

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Tonight, we are going to do chapter 29 and the beginning of chapter 30.

Let's begin,

We live in an age where many of us are lost without our smartphones.

Not only do they help us connect with each other – for many of us, they make our lives easier.

Whether you own an android or an apple phone you can find an app for just about anything.

And I mean anything.

Here is an example, in many parts of the world – it is still customary that when a man wants to get married, that he schedules a meeting with the family of the girl and at that meeting, a dowry is provided.

It is the family that decides if both the man and the dowry will be acceptable.

The challenge facing some men is determining what is the fair value for the bride???

You don't want to offend the family members with a dowry of one cow if the bride is worth three cows – and you may not want to offer three cows for a bride that is only worth one cow.

So, in 2015, someone in South Africa developed an app that would help men determine the dowry that he would be expected to pay for their bride to be.

All he has to do is answer a few questions about himself and his bride to be.

How attractive is he?

How attractive is she?

What do her parents do for a living?

What is his occupation?

How good of a cook is she?

Etc, etc, you get the point.

After all the questions are answered, the app provides that person with an acceptable dowry for his bride to be.

By the way, my wife is an 8 cow wife.

In our study tonight, Jacob is going to meet his sweetheart, Rachel – and Jacob is going to overpay big time – you see, Jacob could have used this app on his phone.

Jacob is also going to discover that his inlaws are just as dysfunctional as his family back in the Land of Canaan.

However, through the chaos, we will continue to see God's mercy and grace upon Jacob and his family.

Let's pray...

[Gen 29:1-35 NKJV] 1 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 2 And 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. 3 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. 4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where [are] you from?" And they said, "We [are] from Haran." 5 Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." 6 So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "[He is] well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." 7 Then he said, "Look, [it is] still high day; [it is] not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed [them]." 8 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." 9 Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 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. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 12 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. 13 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 to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you [are] my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

Our text this evening starts off with Jacob continuing his 500 mile journey to uncle Laban's house to find himself a wife.

You might recall that last week as we covered chapter 28, we saw God reveal Himself to Jacob in a dream.

Jacob saw angels going up and down the stairway – and God was at the top of the stairway and it was during the dream that God reassured Jacob of that He was going to be with Jacob every step of the way.

Looking back at verse 15 from chapter 28, God told Jacob the following...

[Genesis 28:15 NKJV] 15 "Behold, I [am] with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

So for Jacob, as he continued his journey to Padam Aram – he knows that the presence of God is going to be with him during the trip.

And he certainly is able to see this through the affirmation of the question that he asks those attending the flocks of sheep by the well.

Not only do they affirm that he has finally arrived at his destination.

They affirmed that they know Laban's whereabouts and they even point out Rachel to Jacob.

So in verse seven, it appears that Jacob is looking for some alone time with Rachel and tries to get the others to leave by telling them to give their sheep water and move on.

The problem was that the well contained a large stone covering the well and the shepherds needed the help of all the shepherds to remove the stone.

Make a note that the job of the shepherd was usually assigned to the smallest or the youngest child. David was a shepherd, being the youngest child.

So what does Jacob do when he sees Rachel approaching?

He does what any teenage boy would do in front of a girl he liked and he proceeded to show off. The problem was that this teenage boy was in his 70's.

He removed the stone and then he gave water to the flock that Rachel brought over and then he kissed her.

Now this event, has many similarities to the story of Abraham sending Eliezer to go get Isaac a bride.

You might remember that Eliezer prays on his way to Padam Aram and he then meets Rebekah at a well.

In that event, Rebekah was the one who watered all his camels. Here Rebekah's son is giving water to the flock of his future bride.

Because everything is moving so fast, Jacob screams out and cries.

Why is he crying? Because Jacob can see the presence of God as everything is falling into place.

Now, Rebekah runs home and tells Laban and Laban is glad to see Jacob. Why?

Because Laban remembers the jewelry of silver and the jewelry of gold and the clothing that Eliezer had given him and the family as a dowry for Rebekah.

Look at verse 14 again,

[Gen 29:14 NKJV] 14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you [are] my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

Laban and Jacob had a lot more in common than being related. Both Laban and Jacob were deceivers and we will see how Jacob gets jacobbed by Laban.

You see, God is going to use Laban's deception to reveal to Jacob's sin to Jacob.

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you [are] my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what [should] your wages [be]?" 16 Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder [was] Leah, and the name of the younger [was] Rachel. 17 Leah's eyes [were] delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

Regarding Leah – when it mentions that Leah’s eyes were delicate...

Other translations will have her eyes as tender and the NLT translation states that her eyes were weak.

– many people will ask, what was wrong with Leah???

- Many people attribute this verse as Leah having different color eyes than what was considered attractive in that part of the world. People in the middle east usually have shiny dark black or brown eyes and it is possible that Leah possibly had hazel eyes or blue eyes – different than Rachel’s eyes.
- Another possible explanation was that Leah simply wasn’t very pretty – especially when compared to Rachel.

Remember, the scriptures have already demonstrated that Esau and Jacob were opposites of each other, here we might be seeing the same thing – all we know about Rachel is that she was beautiful of form and appearance.

