

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Seven – Genesis 29:1-35

We studied Isaac in the first six series of studies. Now we’re going to focus just almost completely on the life of Jacob in the ongoing saga of his life.

You’ll find the first study we’re in Genesis 29.

Father, we thank You for Your Word and we thank You for the wonderful things we’ve seen You do in our church. We’re just so thrilled with the way that You’re working in our lives and the really special things that are taking place. Father, one of the things we’ll be able to say when we get done with this one is if You could do it for him, You could do it for all of us. And we thank You that we can look at characters and understand what You had to work with and be encouraged that there’s hope for us to be made more Christlike. There’s hope for us to learn how to live in victory in the Spirit. And there’s hope for us to reflect on others, the Savior, in attractive ways, so that they too would come to know Him. We just ask now that You’ll bless our study. In Jesus’ name we

pray. Amen.

In our study of Jacob we're going to see how so many times he makes decisions independently, not communicating with the Lord..

We have watched him in his relationship with Esau and we've also watched him in his relationship with his father Isaac, embarrassed at some of the things that happened in the first six episodes.

There comes a time in our life when what we sow, we're going to reap. God always has somebody waiting in the wings to really teach us what we need to learn and what we haven't been willing to learn to this point.

All of us as believers, if we're walking with the Lord and endeavoring to become more Christlike, experience these really tough, tough times. And this is a tough one. And we'll see it as he's leaving home because he has to. He's literally a fugitive, because when he stole the blessing from Isaac, their father, Esau had plans to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died.

Rebekah got wind of that and she sent Jacob to Paddan Aram, which is where Rebekah was from. He went to her brother's home, to Uncle Laban's house.

Jacob was on that journey as we had our last study together. In that episode he met God at the top of the stairs. It was one of those wonderful times when God really spoke and He gave

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Jacob the full authority to the rights to the Abrahamic covenant. It had gone from Abraham to Isaac, and God had made it quite clear that it was going onto Jacob.

Some marvelous things that took place there. And as we pick up in Genesis 29, he's still 250 miles from Paddan Aram.

Recognize the fact things are not really nice at home. Isaac is blind and gotten older, he's been deceived—with regard to the blessing—he and Rebekah really aren't communicating all that much. We learned that in the last study. They both had different designs for the two children. Isaac wanted to bless Esau because he was the oldest. Rebekah had the Lord speak to her, saying that the older was going to serve the younger. And so naturally she was pro-Jacob.

And that's created all the havoc that brings us to this place where now we are going to pick up our hero on his way to the University of Hard Knocks, and the colors are black and blue. He's going to have some really, really tough, tough experiences in this study.

Just talk and think though, when we give our life to Christ, His first and most important priority is to make us fruitful. We don't come that way.

When we become a believer, we still have our old nature within us. And we still have a long way to go as a babe in Christ, to grow up and mature in our faith.

A lot of people don't understand that. So the difficult times are wondering why in the world we did this or why did this happen to us. We learn quickly that God wants fruitfulness and He's going to go to great pains in this study to see all of this take place.

God knows where He is to take us. And He knows who to bring into our lives. And He knows how to get us where He wants us to get, and to be. And we'll see that unfold in these verses.

Ready or not, here we come!

Warren Wiersbe put it this way, as we begin this study:

Life isn't easy, and what life does to us depends a great deal on what life finds in us.
(source unknown)

And many of the things that are going on in our life can be things that we will be better instructed when we see the way God works with Jacob.

v. 1 Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples.

“Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples.”

That is such a subdued picture. This man has just had a

glorious experience with the Lord. We could say it's his
CONVERSION EXPERIENCE.

And like one guy said, after being led to Christ, "I feel like I'm walking on clouds. My feet haven't touched the ground yet."

That's literally what the Hebrew text says here. It says "he lifted up his feet" or "he went on his way rejoicing," is more of the picture of the text.

We could just say, "He is a happy camper." He's gotten up from the experience and he's going to make the rest of that 450-mile journey. It's the joy of his salvation that makes him light-footed and walking on the clouds. And so away we go.

