

GENESIS 29

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

Genesis 29:1–35

Jacob Marries Both Leah and Rachel; and Sires Four Sons

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to every chapter of this word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) ([folder](#)) (which is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined. There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here than others, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. On occasion, I will quote from a source which is totally wrong on that subject; and then explain why. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables** or every word **Various Commentators** doctrines as well (sometimes, these can be repetitive). These are tables which are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available. If you ever want to read most of the relevant material on a particular verse or concept of a verse, that is available herein.

Preface: Jacob goes east to take a wife from his mother's family.

In Gen. 29, Jacob arrives at his destination in Padan-aram, coming upon some shepherds who know Laban (Jacob's uncle) and the Laban family. When discussing the use of the well, Rachel, Jacob's first cousin, comes onto the scene, leading a flock of sheep. Jacob tells her who he is and she runs back to her family to tell her father. Her father immediately comes out to meet Jacob, to invite him into their home.

A month goes by and Jacob is apparently helping with the sheep and Laban's ranch, and Laban asks what he would like to be paid. Jacob suggests that he work for 7 years in order to marry Rachel, with whom he was in love. Laban accepts this offer.

7 years later, Laban throws a wedding party for Jacob, and at the end, Jacob goes to the bed of his new bride. In the morning, Jacob awakens to find that he has married Leah, the older sister, and not Rachel. He goes immediately to Laban and confronts him, and Laban gives him a phony excuse. Laban proposes that Jacob work another 7 years, and that he would also be allowed to marry Rachel. Jacob agrees to this. At the end of Gen. 29, Leah has given birth to 4 of Jacob's sons.

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Genesis. This will be the most extensive examination of Genesis 29, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

Quotations:

Matthew Henry: *The affairs of princes and mighty nations ...are not recorded in the book of God, but are left to be buried in oblivion; while these small domestic concerns of holy Jacob are particularly recorded with their minute circumstances, that they may be in everlasting remembrance. For "the memory of the just is blessed."* (Prov. 10:7a).¹

Gen. 29:20 **So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.** (ESV)

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter commentary (slightly edited).

Pele: *Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.*²

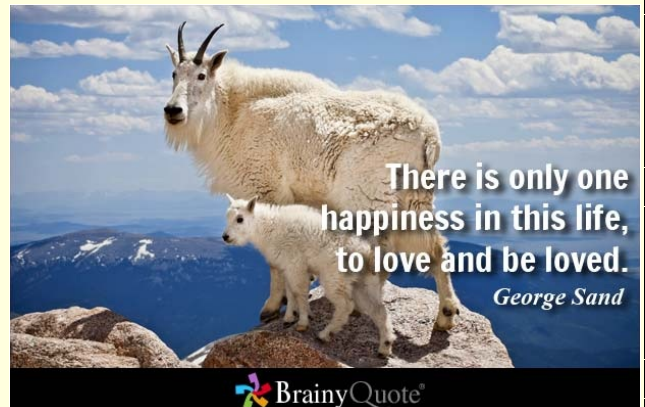
Steve Jobs: *Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it.*³

Audrey Hepburn (perhaps thinking of **Leah**) said: *The beauty of a woman must be seen from in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides.*⁴

Quotations on Love:

Jackson Brown, Jr.: *Sometimes the heart sees what is invisible to the eye.*⁵

George Sands Quote (a graphic) from **Brainy Quotes**; accessed August 14, 2017.



John Wooden Quote (a graphic) from **Brainy Quotes**; accessed August 14, 2017.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.: *Love is when the other person's happiness is more important than your own.*⁶

Bertrand Russell: *The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.*⁷

Dr. Seuss: *You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.*⁸

Quotations on Manipulation:

J.R. Ward, from *Lover Eternal*: *You are a manipulator. I like to think of myself more as an outcome engineer.*⁹

Colm Toibin: *All writing is a form of manipulation, of course, but you realize that a plain sentence can actually do so much.*¹⁰

² From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/p/pele737774.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

³ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/s/stevejobs416859.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

⁴ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/audreyhepb413484.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

⁵ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/hjacksonb100702.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

⁶ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/h/hjacksonb384402.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

⁷ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/bertrandru383143.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

⁸ From <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/love> accessed August 14, 2017.

