

99-10-10b

We now resume our study of the career of Jacob and we resume now in chapter 29. God, in spite of Jacob's failures and his rather dismal record up to this point as a man of integrity, as he leaves the land, God appears to him and as we have seen in God's dealings with other patriarchs, God does not come and confront him about his failures. God never came to Abraham and spoke to him and said, Abraham, shame on you for lying about Sarah and saying that she was your sister instead of your wife.

Now, he told that to Abimelech and Abimelech brings Abraham in and sort of embarrasses him, but God spoke the truth and he still didn't excoriate Abraham. He didn't say, let me tell you what a rat Abraham is. It is surprising when you think about it that God doesn't seem to concern himself with the failures and with the sins.

He affirms promises. He assures his presence. He seems to overlook a lot for these men, particularly those who show that they're making progress in the area of faith.

And even here after his rather disappointing conduct at home and as he's fleeing for his life from his angry brother, when God appears, it is not to say, now see, Jacob, you should have been doing things differently. God affirms the promises of Abraham and God says, I will be with you wherever you go. I will bring you back.

He gives him encouragement. He gives him hope. And as a result of that, in chapter 29, it says in the New King James, so Jacob went on his journey and came to the land.

In Hebrew, this literally says Jacob picked up his feet and went. It's a real curious phrase. It's not a common phrase.

In fact, it isn't found anywhere else in the Bible. But it's a strange thing to say. Jacob picked up his feet.

You could see him while he could pick up his old kit bag or he could pick up his provisions or he could pick up his cloak or something. But it says he picked up his feet. And you get the idea from this that this was a great encouragement to Jacob.

He resumes his journey with renewed enthusiasm, with renewed hope, with great optimism. He seems to be energized and looking forward to what God has in store for him. So he picked up his feet and came to the land of the people of the east.

This phrase, the people of the east, is interesting to trace through Scripture because they seem to be the dwellers to the east and slightly to the north of the land of Canaan, the Palestine area. Later on, they will ally themselves with various other groups and be engaged in battle by Israel once they possess the land. But this is kind of a collective phrase to incorporate non-specific people that are just outside the land, generally to the east.

The land of the people of the east, he looked and saw a well in the field and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it. For out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth.

Now all the flocks would be gathered there and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth. And Jacob said to them, My brethren, where are you from? And they said, We are from Haran. Then he said to them, Do you know Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.

So he said to them, Is he well? And they said, He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep. Then he said, Look, it is still high day.

It is not the time for cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go and feed them. But they said, We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth.

Then we water the sheep. Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother.

Then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him into his house. So he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh.

And he stayed with him for a month. You cannot help but notice the threads of this story that run backward and also forward through other portions of the Old Testament. But we are beginning to see a pattern when it comes to betrothal, when it comes to someone's wife being identified, the presence of flocks, the watering of animals and so forth.

But if you think back to what was it, Genesis 24, where the servant of Abraham encounters Rebekah at the well. She waters the camels. She is there drawing water.

The well seems to be the place where the future wives are located and identified. We'll find later on in Exodus that Moses is going to meet his future wife at a well after he's killed the taskmaster and goes over to Midian and meets Zipporah. There's also an issue of a well and watering of flocks.

Why would this be associated with marriage? There are some fairly obvious connections

here. Wells are a source of life. The water that comes from them is necessary to sustain life.

The flocks are productive because they can be watered. The ewes can give birth to lambs and so forth because there is water present. The whole theme of wells in the land came up with Abraham digging wells and finding places to settle and prosper.

Isaac going and re-digging the wells of his father so that he can dwell and prosper. But a well not only sustains in the present but offers hope for the future. Where there is a well, you have the expectation that there will be water.

You're not going to die. It's not like catching rain in a bucket, for example. It's not like carrying a skin of water with you that can run dry.

A well is something that enables you to expect to exist in the future. To have a bride, to have a wife with the expectation of offspring, this is also a forward-looking concept. You have over in Ecclesiastes, I believe, the passage that talks about let each one drink water from his own well.

It's a euphemistic way of talking about marriage and not straying from marriage to enjoy the wife of your youth and so forth. The wife is there. Actually, a metaphor is used there of a spring of water or a well.

This is an interesting association that is once again echoed here. When Jacob, from a human point of view, is fortuitous, we would say this is providential looking at it from a biblical point of view. God seems to have already begun to honor the promises that he has affirmed many days before.

