

## Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram

**29** Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. <sup>2</sup> There he saw a well in the open country, 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?" "We're from Harran," they replied. <sup>5</sup> He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" "Yes, we know him," they answered. <sup>6</sup> Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?" "Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep." <sup>7</sup> "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."

<sup>8</sup> "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." <sup>9</sup> While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherd. <sup>10</sup> When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of his uncle Laban, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep.

<sup>11</sup> Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. <sup>12</sup> He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."

## Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> Leah had weak<sup>[a]</sup> eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." <sup>19</sup> Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." <sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her. <sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."

<sup>22</sup> So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. <sup>23</sup> But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. <sup>24</sup> And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant. <sup>25</sup> 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?" <sup>26</sup> Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.

<sup>27</sup> Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work." <sup>28</sup> And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. <sup>29</sup> Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. <sup>30</sup> Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

## Jacob's Children

<sup>31</sup> When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. <sup>32</sup> Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben,<sup>[b]</sup> for she said, "It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now." <sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>[e]</sup> Then she stopped having children.

### We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

- Jacob continues on his journey to the land of the Eastern people in the north of the fertile crescent in present day Iraq
- The journey from Bathsheba to Haran is about 800 kilometres
- In God's providence he arrived at a particular well - can you imagine Jacob's surprise when the shepherds there told him they were from Haran
- They even knew his uncle Laban
- And even more surprising, at that moment his cousin Rachel came along with her sheep
- Why did Jacob try to get the other shepherds to leave the well?
- Was he being a bit arrogant to roll the stone away from the mouth of the well by himself?
- Was he showing off in front of Rachel?
- Laban was happy to welcome Jacob as he was his 'flesh and blood'
- Laban strikes a deal with Jacob to pay him for his work
- Although Jacob was due to inherit Isaac's wealth, it would seem he arrived in Haran with nothing
- Jacob agreed to work for 7 years as a dowry to marry Rachel whom he loved
- Laban appears to agree with the deal
- However at the end of the 7 years, Laban deceitfully goes back on his deal
- But when Jacob says his time is completed and he wants to make love to Rachel, Laban tricks him into marrying Leah instead
- How is it possible for Jacob to be so easily tricked?
- How would Rachel have felt about being put into this situation?
- Laban said it was their custom to marry off the elder daughter first
- But Laban agrees to Jacob marrying Rachel....., but not till the end of Leah's bridal week
- How would Leah have felt about that?
- Laban also insists Jacob works another 7 years as a dowry for Rachel
- Has God allowed Jacob to be deceived in order for Jacob to learn lessons about his own deceitful behaviour?
- Leah gives birth to 4 sons, but Rachel remains childless

- These 4 are the first of the 12 sons of Jacob that make up the twelve tribes of Israel,
- The 4th of whom was Judah and through his line Jesus 'the Lion of Judah' was born