

## **GENESIS Lesson 32 – 6/16/19**

### **Jacob's Vow**

**28:20: And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,**

**28:21: So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:**

**28:22: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.**

Jacob makes a conditional vow to God, just like God will make a conditional promise to Israel.

Ex. 19:5: Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

Lev. 26:3: If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

Lev. 26:4-14: Then I will give...

Lev. 26:15: And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant:

Lev. 26:16-39: I also will do this unto you...

Deut. 7:12: Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep

unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers:

I want you to notice what Jacob actually says, “If God is with me, and keep me, and feed me, and clothe me, and bring me home...then Jehovah will be my God. And I will build Him a house and give Him a tenth of all that He gives me.

Does this sound like a NT Christian? It sounds like Jacob is bargaining with God! Jacob is man who swindled his brother, lied to his father, and now he’s running from a fight.

Jacob’s proposition is plainly, “God, if you’ll do this for me, I’ll do that for you.” The implication is, “If you don’t, then I won’t either.” In his thinking, Jacob is making a deal with God instead of humbly receiving what God said He would do (Gen. 28:13-15).

<b>God’s Promise (Gen. 28:13-15)</b>	<b>Jacob’s Vow (Gen. 28:20-22)</b>
I am the LORD God	then shall the LORD be my God
I will give thee	keep me...give me bread...and raiment...
I am with thee	If God will be with me
I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of	So that I come again to my father's house...

One commentator said, “It would have been much better if Jacob had prayed like this: ‘Because You promised to be with me and to keep me

and to provide for all my needs, and to bring me back to the land which you swore to give to my fathers and to me, I will be completely Yours, God.”

Isn't that how we sometimes live our Christian life? We are expecting God to do certain things, but we are always waiting to “catch Him” not do something. That's human nature. And when He doesn't do what we expect Him to, then we are quick to say, “You see..!”

There is the story of the irreverent carpenter who slipped on a roof (about four stories up), and as he slid to the gutter while clawing at the shingles, he screamed, “Lord, help me!” At the moment he was about to plummet twenty feet to the ground, a nail caught his overalls and his fall was arrested. Then it was, “That's all right, Lord. Never mind, the nail's holding me up.”

We may chide Jacob for trying to bargain with God, but I believe Jacob meant business; it was his response to what God had revealed to him. Jacob promised God he would give Him a tenth, that's more than many Christians give to God today in America in spite of what He has done for them.

I want to focus on what Jacob said in verse 22: “...and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.” This is the second mention of the tithe. The tithe is a tenth. When you tithe, you give God 10% of what He gives you.

Though the word “tithe” as in bringing the tenth to God is not per se a NT doctrine, giving is. And the NT principle of giving is having a heart that says, “I give it all;” remember the poor woman, she was

commended by Christ because she did what? She gave all she had (Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2). In the flesh, I'd rather give a tenth than all!

The tithe is a principal established before the Law, Abram tithed and so did Jacob. Tithing is a matter of the heart; if God has your heart, He's also got your wallet. Ornan the Jebusite, a Gentile, said, "I give it all." (see 1 Chr. 21:23)

And if our faith is after the faith of Abraham, should we not pattern our life and practices after his? For more on the tithe see notes in Lesson 14.

Instead of resting in the promises and goodness of God, like Jacob, we bargain with God and enter into conditions and stipulations of our own making.

#### Jacob in Padan-Aram

**29:1: Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.**

**29:2: And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.**

**29:3: And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.**

**29:4: And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we.**

**29:5: And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.**

**29:6: And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.**

**29:7: And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.**

**29:8: And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.**

**29:9: And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.**

**29:10: 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.**

**29:11: And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.**

**29:12: And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.**

**29:13: And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.**

**29:14: And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.**

Just like Eliezer, Jacob ends up at a well and runs into Rachel from the house of Bethuel. And Eliezer ran into Rebekah. Coincidence? No, just God keeping His promise that He would be with Jacob all the way.

Remember, this was a time before clearly marked roads and signs, Jacob didn't exactly know where he was until he asked the locals.

When you are in God's will He will direct the path that you must trod.

Prov. 3:6: In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

It was not by chance that Jacob ended up at this well, and it was not by accident that Rachel came to the well when she did.

While at the well Jacob asks the men there where they are from and they tell him from Haran; Jacob knows that's where he is supposed to go. But he is puzzled that the men just stand there and do not water their flocks, and they tell him there are more sheep coming and cannot water until all the sheep have gathered around the well.