We know this was a journey measured in weeks to get from where Isaac is dwelling up to Haran. We saw what happened the first night, and then the rest of the journey is skipped over pretty much without a mention. It just says he picked up his feet.

Apparently, he made record time heading north out of the land. When he comes to the land of the people of the east, you remember in verse 2, as we saw when Abraham was going with Isaac to Mount Moriah, and we saw this pattern where when you see the phrase, he looked and he saw, he lifted up his eyes and beheld something, that this introduces a momentous occasion. You have that happening again here in verse 2. He looked and saw.

When you have this doubling of the idea, this is emphasis. It means we're drawing the curtain back on a major scene in the play, if you will. So he looked and saw a well in the field, and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it.

For out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. This is the second time we've seen a stone associated with Jacob.

He set up a stone previously at his head while he slept, and then this stone is turned up on end and anointed and becomes a marker for Bethel. Here's another stone on the well's mouth. Now all the flocks would be gathered there, and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

For some reason I can't explain, this reminds me of the legend that surrounded the pool of Bethesda, where the sick would gather around and wait, according to the apocryphal part of that, which is not in the inspired account, that an angel would come down and stir the waters, so everybody would wait until a time when the waters would be beneficial, and then they would all hop in. But here they are surrounding the thing, waiting for the time when the stone will be removed. Jacob said to them, My brethren, where are you from? They said, We're from Haran.

He said, Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? They said, We know him. He said, Is he well? They said, He is well. And here is his daughter Rachel coming with the sheep.

Then he said, Look, it is high day. It's not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go and feed them.

In other words, he's saying, What are you waiting for? Why are you all camped around the well here? Why don't you take the rock off and go ahead and water these sheep and disperse them so they can go graze? You're wasting time. You're wasting valuable part of the day. These sheep could be grazing, and you've got them sitting here doing nothing around the well.

What are you waiting for? They said, We cannot, in verse 8, until all the flocks are gathered together and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth. Then we water the sheep. And while he is still speaking with them, Rachel comes with her father's sheep.

We find out that she is a shepherdess. Well, what's the story here? Why do they wait? Why do they keep a rock on the mouth of the well? It would appear that it is necessary to keep this well covered. What could the causes be? One could be that it is a rather shallow well, that maybe there's not much water there.

They want to protect it from the sun so that it doesn't evaporate. It may take time for the water to seep in to the bottom of this, what amounts to shallow shaft or pit. And in order to prevent it from evaporating before they get there, because they are there at the heat of the day to get the water, so apparently you can't just come up and find water there at any point.

It needs to be covered. Another possibility is that this is a security measure. We know the contention over wells that was experienced by Isaac down in the south, and it may

be that this safeguards the water for those who own the well or who dug the well, and this stone is so large that it takes several individuals to lift it.

So the casual passerby is not going to come in and muddy the water or take it, but you get the idea that either way this water must not be too plentiful. They have to really safeguard it. If this was a large, plentiful well, why would they care if somebody dipped a little water out of it? But apparently this water is valuable and has to be guarded either from evaporation or from being taken by others.

And so they have to all gather before the rock is removed. They water, and then they replace the stone. And they are apparently waiting for Rachel and her flock, but they are not a part of the household of Laban, because when Jacob asks and says, Where are you from? They say, We're from the same town.

We're from Haran. Apparently they're not too far from the town. We see that Rachel is going to be able to run and tell her father, who apparently dwells in Haran.

So they're not far from the outskirts of the city. These men are from that same city as well. But when he says, Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? They don't say, We work for him.

Or, He's our master. They just say, We know him. So these are flocks owned by other individuals.

They've all assembled around the well, and when they all get there, there's sort of a protocol where once everybody has arrived, the servants all gather, marshal their strength, and several of them get together and remove this stone, and then they water the flocks. The idea would be, First come, first served. So the reason they're sitting there waiting and not grazing the flocks is, if you were there first, you get the first of the water.

And if the water is going to run out, you'll be sure that you got your water, because you got there first. So while these men really, in an ideal world, would be pasturing their flocks and taking advantage of the daylight to graze, the water is so important. They've come and parked there, and they're waiting their turn.

They got their place in line, if you will, for the water. And this is important to understand because of what happens next. While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep.

Notice these other sheep that are around there. Apparently not her father's sheep. She was a shepherdess.

