugly (Bohlen), only her eyes were not clear and lustrous, but weary. Probably she suffered, as so many do in that hot sandy region, from some form of ophthalmia (severe inflammation of the eye. However, Rachel is portrayed as beautiful and well-favored which meant beautiful in form and beautiful in look. So, we know which one Jacob was smitten with.

29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. Jacob was willing to serve Laban for seven years for his younger daughter Rachel's, hand in marriage because of his love for her. "Seven" meant "spiritually complete." However, in Jacob's case, Jacob had no dowry; in other words, he had no money to pay for his bride. Jacob had found what he wanted and was willing to work and serve her father for her.

29:19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. Laban truly didn't want to give the younger daughter away before the older, for there was another custom of the land that Laban didn't tell Jacob about: the oldest daughter had to be married first. Thus Laban had deceived Jacob into serving him seven free years of hard work for Leah and not Rachel. There was trickery in his words: *It's better that he give her to him than to another.*

29:20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. The time seemed to fly by because Jacob was in love. Serving seven years for Rachel seemed but a few days for the woman he loved.

II. THE ARRANGEMENT VIOLATED Genesis 29:21-26

29:21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.

² <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/29-17.htm>

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Jacob's seven years are now fulfilled; his contract is complete so he thinks, and he now demands Laban for Rachel, that he may marry her; take her as his wife.

29:22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. Laban takes this deception all the way. He plans a big feast, gathers all the men of the settlement to celebrate with Jacob in this wonderful occasion. This was the custom of the day: the father of the bride would hold a week-long feast to which family, friends, and neighbors were invited—the marriage was consummated—the couple came together at the end of the week after the celebration. Jacob had waited seven years for the woman of his dreams.

29:23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. Jacob the trickster gets tricked. The evening came (it was dark or nearly dark) when Laban brought the older daughter Leah into Jacob's tent, veiling and concealing her face. And Jacob went in unto his bride, not knowing it was Leah.

29:24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. Laban gives to Leah his maid Ziphah, to be her handmaid as a wedding present.

29:25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? So, when morning comes, behold, he sees Leah lying beside him instead of Rachel. He didn't notice who Laban brought to him in the night, for she was veiled. He calls Laban out, asking what is this he has done to him; reiterating to him about the deal they had—he was to serve Laban for seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage, not for Leah. He wants to know why he was deceived.

29:26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Laban responded that it must happen this way in their country; it's an ironclad law. The older daughter of the family had to be the first to marry. The younger daughter could not be given in marriage until the older sister was first married.

III. THE ARRANGEMENT REVISED Genesis 29:27-30

29:27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. Laban suggested a solution: wait till the bridal week (the first week of marriage) of this one (Leah) is over, and he would also give Rachel to him if he served him another seven years.

29:28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. Jacob agreed to this solution after being tricked. He fulfilled Leah's week. Then, Laban gave his second daughter Rachel to Jacob to be his bride. That would make a total of fourteen years of serving Laban.

29:29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. Laban also gives a wedding gift to Rachel—a maid-servant named Bilhah who later became very important (Gen.30:3).

29:30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. Jacob consummated the marriage, loving Rachel more than Leah, serving seven more years. That had to be love!

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SUMMARY:

Jacob on his journey goes to the east and sees a well in the field; three flocks of sheep are lying near the well to be watered. A great stone covers the mouth of the well. As the flocks gathered, they would roll the stone away from the well's mouth, so the sheep can be watered, then place the stone back to cover it. Jacob asked the shepherds at the well where they lived. They replied in Haran. He wanted to know if they knew his uncle Laban and if he was well. They replied that they did know him, and he was well. At that point his uncle Laban's daughter Rachel came to the well with the sheep, but the sun was still high. It may not have been the best time to water the sheep. Jacob suggests that they not wait, but water them now, so they could go back to the pasture to graze in the daylight that's left (**29:1-7**).

They couldn't roll the stone away until all the flocks and shepherds had gathered together at the well; then they could water the sheep. Rachel was the one bringing her father's (Jacob's mother's brother) sheep. As he saw her, he was so excited as he moved closer, and singlehandedly rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban. He kissed Rachel as he spoke to her and began to burst into tears. Jacob then introduces himself to Rachel as her father's brother, meaning kinsman—Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father about Jacob. When Laban heard the news of his sister's son (his nephew) was there, he rushed to meet Jacob; greeted him with an embrace and a kiss, and brought him into his house. Jacob began to tell Laban all that had occurred. Laban accepted Jacob; being very glad to receive Jacob as his own flesh and blood. And he invited Jacob to stay which was in the space of a whole month (**29:8-14**).

Since Jacob's stay was so long, Laban wanted to know how much Jacob would charge to work and serve him, because Laban knew he deserved wages. Just because they were relatives was no reason for him to work for him without pay. Laban had two daughters: Leah and Rachel, and it would have been good to get a man to work for him and also to marry one of his daughters. Leah was tender eyed (dull bleared eyes) and Rachel was beautiful and well favored. Jacob professed his love for Rachel and was willing to serve Laban for seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage. Laban accepted his proposal for his younger daughter, for it was better to give Rachel to him than any other man. Jacob abided with Laban and his family, serving him for seven years. It only seemed like a few days to him because of the love he had for Rachel (**29:15-20**).

Jacob now demands Laban for his wife, for he had fulfilled the seven years and it was time for the marriage. So Laban gathered all the men of that place together that evening for a feast, but that night he took Leah into the tent for Jacob instead of Rachel, and giving Leah Zilpah, his maid to be her handmaid as a wedding gift. Jacob does not recognize that it is Leah until that morning. He asks Laban what has he done and why has he deceived him because they had an agreement for Rachel? Laban lets him know about the law of the country: that the older daughter has to be married before the younger one. He tells Jacob to fulfill this week of the marriage to Leah and then he can serve him seven more years for Rachel, the younger daughter. Jacob did so and fulfilled Leah's week and then Rachel was given to him to also be his wife. As Laban did with Leah, he also gave Rachel his handmaid Bilhah to be her maid as a wedding gift. Jacob consummated the marriage, loving Rachel more than Leah, serving seven more years. That had to be love (**29:21-30**).