

Background/Context

- Jacob fled from his brother Esau, who was planning to kill him and set out for Paddan Aram (Haran) to find a wife from his mother's household.
- Fifty miles into his journey, at Bethel the LORD appeared to him in a dream and reconfirmed his covenant with him and promised, "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go" (28:15).

Read 29:1-8

1) Jacob had traveled fifty miles from Beersheba to Bethel, where the LORD appeared to him in a dream. Now he had traveled over four hundred more miles. What must have been different about this second part of the journey?

2) Of what must have this event reminded Jacob?

3) What must have Jacob realized about this event?

4) What can we be certain of in every event of life?

- Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.
- Proverbs 16:9 In his heart a man plans his course but the LORD determines his steps.

Read Verses 9-12

1) What characteristics do we learn about Jacob from this scene?

2) How can we mimic Jacob in our lives?

Read Verses 13 & 14a

- 1) What do suppose was included in “all these things” that Jacob told Laban?

- 2) What does the LORD remind us about the way we are to treat our own flesh and blood?
 - 1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Read Verses 14b & 15

- 1) What did Laban soon realize about Jacob?

- 2) What does the LORD want others to realize about us?
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

- 3) From what you might be able to recall about the last story we heard about Laban, do you think Laban’s offer was intended for Jacob’s good?

- 4) Why was Laban in a better bargaining position?

Read Verses 16-18

- 1) Evaluate Jacob’s offer.

Read Verses 19-25

- 1) Explain how the tables had been turned on Jacob.

- 2) How could Laban have pulled this off without Jacob realizing what was going on?
- 3) What effect might this episode have had on Jacob?
- 4) In light of what the writer to the Hebrews says below, what positives might have Laban's deception resulted in for Jacob.

- Hebrews 12:7 Endure hardship as discipline, God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? . . . 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Read Verses 26 & 27

- 1) What do you think of Laban's reasoning in verse 26? Was he right to do that?

- 2) Is polygamy acceptable under God? Some might say it was "alright" in OT times because there was so much of it, how do Jesus' words in the passage below disprove that theory?

- Matthew 19:4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?'⁶ So they are no longer two, but one."

Read Verses 28-30

- 1) What kindness did Laban show Jacob this time around?
- 2) What problem is there already in the household of Jacob?
- 3) We know that being married to more than one person at a time is a sin, what about dating?