There's such joy that comes as we meet him in the first verse.

v. 2 There he saw a well in the field, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large.

"There he saw a well in the field, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large."

Why in the world does he paint such a graphic picture?

Remember that this is the well where the servant was led to find Rebekah. We're going right back to the same house—

brother Laban was involved in the bride of Rebekah for Isaac. We're coming back to the same place.

But there are words that are never stirred. We have to pay attention and wait for just a second.

Now, it's going to be a time of great difficulty. Rebekah said when he left, remember in that last study, "Esau's going to get over this and when he cools down then I'm going to have you come back."

Well she didn't realize that she would die before either one of them ever saw her again. Of course this is not just a little happy trip to Paddan Aram.

We're going to be with her for twenty years—and they are tough years. And sometimes maybe in our life we've got a clock on wanting to cooperate fully with God so that we're instantaneously spiritual giants. There's a lot of things we have to learn yet. "But there are a lot of things that I want to do in your life before I'm going to trust you with fruit and productivity and all the joys that can be yours."

Yes, it does take time. And for him this is the beginning of twenty years to prepare him for usefulness. And there are going to be lots of things that are coming.

But remember, all that's by divine appointment. As long as we keep God's sovereignty, His total and complete control and His ability to orchestrate everything in our lives for a specific

purpose, then we can handle that. And we need to do it.

Now we know that while he was at home as a young boy, he was filled with trickery and deceit in always thinking about Jacob.

Now when it came to the birthright, here Esau nearly starved to death. He takes it as an opportunity to negotiate a deal to get the birthright for a bowl of chili.

He's always thinking about himself. Always thinking about how he can be "one-up." Well, he's about to meet someone whom he has never met before and he belongs in the big leagues when it comes to this sort of thing.

For Joseph it was 13 long years in isolation in Egypt before he was at a point where he had the opportunity to become second in command to Pharaoh. When God does move sometimes He moves very quickly and almost overnight.

For Moses it was a providential circumstance—40 years on the backside of the desert. For Abraham's servant he was guided directly to the home in Paddan Aram, and there led to Rebekah.

So as this scene comes before us, he arrives at the well. It's like he's had reentry. He's at the well, there are three flocks of sheep and there's a large stone there. Pretty well summarizes that verse.

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v. 3 When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.

“When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.”

Naturally they're thinking about blowing sand, they're thinking about keeping the water pure, so they went through all the painful process of waiting for several flocks to get there so they don't open it every time.

v. 4 Jacob asked the shepherds, “My brothers, where are you from?” “We're from Haran,” they replied.

“Jacob asked the shepherds, ‘My brothers, where are you from?’ ‘We're from Haran,’”

“Well, that's obvious because I'm here.”

“they replied.”—won't say another word, just get it.

Remember what Abraham's servant did when he got to the well? He immediately prayed. He said, “God, lead me to the woman.” And then put the conditions on, “If she's the one that draws the water, does all that, then she's the one.”

Jacob doesn't pray. We're not going to see him pray until he's in a wrestling match with the Lord. Finally, he prays.

It's just like we talk about it and yet we assume that just doing it because we've got the desire to do it, that everything's going to work out. And Jacob does not pray a bit about this as he comes to the well.

He just asks a bunch of questions. And so instead of spending time in prayer, seeking guidance, they say they're from Haran.

v. 5 He said to them, “Do you know Laban, Nahor’s grandson?” “Yes, we know him,” they answered.

“He said to them, ‘Do you know Laban, Nahor’s grandson?’”

Well, isn't that interesting? Why didn't he say, “Do you know my mom's brother?”

He uses some interesting phrases.

It's like trying to get blood of a turnip here from these guys.

“they answered.”

v. 6 Then Jacob asked them, “Is he well?” “Yes, he is,” they said, “and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep.”

“Then Jacob asked them,”

You can tell he’s getting frustrated too.

“Is he well?”

“Yes, he is,’ they said,”

“and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep.”

“Oh my! Just what I was looking for.”