It is very probable from the conversation that the well belonged to Laban and he had first dibs, the "other sheep" they were waiting for were his and just as they are speaking Rachel shows up with her father's sheep. Rachel was a shepherd.

And soon as Jacob sees her he immediately tries to show off; he wanted to impress the girl. He drew water for her sheep; that is, her dad's sheep. The reason why these men tarried was not because the stone was heavy, but they had to wait until the owner had his take first.

Remember Gen. 25:27, “...Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.” Jacob is not going to step into a telephone booth and become superman in 10 minutes.

Also remember that he was supposed to marry one of Laban’s daughters (Gen. 28:2). As soon as he found Rachel was Laban’s daughter Jacob knew she could be the one.

The text tells us here that upon learning who Rachel was, he kissed her and wept. It is customary in Middle Eastern culture to kiss family, relatives, and really close friends. Jacob weeping was probably an emotional release, he made a mess of things back home and he has been travelling alone on foot for 2 months.

Rachel takes Jacob to her father’s house, and Jacob meets Laban. They greet each other and Laban tells Jacob: “Stay with me a while.”

#### Laban’s deal with Jacob

**29:15: And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?**

**29:16: And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.**

**29:17: Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.**

**29:18: And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.**

**29:19: And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.**

**29:20: And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.**

**29:21: And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.**

**29:22: And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.**

**29:23: And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.**

**29:24: And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.**

**29:25: And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?**

**29:26: And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.**

**29:27: Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.**

**29:28: And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.**

**29:29: And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.**



**29:30: And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.**

Laban makes a proposition to Jacob, work for me and I'll pay you. Notice that he calls his nephew "brother." This was customary in the Bible times. A brother also referred to a close male relative. Laban was going to profit from that man's presence.

Laban though, wanted Jacob to earn his keep and before Jacob could tell him why he was there—he probably knew, Eliezer came for Rebekah—he asks, "What will I pay you for your service?" The one who supposed to be served (Gen. 25:23) is about to serve!

Now Laban knew that his daughter Rachel was an attractive and shapely young lady (we assume she was young—the Bible doesn't tell us her age), but his older daughter not so much.

The Bible also tells us that Leah was "tender eyed." There has been great debate as to what this phrase "tender eyed" means. Let's look at some verses. But Leah is contrasted with Rachel's beauty—so tender eyed cannot be a good thing. One is beautiful and the other is not.

Tender as soft and well fed:

Gen. 18:7: And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.

Tender as weak (young children don't yet have the strength of an adult):

Gen. 33:13: And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

Tender again as weak (a tender man is thin and not imposing):

Deut. 28:54: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

Tender as someone who would dare not get dirty, or mess her hair or nails:

Deut. 28:56: The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness...

We can assume that when you looked at Leah, you could tell there was something wrong with her eyes—some have suggested that tender here means weak; perhaps Leah was cross-eyed. Others suggest that Leah was simply “plain Jane.”

Laban being the wheeler and dealer he was, probably had hatched a plan on how he would marry off his older daughter and his plan is standing right in front of him. Jacob was about to reap what he sowed.

Jacob served Laban for seven years for Rachel and while he kept Laban’s flocks he spent much time with Rachel—remember she was the one that brought the sheep to the well. Jacob longed for the day that she would become his wife. The Bible says, “...they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her...” This is the longest engagement in the Bible—seven years.

Jacob couldn't wait; he is almost 80 years of age by now! The wedding night finally came, remember there were no lights in the tents during those days, and Laban probably instructed his older daughter to go along with his plan and to keep quiet. He also instructed Rachel to stay out of it. Leah may have loved Jacob secretly (see Gen. 30:15); he stayed with the family for seven years.

Doesn't this sound familiar? After all Rebekah was Laban's sister! Remember the plot to steal the birthright blessing?

Jacob got a lesson in respecting the rights of first-born! This is just what Jacob had done to Esau and it is being done to him!

When Jacob wakes up in the morning, who does he find next to him, Leah! He puts on his overalls stomps out of the tent, heads straight for Laban and says, "Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?"

And when Laban answered him, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn," Jacob didn't say a word, what he had done came right back to his face.

But Laban being the wheeler and dealer, made another deal with Jacob, fulfill Leah's week and then I'll give you Rachel, but you must serve me for another seven years. The week here refers to the seven day marriage feast; two weddings back to back.

And Laban gives each of his daughters a maid, Zilpah to Leah, and Bilhah to Rachel. They would be considered Jacob's concubines. In Laban's treatment of Jacob we see the deceiver deceived!