⁹ From <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/manipulation> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁰ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/colmtoibin585412.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

Joyce Brothers combines love and manipulation (as does Genesis 29): *Love comes when manipulation stops; when you think more about the other person than about his or her reactions to you. When you dare to reveal yourself fully. When you dare to be vulnerable.*¹¹

Philip K. Dick: *The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words.*¹²

Quotations on Polygamy:

Kanye West provides the selfish, incorrect, counter-culture approach: *Love is cursed by monogamy.*¹³

Benyf: *Polygamy simply says, "You are not enough."*¹⁴

G.K. Chesterton: *Variability is one of the virtues of a woman. It avoids the crude requirement of polygamy. So long as you have one good wife you are sure to have a spiritual harem.*¹⁵

Abraham Lincoln: *If the people of Utah shall peacefully form a State Constitution tolerating polygamy, will the Democracy admit them into the Union?*¹⁶

Judy Biggert: *No Congress ever has seen fit to amend the Constitution to address any issue related to marriage. No Constitutional Amendment was needed to ban polygamy or bigamy, nor was a Constitutional Amendment needed to set a uniform age of majority to ban child marriages.*¹⁷ Biggert was born in 1937 and, like all people of that era, had no idea what would happen in the 21st century.

David Josiah Brewer: *It is Mormonism, Mohammedanism and heathenism and not Christianity which have proclaimed polygamy and debased woman from the sacred place of wife to the lower level of concubine. It is not Christianity which has sustained the social evil.*¹⁸

Dennis Prager: *Society may no longer define marriage in the only way marriage has ever been defined in the annals of recorded history. Many societies allowed polygamy, many allowed child marriages, some allowed marriage within families; but none, in thousands of years, defined marriage as the union of people of the same sex.*¹⁹

Elbert Hubbard: *Polygamy: An endeavour to get more out of life than there is in it.*²⁰

Nawal El Saadawi: *The family code in Egypt is one of the worst family codes in the Arab world. Polygamy. The husband is having absolute power over the family.*²¹

¹¹ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/jj/joycebroth143030.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹² From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/p/philipkdi163099.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹³ From <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/polygamy> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁴ From <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/polygamy> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁵ From <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/polygamy> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁶ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/abrahamlin729583.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁷ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/jj/judybigger368800.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁸ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/d/davidjosia687049.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

¹⁹ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/d/dennisprag649304.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

²⁰ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/e/elberthubb163686.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

²¹ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/n/nawalelsaa531061.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

Marine Le Pen (a French politician and lawyer; speaking of France): *We are very, very far from recognising polygamy in our country, thank God.*²²

Gene Robinson provides the divine establishment viewpoint: *The state's interest in marriage is stability. Generally speaking, polygamy does not work for stability. Inherent in the whole polygamous movement is a deep and abiding misogyny and denigration of women. So polygamy is objectionable on lots of grounds.*²³

Outline of Chapter 29:

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²² From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/marinelepe818185.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

²³ From <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/g/generobins513589.html> accessed August 14, 2017.

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www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Genesis

Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			
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Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms

Divine Establishment	Also known as the <i>laws of divine establishment</i> . These are laws which are devised by God for the human race (for believers and unbelievers alike). The more aligned a country is with these laws, the greater freedom and prosperity that country will enjoy. Furthermore, there will be greater evangelism and Bible teaching which takes place. The further a country strays from these law results in greater tyranny and unhappiness among its population. See the Laws of Divine Establishment (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
5th Stage of National Discipline	This is the stage of discipline God brings upon Israel when the people are removed from their own land and taken into slavery by some foreign power. Thieme called this the 5 th Cycle of Discipline. The Five Cycles of Discipline (BDR—probably Thieme) (Mark Perkins) (L. G. Merritt).
The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)	We all come to a time of God-consciousness where we understand the concept and possibility of the existence of God. At that point, we face 2 great questions: (1) do we want to know this God and (2) are will willing to believe in God as He has revealed Himself or do we make a god in our own image and worship that? In both the Old and New Testaments, God will make Himself known (He reveals Himself) to those who will believe in Him and to others as well. We know Him firmly and concretely as Jesus Christ; and in the Old Testament, He is known as the God of the Jews, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Moses (or of Abraham), etc.
Type , Typology	<i>A type is a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons, events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught His redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come, not the image of those things (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1). The Mosaic system, for example, was a kind of kindergarten in which God's people were trained in divine things and taught to look forward to the realities of things yet to come.</i> ²⁴ See Typology (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the Doctrine of Rebound (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

²⁴ From [Dake](#), accessed October 15, 2013.