He actually is on a wife-hunting expedition. He realizes there’s a candidate coming in this direction, because this is what happened to his mother and how she was found in this family.

v. 7 “Look,” he said, “the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture.”

“Look,’ he said, ‘the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture.’”

We almost get the feeling that he wants them out of there.

“Come on you guys, get the job done and get on. I want to meet this lady.”

v. 8 “We can’t,” they replied, “until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep.”

“We can’t,’ they replied,”—we always, we never—“until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep.”

“We cannot, we always, all at one time, we’re to be here, then we roll the stone away and then we do it this way.”

v. 9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

“While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess.”

When we look at that we realize Laban has two girls and obviously he’s pressed both of them into service.

v. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother, and Laban’s sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle’s sheep.

“When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother, and Laban’s sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle’s

sheep.”

Remember it said it was a really large rock? Now we know why it was a really large rock. The adrenaline’s pumping. He is able to do magnificent things.

He rolls the stone away for himself. Is he scoring some points?

Notice the little phrase that he uses **THREE TIMES**”

“mother’s brother,”

“mother’s brother,”

“mother’s brother.”

It’s been two weeks, but maybe he’s a little bit homesick? And of course he was! He’s a momma’s boy through all of that escapade. A lot of memories go through his mind and he looks to Rachel as someone very beautiful.

This has to be similar to Solomon and Shulamith in the Song of Solomon. Isaac immediately fell in love with Rebekah when he saw her.

He “rolled the stone away from the mouth.” We can just see him here. She’s beautiful, she’s in the bloom of her maiden beauty and innocence.

And so quickly he jumps in and does what?

He SERVES.

It just comes by nature, doesn't it, as the adrenaline pumps when we were dating, to do all of those things? Jacob is not an exception to it. He's doing it exactly.

Now don't get an idea that he's a fast mover when we see verse 11. This is just a family kiss, okay.

v. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.

“Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep out loud.”

He is completely overwhelmed that God indeed took him from the top of the stairs and now has brought him to the place where he can see what is going to happen.

Jacob is so different today than we saw him earlier. He was a hardened fugitive. He was selfish. Now he's kind and he's gentle.

Good women have a way of doing that to us men. Softening us and making us tender. And so he begins to share the responsibility of her work and all these other things are with it. And the tears are not tears of sorrow. They're tears of joy that we see flowing from his eyes.

v. 12 He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her

father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.

“He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.”

Now enter the man that’s going to be with us for several episodes. When’s the last time we saw him? Remember? When the servant came with ten camels and all those gifts and had given those nose rings and things to Rebekah, he tripped over himself getting out to the well because he was so greedy over material things.

Is he racing out there expecting to see ten camels and a big entourage? Instead we’ve got a fugitive that’s running for his life and he’s poor as can be in this situation. It’s totally different from what Laban would have thought.

But notice what he says. He plays a good game.

v. 13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister’s son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things.

“As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister’s son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all of these things.”

God has led him, brought him to this place, and now we have a new birth at Bethel. But now we've got a transformation here with Uncle Laban in Paddan Aram.

Remembering back, as a Christian, how many circumstances become clear when we realize that God works very hard at making us more like Himself?

If at the beginning of our lives, when we receive Christ, there is an inward work that goes on. Christ comes to live in our lives. Following that must come an outward work, when we're beginning to be made more like Christ.

There are theological words for that:

1. The first phase is **JUSTIFICATION**.

That word means “just as if I never sinned” or “I am declared perfectly righteous in God’s sight when I receive Christ as my Savior”—**JUSTIFICATION**.

2. **SANCTIFICATION** means “to be set apart” or “to be made holy.”

And that too is a progressive process. And for Jacob right now, there is a giant step being taken in that direction through all of these things that he’s going to be going through in these next episodes.

3. Ultimately there is **GLORIFICATION**.

That's when the work is complete, "Soon we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (ref. 1 John 3:2)

JUSTIFICATION—that happened at Bethel when Jacob met God at the top of the stairs.

We would call that the NEW BIRTH. We can call that SALVATION. We would call it COMING TO CHRIST as Savior, and allowing Him to come into our life.

