

Life with Jacob

GENESIS 29–30

FIRST DAY: Introduction

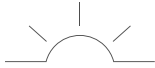
God graciously works in our lives to lead and direct us into all His good plans! In spite of our futile self-efforts, folly, and misguided notions, God faithfully works *all things together* for our good (Romans 8:28). In our lesson this week in Genesis 29 and 30, we witness God's overriding guidance and work in Jacob's life. Though Jacob misguidedly thought he was making things happen, he was in actuality being divinely guided, disciplined, protected, and blessed by God.

Isn't it good to know God's grace will prevail above our futile self-efforts, folly, and misguided notions to direct us into His good plans for our lives?

Ask God for a greater awareness of His gracious presence and direction in your life.

SECOND DAY: Read Genesis 29:1–14

1. After God's divine revelation to Jacob (Genesis 28:10–22), according to the Hebrew language, *he picked up his feet* (Genesis 29:1), meaning he was joyously propelled forward. What does this phrase convey to you about the effect of Jacob's encounter with God at Bethel?

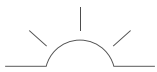


FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This type of well flows underground and bubbles up to the surface. By placing a stone over the mouth of the well, the weight of the stone would keep the water from coming up and evaporating on the open land. This type of well is also mentioned in Revelation 7:17.

2. As Jacob journeyed, he *came to the land of the people of the East* (Genesis 29:1b). Use Genesis 29:2–6 to answer the following:
 - a. What did Jacob see when he arrived? (verse 2)
 - b. How were the *flocks* watered at this well? (verse 3)
 - c. What did Jacob discover from the men at the well? (verses 4–6a)
 - d. Who was *coming* at just that moment? (verse 6b)
3. Jacob observed, *Look, it's still broad daylight—too early to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?* (Genesis 29:7 NLT). How did the men respond? Genesis 29:8
 - a. As Jacob *was still speaking* with them, Rachel arrived *with her father's sheep* (Genesis 29:9). What did Jacob do when he saw her? Genesis 29:10

(1) What do you think motivated him to do this?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In that day, the custom was for the bride to be heavily veiled on her wedding day so that her face was not seen. This might explain why Jacob did not realize he had married Leah until the next morning.

3. What do you learn about Laban's *two daughters* in Genesis 29:16–17?

4. Laban agreed to Jacob's terms (Genesis 29:19). From Genesis 29:20 remark on the *seven years* Jacob served Laban.

5. After seven years, Jacob asked Laban for Rachel, and Laban held a wedding *feast* (Genesis 29:21–22). Use Genesis 29:23–30 to note and comment on:
 - a. Laban's deception (verses 23–25)
 - (1) Link this with the deception in Genesis 27:18–24. What ironies do you see?

 - b. Laban's excuse (verse 26)

 - c. Laban's proposition (verse 27)

d. Jacob's service (verses 28, 30b)

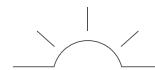
e. The consequences (verse 30a)

(1) Why do you think deception kept surfacing in Jacob's life?

(a) Consider this debacle in light of Galatians 6:7. What do you see?

6. *When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He blessed her with children while Rachel was barren (Genesis 29:31). The names of each of Leah's sons held special significance for her. Use Genesis 29:32–35 to fill in the chart below concerning Leah's first four sons:*

SON'S NAME	LEAH'S PERSPECTIVE	YOUR THOUGHTS
Reuben <i>See, a son</i>	Verse 32	
Simeon <i>One who hears</i>	Verse 33	
Levi <i>Attached</i>	Verse 34	
Judah <i>Praise</i>	Verse 35	



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Most wedding celebrations lasted a week (seven days), so Leah's week-long wedding had to be finished before Jacob could marry Rachel.

a. What do the names of Leah's sons imply about:

(1) Her situation

(2) Her relationship with God (See also Isaiah 54:5)

7. The priestly tribe of Levi, the royal tribe of Judah, and the Messiah would descend from the unloved wife of Jacob. How does this minister to you?

FOURTH DAY: Read Genesis 30:1–21

1. Though Leah had all the disadvantages, God blessed her and made her fruitful. In contrast, use the following Scriptures to draw a portrait of Rachel:

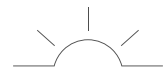
a. Her advantages

(1) Genesis 29:9

(2) Genesis 29:17

(3) Genesis 29:20

- b. Her demand (Genesis 30:1–2)
- (1) What does Jacob’s response reveal about Rachel’s perceptions?
- c. Her calculated solution (Genesis 30:3–4)
- d. The names Rachel gave to her surrogate sons (Genesis 30:6–8)
- (1) Dan (verse 6)
- (2) Naphtali (verse 8)
- e. Rachel’s bargain (Genesis 30:14–15)
2. Leah was not only disadvantaged, but fell into competition with her sister. From Genesis 30:9–13, summarize Leah’s reaction and response to Rachel’s actions.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In the ancient world, mandrakes were a plant believed to have special fertility powers.

a. What do the names of Zilpah’s sons convey to you about Leah’s attitude:

(1) Gad (verse 11)

(2) Asher (verse 13)

3. Use Genesis 30:15–16 to describe the negotiations between the two sisters.

4. According to Genesis 30:17, *God listened to Leah* and allowed her to conceive again. Use the chart below to record and remark on the significance of the children God gave to Leah:

NAME	LEAH’S PERSPECTIVE	YOUR THOUGHTS
<p>Issachar <i>Wages</i></p>	<p>Genesis 30:18</p>	
<p>Zebulun <i>To dwell, honor</i></p>	<p>Genesis 30:19–20</p>	
<p>Dinah <i>Justice</i></p>	<p>Genesis 30:21—Jacob’s only known daughter</p>	

5. What differences do you observe between these two sisters?

FIFTH DAY: Read Genesis 30:22–43

1. In the Bible, whenever *God remembered* (or focused His attention on) someone, a blessing followed. What blessing followed when *God remembered Rachel*? Genesis 30:22
2. Why do you suppose it was important for Rachel to see that her conception had nothing to do with the mandrakes? Genesis 30:23
 - a. How does God’s mindfulness of Rachel minister to you?
3. From Genesis 30:24 note and comment on the name Rachel gave her son.
4. After *Rachel had borne Joseph*, Jacob asked Laban to release him and his family (Genesis 30:25–26). Why did Laban want Jacob to stay? Genesis 30:27

- a. What do you find interesting about this?
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5. Laban urged Jacob to stay and name his *wages* (Genesis 30:28). Use Genesis 30:29–33 to remark on:
 - a. Jacob’s service (verses 29–30)

 - b. Jacob’s request (verses 31–32)

 - c. Jacob’s integrity (verse 33)

 6. Laban agreed to his request (Genesis 30:34). From Genesis 30:35–42 briefly summarize Jacob’s self-efforts.
 - a. Neither the Bible nor science give any credence to Jacob’s method of manipulating the branches and bark. How would you characterize these self-efforts?