Some of these definitions are taken from

<http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/>

<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>

<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/terms-and-definitions/>

<http://www.theopedia.com/>

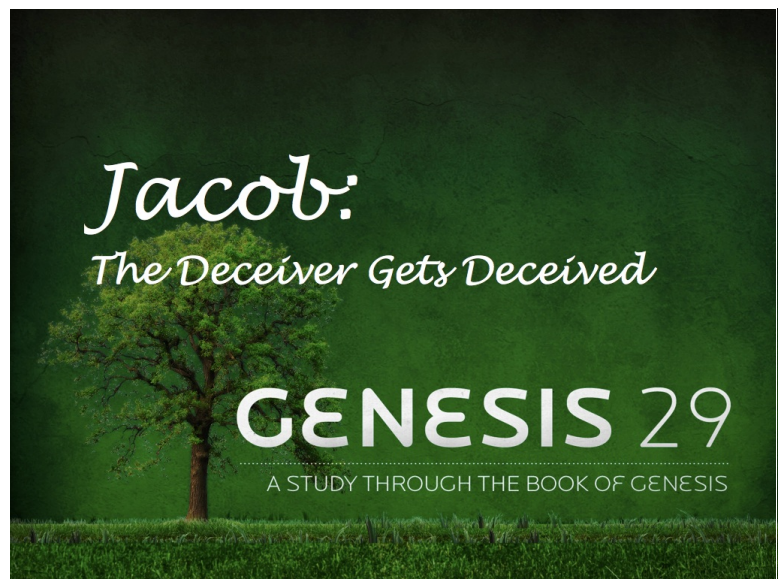
An Introduction to Genesis 29

Introduction: In the previous chapter, Jacob was still in the Land of Promise, eventually heading North and then east; and God had come to him in a dream, where Jacob had the vision of the angels going up and down from earth to heaven.

Jacob will leave the land of Canaan, and go to a land where there is deception, superstition, and a worship of false gods. However, the worship of the True God was known within his family—although it will become apparent in later chapters that they have some problems in this area.

Genesis 29—The Deceiver Gets Deceived (a graphic); from [PinsDaddy](#); accessed August 11, 2017. This is a marvelous summation of this chapter; and I may reconsider my title as a result.

J. Vernon McGee: *Over this chapter I would like to write: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8) . Probably the title that we ought to put over this chapter is "Chickens Come Home to Roost." In the beginning of this chapter we will see that Jacob begins to reap the harvest of his evil doing. The passage in Galatians is written primarily for Christians, but it expresses a universal law of God in every age. It is true in any area of life. You sow corn; you reap corn. You sow cotton; you reap cotton. You sow wheat; you reap wheat. You sow tares; you reap tares.*



McGee continues: *Examples of this principle run all the way through the Scriptures. For instance, Pharaoh slew the male children of the Hebrews, and in time his son was slain by the death angel. Ahab, through false accusations, had Naboth slain and the dogs licked his blood. God sent His prophet Elijah to Ahab with the message that, as the dogs had licked the blood of Naboth, they would lick the blood of Ahab. And that was literally fulfilled. You remember that David found this to be an inexorable law which was applicable to his own life. He committed the terrible sins of adultery and murder. God forgave him for his sin. Yet, the chickens came home to roost. He reaped what he had sown. His own daughter was raped and his son slain. Even Paul the apostle felt the weight of this law. He had given his consent at the stoning of Stephen. Later, Paul was taken outside the city of Lystra and was stoned and left for dead.*

McGee concludes: *Jacob is the classic illustration of this inflexible law. Jacob had lived by his wits. He was rather cocky and clever. He had practiced deceit. He would stoop to use shady methods to accomplish his purpose. And he was proud of his cleverness. But he will reap what he has sown.*²⁵

There are assumptions that we will make—truth is revealed to those who want it. God's truth is not available to every single person, but that is a matter of their volition, rather than God's inability to provide it. The believer who wants to know God, Who God is and what God does will be provided with this information. That is a function of God's character.

So what Jacob knows is a matter of his own volition; and the same is true of his eastern family. They have some positive volition toward the **Revealed God** and they will all appear to have some recognition of God's authority as well. Nahor is the father of those who live in the east; Abraham is the father of this very small clan in Canaan. However, the God of Abraham is equivalent to the God of Nahor (Gen. 31:53). So, when Abraham's servant spoke to Bethuel and Laban about the God of Abraham; He is their God as well.

