

Jacob Works Seven Years for Rachel (1930–1923 BC)

Genesis 29:1–20

- 1 So Jacob moved on and came to the land of the eastern people.
- 2 He saw in the field a well with three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because the flocks were watered from that well. Now a large stone covered the mouth of the well.
- 3 When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place over the well's mouth.
- 4 Jacob asked them, "My brothers, where are you from?" They replied, "We're from Haran."
- 5 So he said to them, "Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nahor?" "We know him," they said.
- 6 "Is he well?" Jacob asked. They replied, "He is well. Now look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
- 7 Then Jacob said, "Since it is still the middle of the day, it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. You should water the sheep and then go and let them graze some more."
- 8 "We can't," they said, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled off the mouth of the well. Then we water the sheep."
- 9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was tending them.
- 10 When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, and the sheep of his uncle Laban, he went over and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban.
- 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep loudly.
- 12 When Jacob explained to Rachel that he was a relative of her father and the son of Rebekah, she ran and told her father.
- 13 When Laban heard this news about Jacob, his sister's son, he rushed out to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban how he was related to him.
- 14 Then Laban said to him, "You are indeed my own flesh and blood." So Jacob stayed with him for a month.
- 15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Should you work for me for nothing because you are my relative? Tell me what your wages should be."
- 16 (Now Laban had two daughters; the older one was named Leah, and the younger one Rachel.
- 17 Leah's eyes were tender, but Rachel had a lovely figure and beautiful appearance.)
- 18 Since Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel, he said, "I'll serve you seven years in exchange for your younger daughter Rachel."
- 19 Laban replied, "I'd rather give her to you than to another man. Stay with me."
- 20 So Jacob worked for seven years to acquire Rachel. But they seemed like only a few days to him because his love for her was so great.

Laban Deceives Jacob / Jacob Works Seven Years for Leah (1923–1916 BC)

Genesis 29:21–30

- 21 Finally Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time of service is up. I want to have marital relations with her."
- 22 So Laban invited all the people of that place and prepared a feast.
- 23 In the evening he brought his daughter Leah to Jacob, and Jacob had marital relations with her.
- 24 (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)
- 25 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?"
- 26 "It is not our custom here," Laban replied, "to give the younger daughter in marriage before the firstborn.
- 27 Complete my older daughter's bridal week. Then we will give you the younger one too, in exchange for seven more years of work."
- 28 Jacob did as Laban said. When Jacob completed Leah's bridal week, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.
- 29 (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)
- 30 Jacob had marital relations with Rachel as well. He loved Rachel more than Leah, so he worked for Laban for seven more years.

God Opens Leah's Womb (1922–1919 BC)

Genesis 29:31–35

- 31 When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to become pregnant while Rachel remained childless.
- 32 So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "The LORD has looked with pity on my oppressed condition. Surely my husband will love me now."
- 33 She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, "Because the LORD heard that I was unloved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.
- 34 She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, "Now this time my husband will show me affection, because I have given birth to three sons for him." That is why he was named Levi.

35 She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, “This time I will praise the LORD.” That is why she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

War Between Sisters (1919–1916 BC)

Genesis 30:1–21

Jacob’s Children by Bilhah

- 1 When Rachel saw that she could not give Jacob children, she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children or I’ll die!”
- 2 Jacob became furious with Rachel and exclaimed, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”
- 3 She replied, “Here is my servant Bilhah! Have sexual relations with her so that she can bear children for me and I can have a family through her.”
- 4 So Rachel gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob had marital relations with her.
- 5 Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son.
- 6 Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me. He has responded to my prayer and given me a son.” That is why she named him Dan.
- 7 Bilhah, Rachel’s servant, became pregnant again and gave Jacob another son.
- 8 Then Rachel said, “I have fought a desperate struggle with my sister, but I have won.” So she named him Naphtali.

Jacob’s Children by Zilpah

- 9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife.
- 10 Soon Leah’s servant Zilpah gave Jacob a son.
- 11 Leah said, “How fortunate!” So she named him Gad.
- 12 Then Leah’s servant Zilpah gave Jacob another son.
- 13 Leah said, “How happy I am, for women will call me happy!” So she named him Asher.

Leah Bears More Children to Jacob

- 14 At the time of the wheat harvest Reuben went out and found some mandrake plants in a field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”
- 15 But Leah replied, “Wasn’t it enough that you’ve taken away my husband? Would you take away my son’s mandrakes too?” “All right,” Rachel said, “he may sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son’s mandrakes.”
- 16 When Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must sleep with me because I have paid for your services with my son’s mandrakes.” So he had marital relations with her that night.
- 17 God paid attention to Leah; she became pregnant and gave Jacob a son for the fifth time.
- 18 Then Leah said, “God has granted me a reward because I gave my servant to my husband as a wife.” So she named him Issachar.
- 19 Leah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a son for the sixth time.
- 20 Then Leah said, “God has given me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me because I have given him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun.
- 21 After that she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

The Birth of Joseph (1916 BC)

Genesis 30:22–24

- 22 Then God took note of Rachel. He paid attention to her and enabled her to become pregnant.
- 23 She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Then she said, “God has taken away my shame.”
- 24 She named him Joseph, saying, “May the LORD give me yet another son.”

Jacob Prospers in Spite of Laban’s Attempts to Cheat Him (1916–10 BC)

Genesis 30:25–43

- 25 After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way so that I can go home to my own country.
- 26 Let me take my wives and my children whom I have acquired by working for you. Then I’ll depart, because you know how hard I’ve worked for you.”
- 27 But Laban said to him, “If I have found favor in your sight, please stay here, for I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me on account of you.”
- 28 He added, “Just name your wages—I’ll pay whatever you want.”
- 29 “You know how I have worked for you,” Jacob replied, “and how well your livestock have fared under my care.
- 30 Indeed, you had little before I arrived, but now your possessions have increased many times over. The LORD has blessed you

wherever I worked. But now, how long must it be before I do something for my own family too?"

31 So Laban asked, "What should I give you?" "You don't need to give me a thing," Jacob replied, "but if you agree to this one condition, I will continue to care for your flocks and protect them:

32 Let me walk among all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb, and the spotted or speckled goats. These animals will be my wages.

33 My integrity will testify for me later on. When you come to verify that I've taken only the wages we agreed on, if I have in my possession any goat that is not speckled or spotted or any sheep that is not dark-colored, it will be considered stolen."

34 "Agreed!" said Laban, "It will be as you say."

35 So that day Laban removed the male goats that were streaked or spotted, all the female goats that were speckled or spotted (all that had any white on them), and all the dark-colored lambs, and put them in the care of his sons.

36 Then he separated them from Jacob by a three-day journey, while Jacob was taking care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 But Jacob took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees. He made white streaks by peeling them, making the white inner wood in the branches visible.

38 Then he set up the peeled branches in all the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink. He set up the branches in front of the flocks when they were in heat and came to drink.

39 When the sheep mated in front of the branches, they gave birth to young that were streaked or speckled or spotted.

40 Jacob removed these lambs, but he made the rest of the flock face the streaked and completely dark-colored animals in Laban's flock. So he made separate flocks for himself and did not mix them with Laban's flocks.

41 When the stronger females were in heat, Jacob would set up the branches in the troughs in front of the flock, so they would mate near the branches.

42 But if the animals were weaker, he did not set the branches there. So the weaker animals ended up belonging to Laban and the stronger animals to Jacob.

43 In this way Jacob became extremely prosperous. He owned large flocks, male and female servants, camels, and donkeys.

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