

## Lesson 8 – Genesis 28-31

Text: Genesis 28-31

Main Characters: God, Jacob, Laban, Rachel, Leah

Key Passages:

- Genesis 28:13-14 – The promises of Abraham and Isaac were given to Jacob as well.
- Genesis 29:25 – Laban deceived Jacob, giving him Leah instead of Rachel.

Main Storyline:

After deceiving Isaac, Jacob was in danger of being killed by Esau. Rebekah and Isaac sent Jacob away to Rebekah's brother's house (Laban) to find a wife, as they were adamant that he should not take a wife from among the Canaanites. (Esau seemed to take the advice also, and he took another wife, this time from his own family, a daughter of Ishmael). Jacob obeyed his parents and left to live with Laban.

One night on his way to Haran, the city of Nahor and Laban (where Abraham had left in chapter 12), Jacob used a rock as a pillow. That night, he had a vision of a ladder with angels going up and down on it. Above it, the Lord stood, and He spoke to Jacob, giving him the same promises that He had given to Abraham and to Isaac. God also promised that He would be with Jacob and provide for him. Jacob then made an altar out of his pillow and promised that he would follow God if He kept His promises.

Jacob arrived in Haran and met Rachel, Laban's daughter. He immediately fell in love with her and wanted her to be his wife. He also met Laban, Rachel's father, who told him that he could live and work with them because he was family. After a month, they agreed that Jacob would work 7 years for Rachel, Laban's daughter. Because he loved Rachel so much, the 7 years seemed like just days to him.

When the 7 years were over, Jacob asked for Rachel, as they had agreed. Laban made a big wedding feast, as was the custom in the day. However, that night, instead of giving Rachel to Jacob, he gave Leah to him (Rachel's older sister, not very attractive). Jacob did not realize he had married the wrong woman until it was too late. The next day he confronted Laban for deceiving him. Laban told Jacob that he would give him Rachel after a week, but that he would have to serve another 7 years afterwards. Jacob agreed, and he finally had Rachel as his wife. He loved Rachel much more than Leah.

Because God saw that Leah was not loved, He gave her four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. When Rachel saw that she was barren, she gave Jacob her maid, Bilhah, to have children, and so she had two sons, Dan and Naphtali. Leah saw that she had stopped bearing children, and gave Jacob Zilpah, her maid, who then had two sons, Gad and Asher. Leah then had two more sons and a daughter, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. Finally, Rachel had a son named Joseph.

After Rachel had her son, Jacob decided it was time to leave Laban. However, Laban asked him to stay longer, and they made an arrangement to split the flocks according to their colors. God blessed Jacob such that his flock grew to be much larger than Laban's. Laban and his sons seemed to be resentful of this. God appeared to Jacob and told him to return to his family. Jacob left secretly with his family, but not before Rachel stole some idols from Laban's house.

When Laban found out that Jacob had gone and that the idols were missing, he was furious. He chased after Jacob and caught him in 7 days. He angrily searched the whole camp for the idols, but Rachel had hid them. They eventually made a covenant at Mizpah, and Laban returned to his home.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Our covenant with God is twofold; He cares for us, but we must serve Him (Leviticus 26:12).
- 2.) "What comes around goes around;" God deals with us according to our sin (Obadiah 1:15).
- 3.) Not following God's plan/favoritism in families continues to cause problems (Genesis 29-30).