God has promised to be with Jacob during this time—therefore, Jacob is going to learn from this experience as well as become enriched by this experience. Jacob will return to Canaan, 20 years from this time, a very changed man. He will be married—twice—and he will have two mistresses (more properly, surrogates). His attitude toward Esau will be changed dramatically. However, he will never achieve the status of Abraham and be called the friend of God.

The blessings of God follow after Jacob. Jacob, as we have already observed, is not a spiritual giant—not by any stretch of the imagination. However, he is in the line of promise, and, as such, is the recipient not only of God's care and protection, but of God's blessings.

In this chapter, I will deal with two important topics: (1) How were Rachel and Leah involved in the deception of Jacob (if at all)? (2) We believers today will not, during our lives, here the voice of Jesus teaching; we will not see the signs and miracles that the Exodus generation saw; 99.9% of us will never witness something which is a clear, unequivocal miracle—aren't we getting the short end of the stick here? That first topic is one of interest; not sure that there will be any spiritual impact in discussing it. The **second topic** (covered in the introduction) is extremely important for your spiritual life today. How many times have you heard someone imagine that they were back in the time that Jesus walked the earth?

David wrote in the psalms: *Indeed, [divine] good and [God's] grace will pursue me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of Y^ehowah forever.* (Psalm 23:6) This describes the life of the mature believer. During his time on earth, God's divine good and grace pursue him; and then, in eternity, he is with God forever. What could be a better life? And even Jacob, who is anything but a mature believer, is in the line of promise, and in this line, goodness and grace still pursue him. God has promised this to him directly:

Are believers in the Church Age short-changed because God does not appear to us? Gen. 28:13–15 And behold, the LORD stood above it [the stairwell] and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (ESV)

As we discussed in Gen. 28, if Jacob had not put his trust in God before, he indeed had some trust in God now. After all, God appeared to him in a dream. It is my opinion that Jacob is being exposed to real life at this point, away from the protection and nurturing of his immediate family.

²⁵ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Gen. 29); accessed August 13, 2017.

This, of course, makes many people think, "If God appeared to me, I would have a greater strength of faith too." No doubt, there are people you know (perhaps even you) who think that you have been short-changed (1) because God has never appeared to you; (2) you were not alive when Jesus walked the earth; (3) you have never seen anything that you could undeniably call a miracle.

This is one of the amazing things in the history of God and man: Jacob will not become a great believer, like his grandfather Abraham. God appeared to both men; and God will appear to Jacob on many occasions. Abraham became great in faith. However, for most of his life, Jacob advanced to a stage of mediocrity (he appears to have ended his life well). My point being is, direct contact with God does not insure that a person will become a great believer. In fact, it does not even guarantee that a person will become a believer.

The Exodus generation saw great miracles performed by God. Most of the miracles which occur in Exodus are done on a grand scale, so that all the people of Egypt and all the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could observe them. However, bear in mind that the Egyptians, for the most part, remained hostile to the Jews, despite the fact that they witnessed the very same miracles. There was not a mass exodus of Egyptians to go with the Jews (although some Egyptians did accompany the Jews). The Egyptians, who witnessed these great judgments against Egypt—and it was completely clear what was happening—they did not align themselves with the Jews. They saw miracles which completely disparaged their own false gods; and yet, the Egyptians did *not* come in large numbers to the Jewish people and say, "Let us worship your God with you."

God remained with the Jews of the Exodus and not only continued to perform miracles for them, but spoke aloud to them (which frightened them greatly). And yet, this generation of Jews, who witnessed a dozen or so amazing miracles, were one of the worst generations of believers in Jewish history. Most of them died the sin unto death out in the desert, after leaving Egypt. They saw many miracles, and yet, they continued to doubt God and rebel against Moses and Aaron. Therefore, God killed them before entering into the Land of Promise. He later commented, "**For 40 years, I loathed that generation.**" (Psalm 95:10) They saw great miracles with their own eyes; and the miracles were confirmed by everyone there, and yet, the *adults* who left Egypt were nearly all a worthless lot of believers.

There were a great many people who saw Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry; and many of them observed miracles of healing. Yet not everyone believed. Jesus spoke to Jews, to scholars of the Old Testament, to Romans, to Samaritans, and most of these people—who saw Jesus with their own eyes—opposed Him. In fact, there was a coalition between the Romans and the Jews which took Jesus to the cross—and these two groups hated one another!