SANCTIFICATION—is a progressive thing that goes on in all of us, as believers are experiencing that. And we should be making progress on a daily basis in becoming more and more like the Savior, if we are daily feeding on the Word and spending quality time with Him, and providing opportunities for that.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

That helps us understand what God is all about after we receive Christ. And so many times this is left undone and unexplained. And because it is, people get confused about some of the terrain that they have to travel as new believers.

v. 14 Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh

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and blood.” After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month,

“Then Laban said to him, ‘You are my own flesh and blood.’ After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month,”

Now what was going on that whole month? He probably had a great interest in sheep, and also a shepheress that was handling those sheep.

He spent the entire time with Rachel through the whole month. And Laban’s no dummy. He can see the possibilities here of negotiation with a poor boy and a family man that he probably could get a really good contract with him. And he is going to get “one up” on him right here.

v. 15 Laban said to him, “Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.”

“Laban said to him, ‘Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing?’”

Jacob’s saying, “Well, I don’t think so.”

“Tell me what your wages should be.””

Well, he sees potential for profit and what he sees and where he is, he’s going to join the workforce for the first time. He’s been a momma’s boy, a family man, and everything’s been

provided. And now he's out where he is going to have to show up for work because he's entering into a contract here—the chickens have come home to roost.

And so now that we're at this point in the study, we realize there's a lot of things that are going to happen when he enters the workforce.

v. 16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

“Now Laban”— we can see it all starting to fall together here.

“Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.”

v. 17 Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful.

“Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful.”

That Hebrew word “weak” is one of the hardest ones to try to interpret. If we read some commentators they would make us think that she maybe needs cataract surgery or Lasik or something like that.

“Soft” is another translation for the word. The contrast is that there are some people, when we look into their eyes, their eyes

just flash. And obviously Rachel is at that point. She not only is beautiful in form and face, but her eyes just sparkle.

Leah's different. Whether she had to wear glasses or anything else is beside the point. She too is a beautiful girl. They are just different.

That's probably the picture that we would describe of Rachel and Jacob was attracted to her. And as a result of that, he's going to make a choice.

Now just imagine when we're making choices and we're the last kid to be chosen for the team, how we feel. Here Leah, right from the start, is not chosen. And he's got to live for seven years with that.

But now another thing we need to understand. There's no prayer, he's taken what looks good. Who else did that? Lot with the well-watered plains of Jordan and he ended up losing everything.

When we fail to pray and we make our own decisions on the basis of what looks good, we get into deep trouble eventually. Because we're doing it our way rather than doing it the Lord's way, and allowing Him to have the privilege of leading us in the direction that He would like for us to go.

Well, Leah was pretty, but Rachel was something else. And Rachel to him is the right chemistry, the right woman.

v. 18 Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, “I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.”

“Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, ‘I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.’”

Now notice something else here, Laban never mentions the names of the girls. He probably is already thinking in his mind, “I’m going to get 14 years out of this deal and now all I’ve got to do is fake him out.”

He’s thinking dollars and cents, and he is a deceptive old coot when we look at it. In his subconscious he’s probably thinking all of this over.

And for Jacob it’s just to have Rachel. And two can play at this game, and certainly Jacob deceived a blind father and a blundering brother, and now he’s getting a chance to face the whole thing himself.

Soren Kierkegaard put it this way:

(Days of Grace Through the Year by Lewis B. Smedes)

Lord, I have to make a choice, and I’m afraid that I may make the wrong one. But I have to make it anyway; and I can’t put it off. So I will make it, and trust you to forgive me if I do wrong. And, Lord, I will trust you, too, to help make things right afterward.

The last word about choices is this: nothing you do wrong can get God to love you less than he did when you did things right. Nothing ever separates you from the love of God.
p. 309

Jacob made a CHOICE here. We're not going to say one or the other, but there are a lot of clues that are going to be coming along while we work through this biography.

v. 19 Laban said, “It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.”

“Laban said,”—verse 19

Now notice how he handles this. Notice what he doesn't say:

“It’s better that I give her,”—not Rachel.