Now we know, because we're familiar with this whole situation, that Laban has two daughters, and apparently no sons. So of the two daughters, who is the younger? We

already know from our previous experience in Genesis that Rachel is the younger daughter. We don't see Leah out here pasturing the sheep.

Leah being the firstborn, the older daughter, she's the privileged one. She's apparently back at the ranch there, running the household. And the younger is out doing the rather unsavory task of watching over the sheep.

She's actually out there pasturing them. I'm sure she probably has some servants helping with her, but she's out managing that. It reminds us of what we see later on with David.

David is the youngest son of Jesse. He's the one that gets the task nobody else wants, which is watching over the sheep. She is a shepherdess, so she comes out.

When Jacob saw her, and you will notice the emphasis on relationship here. Over and over again, we're reminded of the family. We already know this, don't we? But time it again.

When he saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, then Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother. It's repeated for us three times by the nature of emphasis what this family relationship is. But you will notice also that the last one to arrive at the well is the first one to get their flock watered.

And all these others that have been patiently waiting and foregoing the opportunity to pasture their flocks because they've got their place in life, Jacob basically jumps Rachel to the front of the line. And he single-handedly rolls this stone away. You get the idea that Jacob is physically strong.

We haven't had much of an impression of what he's like. We knew about Esau being a hairy man and liking to go out and hunt and so forth and that Jacob was content to dwell in tents. So we got the idea maybe he was kind of a pallid, limp-looking guy that didn't see much of the sunlight.

But we find out both from his previous episode in turning the rock up on end and also here that he's a rock mover. Apparently it took several servants to roll this stone away. That's why they put this big rock was to safeguard the water in the well.

Jacob goes over and single-handedly rolls this thing away. And then he ushers Rachel up to the front of the line and waters her flock. There's another echo here of the last winding up first.

This seems to be Jacob's mentality. He was the second born, but he's elbowed his way up to the front of the line, so to speak, for blessing and for birthright. And he doesn't respect the convention of these shepherds.

He figures out what's going on here and that because she was the last to arrive, there may be no water in the well by the time it's her turn. And these are the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. And what is he really thinking? Is he interested in Rachel at this point or is he interested in getting into the good graces of Laban? Well, it's hard to tell.

It could be not a matter of either or, but both and. But the repetition here when it keeps telling us Laban, his mother's brother, three times, you get the idea that uppermost in Jacob's mind is finding favor in the sight of Laban. This is his goal.

Laban is his mother's brother. Laban is his mother's brother. Laban is his mother's brother, three times.

And you get the idea that Jacob has suddenly seized upon an immediate means of fulfilling his goals. And it's going to be Laban. So he went near, rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered, it doesn't say watered the flock of Rachel.

He watered the flock of Laban. His idea is this is a favor. Laban is going to owe me something because I've brought his flock.

So even though apparently he's not oblivious to Rachel's charms, his first motivation is this is going to be my foot in the tent flap, if you will, with Laban. So notice then in verse 11, Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept. Then in verse 12, Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebecca's son.

This seems to be out of order, doesn't it? What do you think is going through Rachel's mind when this total stranger rolls this big rock that takes two or three or four men to move. He rolls it away. He brings her flock up to the front and waters it.

Then he starts crying and kissing all over her. And she's thinking, what on earth? How many months and years perhaps has she been coming to this well? Here's this dusty, travel-worn guy that heaves this rock out of the way, puts her to the front of the line. You can imagine that these male shepherds out there would probably ensure.

This is probably why Rachel didn't bother to get there early because they wouldn't let her, even if she got there first, they would elbow her out of the way, water their flocks, and she was always dead last anyway, so why bother? Take advantage of the daylight, pasture the flock. After these others have had their fill, maybe she can get her sheep in before they put the rock back. But Jacob changes all of that, and then he begins to weep and kiss her, and she's thinking, what on earth? So then he explains.

But he can tell already that this is a very providential or fortuitous turn of events that he should encounter and have this opportunity to, because he doesn't have the ten camels that Abraham's servant had. How is he going to impress Laban? Just walking in with basically the robe on his back and say, well, hi, I'm here, I'm your nephew. So this gives him a bargaining chip.

This gives him something to bring to the table. So he told Rachel he was her father's relative and that he was Rebecca's son. So she ran and told her father, so they can't be too far from the dwelling place because she can run there.