The disciples were 12 of the biggest knuckleheads you have ever seen, all the way to the cross; and one of them actually betrayed the Lord. Yet they heard the words of Jesus day after day after day; and they saw some of the greatest miracles ever performed. People grow based upon their positive volition and their interaction with Bible doctrine.

What you need to do is appreciate where you are and what you know; and enjoy this period of history. Being an American, I was raised during the greatest period in America's history, where we have enjoyed great material prosperity and great blessing at the hand of God. Not only have I lived in a great period of American history; but I live during one the greatest periods of time in the greatest country in human history. What God has blessed America with has been unsurpassed in human history. The freedom, and blessing and protections from God cannot be found anywhere in the world at any time in history.

Yet, despite this, I have also seen a significant number of Americans turn against their own country and turn against God, ignoring or even repudiating their spiritual history. I could witness in my very own lifetime the destruction of the United States, which is the greatest country to have ever existed up to this point in time. I am

seeing the seeds of our destruction being planted even as I write this.²⁶ What could be more exciting than that? What could be more dramatic?

We don't need to see miracles; we don't need to hear the voice of God; we don't need to meet Jesus during His very short, earthly ministry. We have the full and complete Word of God and most of us live in a country where we have easy access to God's Word. In fact, we have online access to over 80 English translations of the Bible.

We live during one of the greatest periods of time in human history; and many of us in the greatest nation in human history. We are witnesses to two of the greatest evils in human history—Islam and communism. Their evil cannot be denied, and yet it is. One of our political parties has more in common with the communist party than with our founders; and the other party barely tolerates those who are trying to reconnect with the spirit of our founders.

We as Americans are beneficiaries and heirs to the greatest spiritual heritage of any previous nation. For those of us who live in the United States, we have a front row seat to one of the greatest struggles in the history of mankind. We can see the full-on evils of socialism and Islam and how these disparate ideologies seek to destroy, above all else, the faith of Jesus Christ—and to destroy any nation that professes Jesus as their Lord and Savior (as well as to destroy nation Israel). I don't know that Satan's works have ever been more transparent as they are today.

This is a wonderful time to be alive. This is one of the greatest and most exciting eras of human history. If you know Bible doctrine; if the truth of God is in your thinking; then the spiritual battle which undergirds current events is clear, unmistakable, and, quite frankly, exciting. Each day brings more news of the spiritual battle which is the basis for all that is happening. Consequently, the choices that God has allowed us to make at this time could not be more stark or more meaningful.

The political party which is most hostile to Christians, to nation Israel, and to the Bible, on the other hand, tries to sell the idea that their governmental philosophies are most akin to Scripture. This requires every believer to search the Scriptures. See **Liberalism, Conservatism and Christianity** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Chapter 29 is an incredible chapter. About 14 years are covered in this chapter and we see the marriage of Jacob and perhaps the most romantic verse in the entire Bible. He will see his family in Haran, the family that he has never met. We will see how Laban has become a manipulative liar, more deceptive and unprincipled than even Jacob; yet God, in His matchless grace, will overrule him.

Also, in this chapter, we will witness the next generation in the line of Jesus Christ (Judah) and we will see the beginning of the line which leads to Moses and the Levitical priesthood (Levi). We will see once again the first-born, Reuben, who has all the advantages, yet he will lose them in later years.

Dr. Peter Pett: This covenant narrative reflects the fulfilment of Yahweh's promise of fruitfulness to Jacob and is based on the covenant significance of the names given to the sons. It is not just a story. The names reflect their covenant relationship with God.

Pett continues with an important observation: But it is noteworthy that, in remarkable contrast to Genesis 24, there is no mention of God until we come to the birth of the sons. It is as though the writer is telling us that, although God's purposes came to fruition through it, God was not directly involved in the chicanery that took place. When Abraham's servant sought a wife for Isaac, he went about it prayerfully and waited for God to show His will through the acts of another catering to the needs of his beasts. Here we have no prayer and Jacob pre-empts the situation. The contrast could not be more stark.²⁷

²⁶ I write these words in 2017; however, I have been working on this chapter for about 3 years, on and off.

²⁷ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.

Jacob's exits from the Land of Promise seem to be typical of Israel's banishments from the land. Israel is removed entirely from the land in 586 B.C. and then allowed to return in 516 B.C. Then the Roman Empire, in A.D. 70 destroyed Jerusalem and slaughtered the Jews and enslaved many of them (if memory serves). I expected other commentators to notice this, but have not run across any, until this...

