

JACOB MEETS RACHEL AND LEAH

Old Testament Lesson #21

[Editor's note: In telling this story, explain to the children that in Old Testament times, men sometimes had more than one wife at the same time.]

Fleeing from the anger of his brother Esau, Jacob continued his journey from Bethel. As he came to the outskirts of the city of Haran (HA-ran), he saw a well and flocks waiting to be watered. He asked the men there if they knew Laban (LA-ban) and his family. They said they did and that Laban's daughter Rachel was now coming with his flock, since she was a shepherdess.

Jacob was pleased to find his relatives. He could not contain his joy and kissed Rachel and cried. When Rachel learned he was her relative, she ran and told her father about Jacob. Laban met Jacob, took Jacob home and extended hospitality to him.

Jacob worked for Laban for a whole month without being paid. Then Laban asked Jacob to name his wage. Laban had two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Leah was the older daughter, but Rachel was very beautiful and Jacob had fallen in love with her. He told Laban that he would work for him seven years in return for Rachel.

Laban accepted Jacob's terms. The seven years flew by for Jacob because of his great love for Rachel. On the appointed day, Laban gathered all the people of that place together and held a great feast. At evening time, he gave Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel.

In the morning, Jacob realized that Laban had deceived him! When he asked Laban why, Laban said it was not proper to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older. He told Jacob to complete Leah's week long marriage celebration, and then he would give him Rachel as a wife. Jacob would be able to marry Rachel right away, but in return, Jacob must give Laban another seven years of service. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, so he agreed to Laban's terms.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Laban was a descendant of Abraham's brother Nahor.
- Jacob learned the lessons of being deceived. A consequence of his own deception of Isaac was his being deceived by Laban, costing him an additional seven years of labor in order to marry the woman he desired.
- Isaac's command that Jacob find a wife from among their own people (as Rebekah had been found for Isaac) was based on the belief that a proper wife was to be found among their own people, who shared the same God and faith.

Jacob Meets Rachel and Leah

- I. Jacob met Rachel at a well.
 - A. Rachel's father Laban was kind to Jacob.
 - B. Jacob worked for the family for a month without pay.
 - C. Jacob agreed to work for Laban for seven years if he could marry Rachel.
- II. After seven years, Jacob was ready to marry.
 - A. Laban hosted a feast.
 - B. Jacob expected to receive Rachel but was given Leah instead.
 - C. He was angry that Laban had deceived him; Laban said the younger daughter could not marry before the older daughter.
 - D. Jacob married Rachel at the end of the week but worked seven more years for Laban as payment for Rachel.

ANSWER KEY:

Rachel daughter of Laban

Jacob worked for Laban for a month with no pay. Laban asked Jacob to name his wage for working. Jacob said he would work 7 years without pay if he could marry Rachel. Laban accepted this. After 7 years Laban had a feast and gave his daughter to Jacob. That evening he gave Jacob Leah, not Rachel. Jacob found in the morning he had been deceived. Jacob went to Laban to ask why. Laban said he couldn't give his younger daughter first. He agreed to give Rachel for 7 more years' service. In a week Laban gave Rachel to Jacob. Jacob worked 7 more years. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.