He’s assuming Rachel. He’s saying “her.”

“It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.”

And so he feels that he is freed in that he didn't actually make a commitment with regard to Rachel, although Jacob thought he did—and he's very cooperative with this. He's good at math. He's just thinking two times seven equals fourteen. “Things will, well you know, this could really go great. And after all, he's been raised by my sister Rebekah so he's got to

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be a good guy.” We know he’s thinking all of these things and he’s right.

v. 20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

“So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.”

We just don’t know anything about that kind of love anymore and the thrill of seeing it. Here is a man who for seven years developed the spiritual, the emotional and very mental part of the relationship, but never touched the physical for seven long years. He lived on the land, lived there at the home, and served for those seven long years.

Think about this statement:

If love involved more **SACRIFICE** in its **INCEPTION**, it would probably be less **SELFISH** in its **CONTINUANCE**.

If there was more sacrifice in the initiation of the relationship—here’s seven long years of labor—and Rachel’s watching him work his tail off for seven long years—out of love for her in order that he might spend the rest of his life with her. It wouldn’t be stopping in the middle.

Imagine the moments that have been created over seven years to log in their wedding book.

Rightfully and truthfully, Jacob is honorable at this point. He's fulfilling what his uncle had said and he's done it.

Mother Teresa said:

“A joyful heart is the normal result of a heart burning with love.”

(source unknown)

Obviously Jacob is a great illustration of this. And he has waited faithfully and patiently.

v. 21 Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her.”

“Then Jacob said to Laban, ‘Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her.’”

Basically he's saying, “Let's get physical. It's been 2,557 days that I have been waiting, laboring and working for you in order that she can be my wife. I have fulfilled the requirements.”

Now we get some kind of a feeling of the impact of what's getting ready to happen.

“You have been faithful, you've worked 2,557 days, and daddy has said”— he knows full well the one that Jacob chose to be his bride.

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v. 22 So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast.

“So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast.”

Usually they did this for seven days. They had the wedding during the seven-day feast. It’s kind of like the marriage at Cana. We saw that and we’ve seen that in some of the parables of Christ.

This was very customary.

v. 23 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her.

“But”—this is the hard part.

Now remember, Leah’s got to be involved in this too. Now we don’t know whether she had any say in it, but she’d been around for seven years watching all this go on.

“when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob consummated the marriage with her.”

Is there anything more shameful and as treacherous coming from old uncle Laban in what he’s done?

We don't understand how all that could happen. There was no electricity, the bride was heavily veiled until the bridal chamber. And how many times did he whisper "Rachel" in the night and Leah lay there silent? We just understand that the two of them, father and daughter, are involved in this—whether she had any choice or not.

Jacob deceived his father and now he is royally deceived by his future father-in-law.

v. 24 And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her maidservant.

“And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her maidservant.”

This was normal. Hagar was with Sarah when we studied the life of Abraham some years ago. And so this would be a normal practice and usual custom.

But look at verse 25.

This reminds us of the shock that some people are going to have when they die with false confidences and premises without having received Jesus Christ as Savior. They're going to wake up and realize they're in the wrong place.

“It's Leah, not my love.”

v. 25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob

said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?”

“When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?’”

All the words that Esau and Isaac could have said to him when he’s at home.

The NET Bible translates this:

In the morning Jacob discovered it was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What in the world have you done to me! Didn’t I work for you in exchange for Rachel? Why have you tricked me?”

Now how’s old uncle Laban going to handle this ugly soap opera that’s beginning to develop here? Well, it’s going to be kind of sad but this is what he has to say when he’s confronted with the whole issue: “What have you done to me?”

Old things have to be taken care of. And here is just a graphic picture of some of the consequences that happen.

Listen to this statement by Samuel Rutherford:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

There is no sweeter fellowship with Christ than to bring our wounds and our sores to him.

p. 3

Jacob needs to bring all of this to the Lord. He's being disciplined and discipline isn't pleasant when it's happening, but it's going to yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Ready for the answer? Here it comes.

v. 26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one."