18 Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." 19 And Laban said, "[It is] better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." 20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed [only] a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

Ahhhhhhhhh!!!

Isn’t that romantic?

Paul tells us in 1 Cor 13:4 that love is patient.

Lust will not wait. Lust says now – love says wait.

Jacob worked seven years for Rachel – remember, he didn't have money for a dowry. His labor was the dowry payment to Rachel's father.

He didn't even negotiate how long he was going to work for Rachel – the going rate was only two years.

You see, in the eyes of the world, Rachel was not worth seven years but in the eyes of Jacob, he determined that seven years of labor was well worth it.

It works the same way with the believer as Jesus paid the ultimate price when He died on the cross for us. All because He loved us.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give [me] my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. 23 Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. 24 And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah [as] a maid. 25 So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it [was] Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" 26 And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 "Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."

Leah would have been wearing a veil on her wedding day – there is no way Jacob would have known it was her.

Jacob just got a taste of his own medicine.

Laban's response to Jacob is, "Here in our country, we take care of the firstborn first" and for Jacob, that must have struck a chord thinking back to what he had done to Esau.

[Gal 6:7 NKJV] 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

28 Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. 29 And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. 30 Then [Jacob] also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

So Jacob finally gets to marry Rachel after 14 years of hard work. However, he also gets both of their maids, and they will become his concubines as well. So really – he has four wives.

Some 3500 years later a man named Joseph Smith will use Jacob's multiple wives as one of his excuses to institute plural wives based on this example from the age of the patriarchs.

The Mormon church will acknowledge that Brigham Young had multiple wives, but they usually deny that Joseph Smith had multiple wives. Yet according to some scholars who have researched the Mormon temple archives, Joseph Smith had something close to 48 wives in addition to his first wife Emma.

I think it's interesting to look at what Jesus uses as the example of marriage when He was asked about divorce:

(Mat 19:3-6 NKJV) The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" {4} And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' {5} "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? {6} "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Jesus doesn't pull from the example of the patriarchs, He pulls from God's original design in the Garden of Eden. God made one man and one woman.

This is to be God's rule for marriage – one man and one woman.

So because Jacob loved Rachel – God intervenes on Leah's behalf.

And in the process chasten Jacob.

31 When the LORD saw that Leah [was] unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel [was] barren. 32 So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name **Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." 33 Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that **I [am] unloved, He has therefore given me this [son] also.**" And she**

called his name Simeon. 34 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called **Levi**. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name **Judah**. Then she stopped bearing.

It is hard not to feel sorry for Leah at the end of chapter 29 as she desperately tries to win the affection of Jacob.

Now, in the beginning of chapter 30, the soap opera continues as now Rachel and Leah compete with one another and become envious of each other.

[Genesis 30:1-24 NKJV] 1 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!"

Rachel sees that Leah has four children and is envious of her -

In these ancient days, a woman's sense of worth came out of the children she gave birth to. It was a great shame to have no children.

The irony in this statement is that Rachel dies giving birth to her son Benjamin later on.

2 And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "[Am] I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Rachel is placing the blame on Jacob and Jacob is placing the blame on God for the reason that Rachel has no children. However, none of them are going before the Lord in prayer. Everyone is trying to solve the situation with the only way they know how and that is through the flesh.

Rachel first attempts to resolve the situation by having her maid Bilhah be the surrogate.

3 So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear [a child] on my knees, that I also may have children by her." 4 Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. 5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. 7 And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, [and] indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.

When Leah sees what is going on, she pretty much says, "Well two can play at that game and she gives her maid to Jacob and she has two kids with Jacob.

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. 10 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad. 12 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13 Then Leah said, "I am

happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.

Oh it gets worse. Rachel is not done scheming.

14 Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me [some] of your son's mandrakes." 15 But she said to her, "[Is it] a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." 16 When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. 17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. 19 Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 And Leah said, "God has endowed me [with] a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. 21 Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Mandrakes were these berries that people took when they were having fertility issues – so Rachel make a deal with Leah – I will trade you the mandrakes for a night with my Jacob.

The plan backfires on Rachel as Leah becomes pregnant again. But notice in verse 17, that it was God that led Leah to have more children. And she has two more sons and one more daughter.

22 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. 23 And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." 24 So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son."

Rachel finally gets pregnant and it was as a result of prayer and not the mandrakes.

She names him Joseph yet, she desires another one.

What a reflection on our human nature that it often appears that we are never satisfied in what God has given us.

We always want more...

So, what can we learn from our text tonight???

I think we can learn a little from the way the Lord responded to the three major characters.

Leah – even though she was hated, God still had big plans for her because it was through her that the tribes of Judah and Levi were born. Judah is the royal line that will go through David and eventually to Jesus Christ and Levi is the line where all the priests will come from.

Jacob – even though God was with him, there were still a few things that Jacob has to address. He is still a work in progress. And we saw God chasten him regarding his deceiving practices and also in the way he treated Leah.

Rachel – Rachel was envious of her sister despite her receiving all the love from Jacob. God demonstrated his grace and mercy upon Rachel as He opened up her womb.

The drama in this family is far from over –

However, we will continue to see God presence in every move that they make. Just like He promised that He will never forsake us.

Amen.

Let's pray...



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