

## Genesis 29

Verses 1- 6

Then Jacob set out on his journey, and went to the land of the people of the east.

<sup>2</sup> He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, because they watered the flocks from that well. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. <sup>3</sup> When all the flocks were gathered there, they would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where are you from?” And they said, “We are from Haran.” <sup>5</sup> So he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know *him*.” <sup>6</sup> And he said to them, “Is it well with him?” And they said, “It is well, and here is his daughter Rachel coming with the sheep.”

Then Jacob set out on his journey, and went to the land of the people of the east.

This is in northern Mesopotamia

See Map 2905



<sup>2</sup> He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, because they watered the flocks from that well. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large.

This could be the same well where the servant of Abraham met Rebekah years earlier. However there was nearly a 100 years between the servant of Abraham and Jacob coming to Haran and new wells could have been dug during that time.

See chart 2910

| Ch      | Person  | Event                       | Age   | Year        |
|---------|---------|-----------------------------|-------|-------------|
| 20      | Abraham | She is my sister (2nd time) | 99    | 1897        |
| 21      | Abraham | Isaac born                  | 100   | 1896        |
| 22      | Abraham | Abraham Tested              | 120   | 1876        |
| 23      | Sarah   | Sarah dies                  | 127   | 1859        |
| 24      | Isaac   | Marries Rebekah             | 40    | 1856        |
| 25      | Isaac   | Esau and Jacob born         | 60    | 1836        |
| 25      | Abraham | Abraham dies                | 175   | 1821        |
| 26      | Esau    | Marries two Hittites        | 40    | 1796        |
| 25      | Ishmael | Ismael dies                 | 137   | 1773        |
| 27 - 28 | Isaac   | blessing                    | 137   | 1759        |
| 27 - 28 | Jacob   | Trip to Haran               | 77    | 1759        |
| 29      | Jacob   | 7 years for Rachel          | 77-84 | 1752        |
| 29 - 30 | Jacob   | 7 years and 11 kids         | 84-91 | 1752 - 1745 |
| 30      | Jacob   | Joseph born                 | 91    | 1745        |

<sup>5</sup> So he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know *him*.”

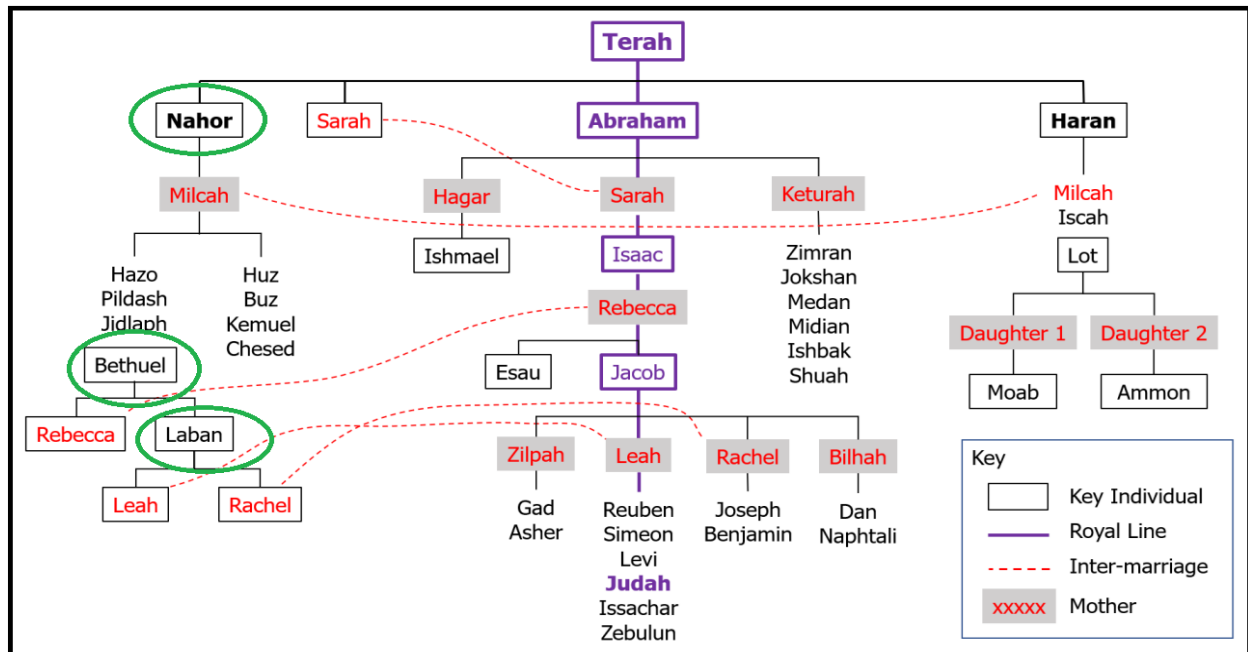
Son as used here actually means grandson. We saw this same usage in Genesis 9:24 with Noah and Canaan.