"Laban replied, 'It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.'"

It's the OLDER over the YOUNGER.

Back at home it was the YOUNGER over the OLDER.

And so the wheels are reversed in so many of these things that happen to teach a lesson. It's the rights of the firstborn that are coming back to haunt him now in this experience, having to deal with Laban and the fact that he tricked him in this situation and created the havoc of what we're seeing.

This is a quote from Charles Colson:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns

Upside Down by Carol Kent)

LIFE ISN'T LIKE A BOOK.
LIFE ISN'T LOGICAL OR SENSIBLE OR ORDERLY.
LIFE IS A MESS MOST OF THE TIME.
AND THEOLOGY MUST BE LIVED
IN THE MIDST OF THAT MESS.
—CHARLES COLSON

p. 9

And that is the picture that we're going to have in these next couple of episodes in his life.

So Laban's got another contract. Every time we turn around he's got another negotiation to cover what he just got through doing.

v. 27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

"Finish this daughter's bridal week;"—which means the seven days—"then we will give you the younger one,"—we'll make it a 14 day deal instead of just a 7 day deal and you'll get both of the girls—"in return for another seven years of work."

"Of course that means you're going to sign on for seven more years so I'm going to get seven more years of labor out of this one."

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Maybe he wasn't even thinking this when Rachel was involved, because if that were true, he might have thought that maybe Leah would have found a husband before the seven years were up. But obviously she didn't and so he's figuring out how to get it all done in one big swoop.

He hatches this thing up and this is the situation. He has a second contract. He's backed against the wall. He loves her so much, it seemed like a few days, but now he's got to work another 2,557 days in order to have Rachel legally as his wife.

v. 28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

“And Jacob did so.”

We have to admire him. The guy's faithful as an employee.

“He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.”

That week means they just had the wedding week and he has the privilege of these ladies for the next seven years in his family.

Imagine what goes on. Talk about pain in the tents. We have two sisters, and one of them has been put in this situation before Rachel ever was able to enjoy the fruit of her love for her husband Jacob. And that between the two of them, things

are going to get messy.

One of the things we learn out of this study is that the best thing we can do is submit to God and really pray and seek His face about what we're getting ready to decide, or when we're getting ready to do something. Because when we just take things in our own hands and make decisions, these are the kinds of messy situations we can get into.

Always remember the rights of the firstborn and be sure to wait God's time for things. And all of those things culminate in this study.

This statement from Erwin Lutzer is so good:

(When You've Been Wronged: Moving from Bitterness to Forgiveness by Erwin W. Lutzer)

When you resign your rights and submit to God's plan, you align yourself with the spirit of Jesus—the spirit of humble submission and suffering.

p. 107

Now right from the start it's even going to get worse. Look at these remaining verses.

v. 29 Laban gave his servant girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maidservant.

“Laban gave his servant girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as

her maidservant.”

Now we’ve got four ladies.

v. 30 Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

“Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah.”—we knew that—“And he worked for Laban for another seven years.”

But now the Lord gets involved. Oh, the painful situations that come when God gets involved and oh if we can just be learners of wisdom and ask God daily to give us wisdom in the things that He orchestrates around us that blindsides us so many times.

v. 31 When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

“When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.”

God is in the business of giving children as a gift from Him.

And the picture here is that, “Your sweetheart is not going to have any children right now Jacob. It’s going to be the unloved.”

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And so Jacob has really taken some shots on his bow. He and the Lord aren't on the same page, are they? The picture is so sad here.

v. 32 Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, “It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.”

“Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, ‘It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.’”

“Reuben” means “really attached.”

“He will be attached to me now because we have a child between us”—is what she’s saying when she names him “Reuben.”

v. 33 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too.” So she named him Simeon.

“She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, ‘Because the Lord heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too.’ So she named him Simeon.”

Which means “because the Lord heard.”

She's feeling attachment with the first child, now with Simeon she's feeling that the Lord has heard her. Well, we aren't done yet friends.

v. 34 Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” So he was named Levi.

“Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, ‘Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.’”—my three sons—“So he was named Levi.”

And then finally, “I have three, I want one more, so praise the Lord for number four.”

v. 35 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

“She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, ‘This time I will praise the Lord.’ So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.”

The word “Judah” means “praising the Lord.”

“Levi” means “attached.”

Bob Russell wrote these words:

Still Complaining While the Cup's Overflowing

It is a rare person who, when his cup frequently runs over, can thank God instead of complaining about the limited size of his mug!

—Bob Russell, pastor and author

Bob Russell, quoted in the November 27, 2008, entry of Men of Integrity (November/December 2008)

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God is pouring out His blessing and still there's such horrible, horrible feelings in this whole family, even though there are four children ages 1 to 4 in the family. And Leah is ahead in the children's competition four to zip. And this is not going to be setting up a pleasant environment.

Lesson #1: We see the joy of being right with God as Jacob journeys toward Haran. "He lifted up his feet."

Lesson #2: We see God's guiding hand upon Jacob through the wilderness and desert area to the exact location where the Lord wants him to be. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37:23, 24). "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not unto your own understanding, in all your ways

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acknowledge him and he will direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

Lesson #3: God uses people in our lives to discipline us and to show us ourselves so that we can come to a true hatred of those things in our lives which are not pleasing to the Lord.

Lesson #4: Jacob learns three lessons through this disciplining experience: 1) submission; 2) rights; and 3) waiting.

Lesson #5: Jacob should have prayed and asked for the Lord’s wisdom in each of these experiences.

Lesson #6: Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

Brennan Manning says:

(The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God’s Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives by Brennan Manning)

Self-hatred for real or imagined failures begets crippling guilt and is spawned by the father of lies. It thwarts God’s plan for our existence, our personal standing in the world. When we scorn ourselves and say, “I’m a born loser, a fraud, a hypocrite,” then we scorn the divine plan—scorn all the dreams God would realize through us, all the joy he anticipates from us, and all the hope he has placed in us.

p. 34

Joni Eareckson Tada prays:

(31 Days Toward Intimacy with God by Joni Eareckson Tada)

*God will not only enter our thoughts
(He is already there),
but He will order them purge them of evil,
and draw them up to a higher plane so we can begin
to grasp spiritual realities beyond what we
could ever fathom on our own.*

p. 24

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Seven – Genesis 29:1-35

NOTES

v. 1 Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples.

v. 2 There he saw a well in the field, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large.

v. 3 When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well’s mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.

v. 4 Jacob asked the shepherds, “My brothers, where are you from?” “We’re from Haran,” they replied.

v. 5 He said to them, “Do you know Laban, Nahor’s grandson?” “Yes, we know him,” they answered.

v. 6 Then Jacob asked them, “Is he well?” “Yes, he is,” they said, “and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep.”

v. 7 “Look,” he said, “the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture.”

v. 8 “We can’t,” they replied, “until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep.”

v. 9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

v. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother, and Laban’s sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle’s sheep.

NOTES

- v. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.
- v. 12 He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.
- v. 13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things.
- v. 14 Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood." After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month,
- v. 15 Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."
- v. 16 Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.
- v. 17 Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful.
- v. 18 Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."
- v. 19 Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me."
- v. 20 So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.
- v. 21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her."
- v. 22 So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast.
- v. 23 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her.
- v. 24 And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her maidservant.
- v. 25 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"
- v. 26 Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.
- v. 27 Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."
- v. 28 And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

NOTES

v. 29 Laban gave his servant girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maidservant.

v. 30 Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

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v. 35 She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the Lord." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 29:1-35 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Describe the scene in the opening verses of Genesis 29.

3. Who does Jacob meet at the well?

4. What does Jacob do for Rachel?

5. Describe the working relationship between Laban and Jacob.

6. How does Jacob feel about Rachel, according to verse 20?

7. How does Laban trick Jacob after he served his time for Rachel?

8. What does Jacob do in light of Laban’s actions, according to verse 28?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: We see the joy of being right with God as Jacob journeys toward Haran. “He lifted up his feet.”

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