

The Meetings and Marriages of Jacob

Genesis 29:1-35

I. THE WALK OF JACOB (Genesis 29:1)

A. His Way – *“Then Jacob went on his journey,”*

1. The *“then”* points back to chapter 28 and Jacob’s encounter with God at Bethel.
2. The encounter he had with God had transformed him and now he walked with renewed power and zeal.
3. Note: Despite Jacob’s continual deception, God blessed him. God had taught Jacob great truths at Bethel in spite of his sin. In fact, God would teach him more truths in the future. Jacob would reap the deception of what he had sown with his father and brother at the hands of Laban (Galatians 6:7-8).

B. His Destination – *“and came into the land of the people of the east.”*

1. The distance – Jacob’s trip was 400 to 500 miles. A trip that likely was completed on foot or by donkey/camel.
2. The determination – Jacob had a long journey he had come to arrive in Haran. This wasn’t an easy task for him to complete. Day after day, step after step, this would have been mundane after the first several days. Life is like this many times, it takes determination to complete the daily tasks day after day. If you’re going to do the will of God, even in the mundane, you need to walk close to the Saviour.
3. The place – Haran, on the east side of the Euphrates River. The Euphrates was a major dividing line for this area of the world. “The land of the people of the east” is synonymous with Haran. Jacob would be traveling from the west heading east toward Haran. Jacob would also have traveled north then east as he followed the fertile crescent.

II. THE WELL FOR JACOB (Genesis 29:2-10)

- #### A. The Arrival – *“In the land of the people of the east”* (Genesis 29:1, 2; Judges 6:3, 33; Judges 7:12; Judges 8:10).

- B. The Area – Where three flocks of sheep waited at the well (Genesis 29:2-3)
 - 1. With a stone over the mouth of the well
 - 2. Waiting for the rest of the flocks

- C. The Inquiry of Jacob of the Shepherds (Genesis 29:4-8)
 - 1. The providence in his arrival and location (Genesis 29:4-6)
 - a. One of the most conspicuous things in Jacob’s travel to Haran is the providential hand of God. Providence led him to a well where he was able to obtain the needed information and his meeting of Rachel.
 - b. NOTE: This is reminiscent of the servant of Abraham’s visit when he had come to find a bride for Isaac. God’s providence had worked in the arrival at the well (Genesis 24:10-17).
 - 2. Of watering the flocks of sheep (Genesis 29:7-8)
 - a. They were physically unable to move the stone. This would make Jacob, a plain man and dweller in tents, stronger than the shepherds.
 - b. They were under special agreement not to move the stone. Perhaps the sheep were not to go to pasture until the cattle had had their fill.
 - c. They were lazy and unimaginative. They would not do anything outside of how it had always been done. This seems most likely especially since Jacob could not make any sense of their waiting. The first two choices would have made sense to him if they had been legitimate.

- D. The Watering of the Flocks of Laban (Genesis 29:9-10)
 - 1. Rachel arrived with the sheep of Laban (Genesis 29:9)
 - 2. Jacob moved the stone and watered the sheep (Genesis 29:10)

III. THE WOMAN FOR JACOB (Genesis 29:9-12)

- A. The Industriousness of the Woman (Genesis 29:9)
 - 1. Rachel’s work as a shepherdess reveals her work ethic (Proverbs 31:13).
 - 2. This speaks well of her character. She was not a lazy girl, but one that was busy. She knew how to work and was willing to do so.

- B. The Involvement of the Woman (Genesis 29:9)
 - 1. Rachel’s meeting at the well with Jacob was the beginning of her involvement with God’s people for it is the start of her becoming Jacob’s wife.
 - 2. In becoming Jacob’s wife, it lands her a prominent place in God’s work.
 - 3. A good lesson to note here is that Rachel’s position as a lowly shepherdess did not hinder her from gaining a prominent place in God’s work but was in fact that which brought her to the prominent place in the line of Israel.

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Lowly tasks and menial work do not hinder one's elevation in God's service. It is lowly character that does that. If you find yourself teaching a small Sunday School class, then do so to the glory of God. If you find yourself cleaning the church/meeting house week after week, then do so to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

- C. The Inspiration of the Woman (Genesis 29:10)
 - 1. It is apparent that Rachel's presence inspired Jacob to take it upon himself to make sure that the flock(s) got watered.
 - 2. Note: What motives you? As a Christian are you motivated by your Saviour? Isn't He worthy to live for and serve (Romans 12:1-2).
- D. The Interest in the Woman (Genesis 29:11)
 - 1. Jacob kissed Rachel (Genesis 29:11) – as a relative (see Genesis 29:13).
 - 2. Jacob wept (Genesis 29:11)
 - 3. Jacob made known his relationship to Rachel and her family (Genesis 29:12; Compare Genesis 14:14 to Genesis 12:5).
- E. The Informing by the Woman (Genesis 29:12)
 - 1. Rachel ran and told Laban of Jacob's arrival.
 - 2. Her actions are responsible considering that he would need a place to stay and that he was family that had arrived from a long journey. These same actions were seen in her aunt Rebekah at the announcement of the servant of Abraham (See Genesis 24:28).

IV. THE WELCOME OF JACOB (Genesis 29:13-14)

- A. The Enthusiasm of the Welcome (Genesis 29:13)
 - 1. The actions in the welcome
 - a. Jacob was welcomed and given cordial hospitality in the home of his mother's family.
 - b. Laban "*ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him.*"
 - (1) Enthusiasm needs more than just words and these actions were the outward showing of that enthusiasm.
 - (2) If we are enthused by God, we will show it in more than just our talk, our actions and service for God should show it (1 Thessalonians 2:13; cp. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10).

- c. Note: Based upon Laban's previous actions (Genesis 24:29-31) we can also discern that it is likely he was looking to receive some riches in this visit. We will see how that the one (Jacob) known to deceive and supplant will be deceived himself.
 2. The attitudes in the welcome – *“He ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him.”*
 - a. This enthusiastic welcome for Jacob would greatly encourage him.
 - b. This home showed a cordial acceptance, not a cold “have to” reception.
 - c. Our service to our Lord needs to be the same in that it is accepted in a warm hearty enthusiastic demeanor.
 3. The affection in the welcome – *“and brought him into the house... ..Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.”*
 - a. Laban ran to meet Jacob
 - b. Laban received Jacob into his house (Genesis 29:13-14) – *“my bone and my flesh”* refers to their family connection (see Ephesians 5:30).
- B. The Enlightening in the Welcome (Genesis 29:13)
 1. The information to enlighten
 - a. To explain his reason of travel
 - b. To explain his reason of coming to Laban's house.
 2. The satisfying of the enlightening
 - a. Laban receives him
 - b. Laban declares their connection – *“Surely thou art my bone and my flesh”* (Genesis 29:14)
- C. The Entertaining of the Welcome (Genesis 29:14)
 1. The length of stay by Jacob (Genesis 29:14) – *“And he abode with him the space of a month”*
 - a. Jacob will stay with Laban at least twenty years longer, but in this first month he stayed as a guest in the home of Laban.
 - b. After this month he (Laban) will hire Jacob out for his labour.
 2. The blessings of God seen – Certainly God had opened doors for Jacob and had provided for him just as he had promised (Psalm 23:5; Psalm 31:19-20).