It came to pass when Laban heard the report about Jacob, his sister's son. How many times are we going to be told about this relationship? When Scripture repeats something, it is important. And if you have it repeated this many times, it is exceedingly important.

Why is this relationship so important? Well, this foreshadows for us the whole idea of who is related to who, who was born to whom. It is a reminder again of the intertwining of relatives. He is back in the household of faith.

Nahor was a believer. Tira was a believer. Abraham was a believer.

He is not amongst the Ishmaelites. He is not outside the circle of faith like Esau who goes and marries a couple of Hittite women. You can't get any more family than this.

So he is in the right place, even though he has gotten there through some very unsavory circumstances. Why did he have to leave the land? It is because of deception and hate and discontent, anger, manipulation, everything that conspired to drive him from his father's house. You can't look and find much good there.

But look at where he is. He is at the well. The first woman he lays eyes on is going to be his future wife and the mother of several of his children.

God works all things together for good. Jacob encountered God. Jacob honored God.

He's got a long way to go. He has a lot to learn. But God is with him.

God is already honoring the promises that he has reiterated to Jacob. It seems as though he can hardly take a step without being blessed. And it is certainly not merit on Jacob's part.

It is faith on Jacob's part that qualifies him to be the recipient of these mercies of God. God smooths his way into the household of Laban by giving him the opportunity to do Laban a favor. This was probably an ongoing problem that Laban couldn't get his flocks watered because of these other shepherds.

So when Laban is told all these things, he runs out to meet him and embraces him and kisses him and brings him into the house. What a great way to be received. He heard these things.

He heard what Jacob had done. And so Jacob has two things going for him. He's a kinsman and he's a valuable kinsman.

He can do something for Laban. So Laban runs out. And you get the idea.

Laban may also be thinking back. Well, the last time we had a visitor from the household of Abraham, ten camels, gold rings, that really was a profitable association. So when he hears that here's another individual come up looking for a wife from the household of Abraham, he's got shekels in his eyes, you know, shekel signs in his eyes as well.

And so he comes out and in verse 14 he says, you notice at the end of verse 13, Jacob told Laban all these things. All of what things? Well, he gave a version apparently of why he had left home and why he's there without any possessions, why he doesn't have the ten camels and so forth. Apparently he fills in enough of the picture that Laban sees an opportunity here.

And Laban is assured that yes, this is in fact his nephew. And that's why he says in 14, surely, this is the Hebrew word Ad, A-D. And it's not quite the word surely in English.

It's more along the lines of, well, obviously or evidently. And there's not quite the positive connotation that we get in English where he says, oh, surely you are. And you get the idea that Laban's all 100% for this.

There seems to be a measure of calculation, a measure of almost grudging acceptance on Laban's part. And you think, well, why is this? When he says, obviously you are my bone and my flesh, or it seems clear that you are my bone and my flesh. And there's a note implied of almost reservation here where once Laban hears all the details, he doesn't have quite the unbounded enthusiasm that he had when he ran out to meet him.

But he sees an opportunity. So it says he stayed with him for a month. And this harks back to what Rebecca told Jacob when she said, go stay with Laban for a few days.

And so he has stayed with him for a few days. It ends up being about a month. And so now something has to change.

The time of hospitality, the time when you can expect to be welcomed as a guest, and so forth, that's pretty well over. It's either time to leave or time for the status to change in some way. So then in verse 15, Laban said to Jacob, because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Well, there's no indication that he was doing any service at all.

And Laban has introduced a new element here. Jacob has stayed as a guest. There's no indication that he was serving.

He may have gone out and accompanied Rachel with the sheep or done something. But this is all sort of a temporary arrangement. And so Laban says, let's get this thing on a more permanent footing.

And this is sort of a subtle hint. Either let's get a permanent arrangement going for your service or this is sort of a gentle hint that your time as a guest is up. So he says, because

you're, and this is a very crafty thing for Laban, because you're my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? And he seems to come across as being very generous.

Tell me, what should be your wages? There is probably, it's probably safe to assume that Laban has figured out that Jacob by this time is very sweet on Rachel. And he probably already has in mind what the wages are going to be. And that Laban is going to get this service without having to lay out much cash.

Laban may have a little bit of a cash flow problem at this point. As we're going to see, he doesn't appear to be too prosperous until Jacob starts working for him. He doesn't seem to be prosperous enough to have servants to mind the sheep.

