

Genesis 29:1-12. Sexual Harassment in Aram?

After enjoying a wonderful message⁴ from the Lord our God—*I AM is with you, and will not leave you. You will be the ancestor of a great people, and they will bless all people*—Jacob continued on his journey to Aram. Upon arriving he found a well covered quite well with a large stone. Three flocks were lying about.

Jacob asked the shepherds—Hey bro—where ya'll from? Haran they answered. Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson? Yes, they replied. Is he well, Jacob asked. Yes, he is—here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep.

Look, he said, it's still the middle of the day. Shouldn't the sheep be gathered, watered, and be brought back to pasture? Nope, we can't they argued—not until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the well. Then we'll water the sheep.

During this conversation, Rachel (i.e., Ewe) came with her father's sheep. Jacob's interest was not all that subtle for when he saw the Ewe directing her sheep, he rolled the stone away and watered the sheep, the sheep who belonged to Uncle Laban and shepherded by his cousin, Ewe.

Then it happened. Jacob kissed Ewe and began to weep, aloud no less. He told her that he was a relative of her father Laban, and a son of her aunt, Rebekah. She ran and told her father.

- Q Why was Jacob so presumptuous with the well cover? Had all the sheep gathered with Rachel's presence?
- Q Why did Holy Spirit record Jacob wept? Why did he weep you suppose? At what age do you tell children that Jacob kissed [naw-shak'] Rachel?
- Q What do you suppose Rachel told Laban about what happened at the well?

⁴"I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. ¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

GENESIS 29:1-12

Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. ²There he saw a well in the field, with three flocks of sheep lying near it because the flocks were watered from that well. The stone over the mouth of the well was large. ³When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they would return the stone to its place over the mouth of the well.

⁴Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?"

"We're from Haran," they replied.

⁵He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?"

"Yes, we know him," they answered.

⁶Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?"

"Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."

⁷"Look," he said, "the sun is still high; it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water the sheep and take them back to pasture."

⁸"We can't," they replied, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep."

⁹While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

¹⁰When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud. ¹²He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.

Genesis 29:13-30. *The Price of a Ewe*. After Laban heard about his nephew's presence, he hurried out to meet him. He embraced him, kissed him, and brought him home. Uncle Laban said, you are my own flesh and blood. Jacob had been there a month, when Laban suggested that Jacob not work for nothing—what should your wages be?

Here's the scoop—Laban had two daughters, the older Leah with delicate eyes, and Rachel who had a great figure and was beautiful. Jacob was in love with Ewe and so he said in return for 7 years of work, I take your younger daughter Ewe for a wife.

Laban—okay, better you than some other dude. Stay here and work. Jacob served seven years to get Ewe, but to Jacob it seemed like a few days because of his love for her.

It was time—give me my wife, my time is completed and I want to make love to her. So Laban brought everyone together for a feast, and when the evening came, Laban took Cow and gave her to Jacob—and Jacob oddly enough had sex with Cow (Zilpah, Laban's servant girl was given to Cow to be a maidservant).

Apparently Jacob was zonked for when he woke up that morning with Cow, he kvetched to Laban—what have you done? I served you for Ewe, not Cow. Why have you deceived me?

Laban replied—it's not right to give away the younger daughter when the older has not been married off. Finish your week with Cow and in return for another seven years, you can have Ewe for your wife. (Laban give his servant girl Bilhah for Ewe's maidservant.) So, Jacob made love to Ewe also, and he loved Ewe more than Cow. And, he did indeed work for Laban for another seven years.

- Q To what extent was Laban deceptive versus culturally appropriate?
- Q Why did Holy Spirit include this messy relationship with Laban, Rachel, and Leah?
- Q How do you feel about Jacob marrying his cousins?
- Q Was it all worth 14 years of labor?

GENESIS 29:13-30

As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things. ¹⁴Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."

After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month,

¹⁵Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

¹⁶Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. ¹⁷Leah had delicate eyes; Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful.

¹⁸Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

¹⁹Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." ²⁰So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

²¹Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to lie with her."

²²So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. ²³But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her.

²⁴And Laban gave his servant girl Zilpah to his daughter as her maidservant.

²⁵When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"

²⁶Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. ²⁷Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

²⁸And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

²⁹Laban gave his servant girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maidservant. ³⁰Jacob lay with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Genesis 29:31-35. Fertility & Worth. Because the Lord God Yahweh observed Cow was not loved by Jacob, the Lord God made sure Cow had children (Ewe was barren). Cow's first son was named See, A Son (Reuben). Cow thought, now Jacob will love me. She had another son who she named One Who Hears (Simeon). Cow announced she'd named him One Who Hears because Yahweh heard I am not loved.

She and Jacob were busy, and again she conceived and gave birth to a son who she named Attached (Levi). Again, they conceived another son, and Cow said I will praise Yahweh. So she named him Praise (Judah). After four, she stopped having children.

- Q Why were Judah, Levi, Simeon, and Reuben born?
- Q Would Leah have traded any or all of the boys for true love from Jacob?
- Q Why did Holy Spirit record the birth contexts for Leah?

GENESIS 29:31-35

When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. ³²Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."

³³She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the LORD heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.

³⁴Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." So he was named Levi.

³⁵She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.