<sup>24</sup> When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.

Canaan was a grandson of Noah.

Laban was the grandson of Nahor.

See chart 2915



**6 And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and here is his daughter Rachel coming with the sheep."**

The younger members of the household were given the job of watching the sheep.

Verses 7-12

**7 Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." 8 But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."**

**9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, and the sheep of his mother's brother Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of his mother's brother Laban. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and raised his voice and wept.**

**12 Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.**

<sup>8</sup> But they said, “We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep.”

The shepherds must have been young boys since they were unable to remove the stone. Also Jacob would never have spoken to grown men this way, telling them what to do.

<sup>9</sup> While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

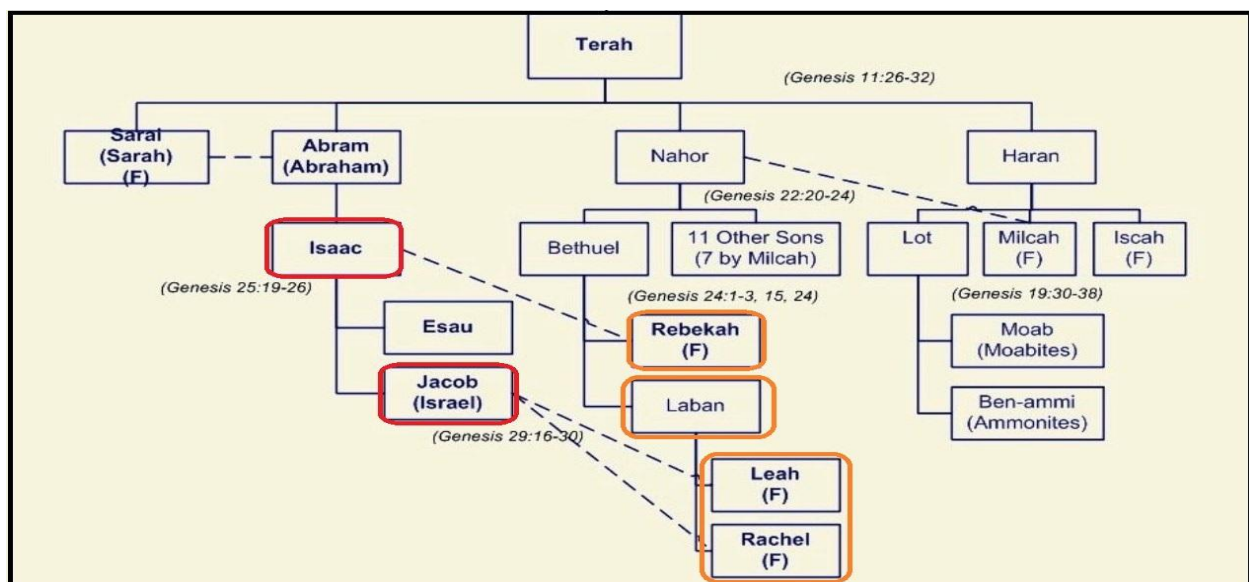
Rebekah had the same job when she was a young girl working for her father Bethuel.

**Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of Laban.**

Rebekah watered all the camels for the servant of Abraham but just the opposite is done here; Jacob waters the sheep for Rachel. However, there was a good reason for the difference; the servant of Abraham came with a caravan bearing expensive gifts whereas, Jacob came alone and needing a place to stay.

<sup>12</sup> Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah’s son, and she ran and told her father.

See chart 2920



Verses 13 - 20

<sup>13</sup> So when Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then he told Laban all these things. <sup>14</sup> And Laban said to him, "You certainly are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month.

<sup>15</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" <sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in figure and appearance. <sup>18</sup> Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." <sup>19</sup> Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me." <sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him like *only* a few days because of his love for her.

<sup>13</sup> So when Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house.

This was the customary greeting among Hebrew families at that time.

<sup>15</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing?"

For a month, Jacob worked at a minimum wage job (room and board) but Laban knew Jacob was a good worker and he wanted him to stay so he asked Jacob what would be a fair wage for his service.

<sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in figure and appearance.

Both Laban and Jacob had a good reason to come to an agreement on his employment.

On his part, Jacob couldn't go back home and he wanted to be with Rachel.

Laban, on the other hand had two daughters and it was better for them to marry a relative of theirs rather than someone outside of their tribe.

<sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him like *only* a few days because of his love for her.

Why would Jacob suggest 7 years? This may have been the maximum number of years he could be indebted to Laban. The cancellation of debt in the Law was every seven years.