He's got his younger daughter out there acting as shepherdess. So Laban apparently has expended all of the gold and presents that he got years before when his sister Rebecca went down to marry Isaac. This obviously was some above 40 years earlier and that's long since disappeared.

He doesn't appear to be doing all that well that his daughter is out there minding the sheep. He doesn't appear to have male servants he can send to solve the well with the rock problem. So he's got the idea here he'd like to keep Jacob on.

This is good brawn to have on the workforce. Laban had two daughters. The name of the elder was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel.

Very interesting to analyze these names, Leah and Rachel. Leah, as near as we can tell from the etymology and the cognates in other languages, means calf. Rachel means ewe, e-w-e, a female sheep bearing lambs type of thing.

So you have calf or heifer. Heifer might even be better than calf because this has the idea of a female cow. So it's cow or heifer.

And then you have ewe. So Laban, rather unimaginatively, has named his two daughters after progenitor type members of the flock and the herd. So Leah is cow and Rachel is lady sheep or ewe.

It says in verse 17, Leah's eyes were delicate. This is in Hebrew literally the word soft. Her eyes were soft.

We don't know exactly what this means. This is apparently something that affected her appearance. We find this out because of the contrast that is drawn between Leah and Rachel.

It may have been that she was nearsighted or that she had something about her eyes which was unlovely to look at. Eyes that sparkled were a mark of beauty in the ancient world. It's spoken of in a lot of the ancient texts, the literature of the ancient Babylonians

and so forth.

When they describe someone who is beautiful, invariably they talk about the sharpness or clearness or sparkling nature of their eyes. So to say that someone's eyes are soft, although we don't have any specific examples of this, appears to indicate that they were less than lovely, that someone was plain. You get the idea from her name even.

Which would you consider a more lovely picture to put up on your wall, a sheep or a cow? The fact that she is named cow and her sister is named ewe would also seem to fall in line with this suggestion. It says, Leah's eyes were soft, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance. So the contrast here, apparently the thing with the eyes was something that diminished her appeal in some way.

Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said in answer to the question what shall your wages be, I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter. Now the bride price, it's always difficult when you go back in time to find good documentation for what was the going rate for a bride price, but basically the idea here is that in lieu of wages, Jacob will serve for seven years and this, if he had been paid wages, he would turn right around and give it to Laban as the bride price. Well, what sort of a transaction are we talking about here? Keep your finger on Genesis 29 and turn over to Deuteronomy chapter 22.

Deuteronomy 22. We have to sort of work backward from what we find in the law. But in Deuteronomy 22, 28, If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has humbled her.

He shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days. So basically, if someone engaged in what we sort of euphemistically call premarital sex today, with a young lady, and she's not betrothed or she's not married, then he has to marry her. This used to be the law back up in the hills.

You know, if you grabbed somebody's daughter and had your way with her, well, then you had a shotgun wedding. Well, this is what the law prescribes. If a man does this, then he marries her, and he pays a bride price, and the bride price is specified here as fifty shekels of silver.

This makes sense when you look earlier in the chapter, in verse 13 and following, it talks about a man taking a wife and goes into her and detests her and decides that she wasn't a virgin when he married her. Then you have this whole idea of the cloth that is supposed to provide evidence of virginity, and there's been a long tradition in Jewish culture that they make sure that there is a cloth with a bloodstain the morning after the honeymoon, by whatever means. This is to ensure that what is spoken of in verse 13 and following does not come to pass.

But basically, when he charges her with not being a virgin in verse 17, I found your daughter was not a virgin, and yet these are the evidences of my daughter's virginity. The parents come out and say, here's the cloth with the bloodstain, so this proves she was a virgin, supposedly. They shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city, then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him.

They shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father. This is double the bride price. The man has apparently already paid the bride price of fifty shekels, but because of this false charge that she was not a virgin, he decides that apparently she's not good in bed, or for some other reason she's disappointed in him, and he disparages her, and by extension her father's household, by saying she wasn't a virgin, and this is proved false because of the evidence of the cloth, then he has to pay double the bride price, one hundred shekels of silver.

But if the thing is true and no evidence of virginity is found, in verse 21, they bring the young woman to the door of her father's house, the men of the city shall stone her to death with stones. So you pretty much want to be sure you've got the cloth with the bloodstain. I've read that in Jewish culture for centuries, the mother of the bride basically gives her a little vial of blood, and in case she doesn't succeed in producing a cloth that has sufficient evidence of her virginity, well, she makes sure that there's some by the next morning.

