

Jacob Gets the (Wrong) Wife

Genesis 29.1-30

Yogi Berra might say 'It's *déjà vu* all over again!' A patriarch goes to Haran and finds a wife at a well. Abraham got Isaac his wife that way, and Jacob thinks he has, but something goes horribly wrong on his wedding night. The deceiver is deceived, and learns a hard lesson.

God Provides a Wife for Jacob (1-14)

- Jacob arrives at a well in Haran (1-8)
- Rachel arrives; Jacob is smitten! (9-12)
- Laban welcomes nephew Jacob (13-14)

Laban gives the wrong daughter: Jacob is deceived (15-30)

- Jacob works seven years for Rachel (15-20)
- Wedding night switcheroo: *Behold, it was Leah!* (21-25a)
- Jacob gets his girl...for seven more years' work! (25b-30)

Learning Hard Lessons on the Journey of Faith

God's promises and loving care are sure, but He also effectively disciplines us by making us painfully aware of sin in our lives.



*Jacob:
The deceiver gets deceived*



1. Haran plays a major role in the patriarchal narrative in Genesis. Abram and his family settled there after leaving Ur (11.31), and Abram left there for the Promised Land (12.4). When Abraham needed to find a wife who was not a Canaanite for his son Isaac, he sent his servant to Haran (Gen. 24). Now Isaac tells Jacob to go to Haran to find a wife (28.2). Why was it so important to *not* marry a Canaanite? Is there a principle here for who Christians should marry? (See 2 Cor. 6.14-18.)
2. The circumstances surrounding Jacob meeting Rachel have both similarities and contrasts with the way Abraham's servant met Rebekah years earlier. Read Gen. 24.10-27, then 29.1-14. What are some similarities? What differences are there? What do we learn about Jacob's faith – or lack of it – here?
3. Deceitful Laban is introduced to us back in Gen. 24.29-32. Can you detect a hint of his greedy opportunism there (see v53)? His conniving nature is also reflected in 29.13-14. Now consider the similarities between Jacob and Laban: How are Jacob's actions in gaining the birthright reflected in Laban's extracting years of labor out of Jacob? Is there irony here, or what?!
4. Scripture teaches us that 'we reap what we sow.' In Scripture, God evidences what is called *talionic justice* – where He turns the actions of a wrong-doer back on himself (for an example of this, see Ps. 64). How does God bring Jacob's sinful actions in tricking his brother Esau and his father Isaac back on him in this instance? There is a lot to pick from here, but the closer you look, the more you see God's instructive discipline!
5. Have you ever felt wronged or cheated by someone, only to be convicted of doing the same thing to others yourself? Has God ever used a circumstance like this to mature you spiritually and help you change your behavior? Can you see a loving Father's wise discipline in your life (see Heb. 12.3-11)? Have you ever thanked Him for it?