See Deuteronomy 15:1- 2

**“At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. <sup>2</sup> And this is the regulation for the release of debts: every creditor is to forgive what he has loaned to his neighbor; he shall not require it of his neighbor and his brother, because the Lord’s release has been proclaimed.**

Now this was long before the Law was given, but as we have seen, many things in the law were practiced by the people before God made it binding in 1446 BC.

Verses 21- 30

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give *me* my wife, for my time is completed, that I may have relations with her.” <sup>22</sup> So Laban gathered all the people of the place and held a feast. <sup>23</sup> Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him; and *Jacob* had relations with her. <sup>24</sup> Laban also gave his female slave Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a slave. <sup>25</sup> So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, “What is this *that* you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?” <sup>26</sup> But Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. <sup>27</sup> Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me, for another seven years.” <sup>28</sup> Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. <sup>29</sup> Laban also gave his female slave Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her slave. <sup>30</sup> So *Jacob* had relations with Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give *me* my wife, for my time is completed, that I may have relations with her.

Jacob had waited for 7 years to take Rachel as his wife, but he should have stopped talking after he said “for my time is complete”.



<sup>22</sup> So Laban gathered all the people of the place and held a feast. <sup>23</sup> Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him; and *Jacob* had relations with her. <sup>24</sup> Laban also gave his female slave Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a slave.

Their marriage ceremony consisted of a feast. It is possible that vows were exchanged but there is no indication that this occurred. Then the father of the bride brought her sister to the tent of the groom. Say What. ☹

<sup>25</sup> So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, “What is this *that* you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?”

What circumstances could explain Jacobs’s lack of awareness on his wedding night. It is possible that Jacob had way too much to drink during the feast. Noah got so drunk that his grandson took advantage of him without his knowledge. But why would Jacob allow himself to get that drunk on his wedding night?

We have heard this expression, “**what is this *that* you have done to me**”, several times now in the Book of Genesis.

1. Genesis 12:18

<sup>18</sup> Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this *that* you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?

2. Genesis 20:9

<sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.”

3. Genesis 26:10

<sup>10</sup> And Abimelech said, “What is this *that* you have done to us? One of the people might easily have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

<sup>26</sup> But Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn.

Even if this statement was true, what Laban did was deceptive because Jacob was “a distant relative” and Laban had a responsibility to inform him of this practice.

Also, did Laban command Rachel and Leah to remain silent about this practice? Even if he did, was it right for Rachel and Leah to say nothing to their future husband?

We know Laban was a deceiver but so was Jacob in regard to Esau. There is a lesson to be learned here .... **As men sow, so shall they reap.** Jacob deceived his father and brother and now he is suffering the consequences of his actions. However, we should not assume that all of our suffering is the result of sin. Sometimes we suffer for the sake of righteousness (For doing what is right)

<sup>27</sup> **Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me, for another seven years.** <sup>28</sup> **Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.**

It seems that Laban had no shame. He deceived Jacob and now he wants another 7 years from him. But Jacob agrees to this new agreement despite the fact that he had been deceived. Obviously, he was still afraid to go home.

Jacob is now 84 years old and during the next 7 years Jacob will have 11 sons.

See chart 2925

| Ch.     | Person | Event                  | Age   | Year        |
|---------|--------|------------------------|-------|-------------|
| 27 - 28 | Isaac  | blessing               | 137   | 1759        |
| 27 - 28 | Jacob  | Trip to Haran          | 77    | 1759        |
| 29      | Jacob  | 7 years for Rachel     | 77-84 | 1752        |
| 29 - 30 | Jacob  | 7 years and 11 kids    | 84-91 | 1752 - 1745 |
| 30      | Jacob  | Joseph born            | 91    | 1745        |
| 31      | Jacob  | 6 years for the flocks | 97    | 1739        |
| 32-33   |        | Jacob & Esau reunite   | 97    | 1739        |
| 35      | Jacob  | Benjamin born          | 97    | 1739        |
| 35      | Rachel | Dies giving birth      | 35    | 1739        |



Verses 31- 35

<sup>31</sup> Now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was unable to have children. <sup>32</sup> Leah conceived and gave birth to a son, and named him Reuben, for she said, “Because the Lord has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.” <sup>33</sup> Then she conceived again and gave birth to a son, and said, “Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also.” So she named him Simeon. <sup>34</sup> And she conceived again and gave birth to a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore he was named Levi. <sup>35</sup> And she conceived again and gave birth to a son, and said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

<sup>31</sup> Now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was unable to have children.

Leah had 4 sons with the following names and meanings:

1. REUBEN means..... Behold, a son
2. SIMEON means.....To hear or to be heard
3. LEVI means.....United or joined
4. JUDAH means.....Praise the Lord