There's a whole realm of speculation you can get into here about, well, if this is so easily counterfeited, why did God set this up as a criteria? Well, we don't have time to go into it. Our purpose in being here is to see that the bride price, apparently, at this time, is fifty shekels. So, we also know that in the culture of the time, back in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's day, the average wage for a laborer could be anywhere from a half shekel to a shekel per month.

So, let's be generous and say that it's a shekel per month. Jacob says, I will work for you for seven years to pay the bride price for Rachel. Well, twelve shekels a year times seven years, if my math is correct, that works out to about eighty-four shekels.

This is pretty generous by way of a bride price. It's well over the fifty shekel, which also seems to be a maximum prescribed by the law. You get the idea that that fifty would be a maximum.

Perhaps suitors and families of brides might agree to less than the fifty, but the law typically prescribes the maximum of something. And so, that fifty shekels, if that man violates a virgin and has to marry her, he's going to pay the maximum bride price, not a minimum. So, this could be two to three times the going rate that Jacob is promising.

And, of course, because of the fact that it's not cash in hand, maybe that's one of the reasons that it's so generous. Even at a half shekel, where he would be earning six

shekels a year, seven times six is still forty-two, and he's still approaching the maximum bride price that might have been in existence at this time. So, the whole point here is, when he agrees to work for seven years, this is a handsome offer.

This is not a mean bride price. This is quite a bit. Laban said, It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man.

Stay with me. Very interesting that in this verbal contract, Laban does not name the name of Rachel. Jacob names Rachel, and he says, I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.

Laban says, It is better that I give her, basically, that I give my daughter, to you than to another man. Stay with me. And this is going to be Laban's out in the contract that he didn't specify, in his end of the bargain, which daughter.

He just says, I will give her. And he can claim later, Well, I actually had in mind a different daughter because all I said was her. So, they make this verbal agreement.

Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her. This phrase, a few days, is exactly the phrase his mother used when she said, Go to my brother in Heron and stay with him for a few days until your brother's anger has cooled. So, to Jacob, serving the bride price for Rachel, it seems only a few days.

We're going to discover that when he has to stay the second seven years, it doesn't say it seemed to him only a few days. It's going to be quite a different matter. That first seven years seemed to breeze by because everything was in prospect.

We find in verse 21 that when the seven years are fulfilled, Jacob said to Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go into her. You get the idea that Laban didn't exactly volunteer. He kind of likes the arrangement.

Jacob had to go ask. Laban didn't say, Congratulations, Jacob. Your seven years are fulfilled.

And Jacob doesn't even... You remember the Na word in Hebrew that indicates a request? It's kind of like saying, Please, that God uses with Abraham when He says, Please take your son, your only son, to Mount Moriah. There's no Na in here. This is not a polite request.

This is a demand. Apparently, Jacob gets impatient. He says, Give me my wife, as you promised me.

My days are fulfilled. This is where we're going to have to stop for this morning. We'll resume and find out exactly what takes place and why we have this seven year period.

Jacob has basically paid now a very handsome bride price. But his manipulation of what belongs to the elder and what belongs to the younger is obviously about to come back to haunt him. He has been serving for the younger daughter and he's going to wind up getting the elder instead.

And Laban is going to explain that there are certain things that belong to the elder that don't belong to the younger. And that's why Jacob is going to be deceived. So, having said everything we've said about the mercy of God and the grace of God, obviously, when God says, I will be with you, Jacob.

I will be with you wherever you go. I will bring you back to the land. This alternate path to the destination is going to be a place where Jacob is going to learn the things that he does not know.

He doesn't understand some things about the rights of the elder and the rights of the younger. And he's going to learn it. He doesn't understand the devastation of deception.

But he's going to find it out. He's going to learn. And because he didn't learn it living in the camp of Isaac, he's going to learn it up there in Haran.

That's what we'll see when we resume next time. Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your Word.

We thank you for your wonderful grace toward us. You are patient. You are gracious.

You're merciful to us. You bear with us. You suffer long.

You never leave us or forsake us. And you accompany us on every step of the journey and teach us the things that we need to know. We pray that we will be responsive to the things that we are here to learn, that we will grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And in so doing, we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We will walk in a way that is pleasing in your sight and is reflecting your glory both now and in the age to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.