Arno Gaebelein: *The Lord brought him [Jacob; whom God will name Israel] to Padan-aram, where he was to dwell as an exile for twenty years. During these twenty years Jehovah did not manifest Himself to him, even as Israel dispersed among the nations has no communications from the Lord.*²⁸

Divine institutions in Genesis 29: Most of the divine institutions can be found in Gen. 29. Obviously volition—the function of the soul—can be found in nearly every chapter of the Bible. Jacob finds himself in Haran based upon decisions which he, his parents and his twin brother made. Rebekah devised a way for her son Jacob to receive Esau's blessing by deceiving Isaac; Jacob goes along with this; and when that happens, Esau is angry enough to kill his twin brother Jacob. Jacob has to get out of town, but Rebekah, his mother, cannot reveal that she was in on this plot to deceive her husband, so she suggests that Jacob leave to find a wife in Haran. Isaac orders Jacob to do that. All of that occurred in Gen. 28, which leads us to Jacob's trip to Haran, which takes place in Gen. 29:1. Quite obviously, the actions of Jacob, Laban, Leah, and Rachel are a tapestry of free will choices that each of them makes.

We have the second divine institution, which is work—which is fundamental to human life. Jacob works a month for his Uncle Laban in this chapter; and then he agrees to work 7 years in order to marry Rachel. So work is integral to this chapter.

Jacob will, after 7 years, marry both Rachel and Leah, the daughters of Laban—and that brings the 3rd divine institution into the picture—marriage. Jacob ends up marrying two sisters. Is that even allowed? This is discussed in great detail in v. 18.

Before we close out this chapter, Leah bears Jacob 4 sons in rapid succession—probably in less than 4 years time. Leah's names for her children reveal her innermost feelings about her relationship with Jacob (as she was not really chosen by Jacob) and about God. Bear in mind, Leah could have chosen to become very bitter over this turn of events.

The final divine institution is that of the national entity. Although we do not have clear evidence of a national entity to which Laban and his family belong, he has apparently worked out agreements with the people of his area concerning use of the well (which most assume belongs to him). When people live together in roughly the same geographical area, somehow, they must find a way to live near one another, despite having conflicting interests. A national entity deals with those kinds of problems.

It will also become clear, from the very personal nature of portions of Genesis, that Jacob is likely the author of these chapters in this book.

As I study a chapter, questions will occur to me—some of them important and many of them minor. Not all of these questions will be satisfactorily answered.

Fundamental Questions About Genesis 29

1. Jacob will marry two women in this chapter. How can we reconcile this with teachings elsewhere in the Bible?
2. Why are all of these shepherds just hanging out by the water hole and not getting water?
3. What is the deal about the well? Why did the shepherds wait there to use it?
4. How should we understand Leah's eyes being weak? What does that even mean?

²⁸ Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.

Fundamental Questions About Genesis 29

5. What is the time frame of Jacob's marriages? Does he marry Rachel *after* a period of 14 years?
6. The detail here is certainly the detail that we would expect from Jacob, remembering every detail of the first day that he met his true love. However, I am not sure of the Holy Spirit's reason for recording this detail.
7. In v. 10, the second verb means *to approach, to come near*; but it is not entirely clear what or whom Jacob is approaching.
- 8.

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It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Genesis 29

Isaac decided, one day, to give his end-of-life blessing to his favorite son, Esau, the firstborn. He directed Esau to kill some wild game, so that they could make a feast out of this anticipated transfer of blessing. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, wanted the preeminent blessing to go to Jacob. In order to direct the blessing of the firstborn to her favorite son, Jacob, Rebekah devised a plan. Jacob would disguise himself as Esau, come to a nearly blind Isaac with freshly cooked meat, and claim that was from his hunt. Although Isaac was quite suspicious about the whole situation, he finally gave in and blessed Jacob, thinking that he was Esau. Isaac gave Esau the preeminent blessing. This is all done in such a way that, only Jacob knows that his mother, Rebekah, engineered the whole scheme. Insofar as Isaac and Esau are concerned, once the scheme came to light, this was all Jacob's idea.

Rebekah's plan worked fine, but she did not think it through to the point where Esau reacts to what has happened. He was extremely angry and he threatened Isaac's life. After all, if Isaac has no children and no wife, the only place his inheritance could go to is Esau (now, Esau did not think this through either, because he would have been subject to justice, had he killed Jacob).

Isaac ended up blessing Jacob and giving him the preeminent blessing; but when Esau found out, he was livid, and spoke gleefully and openly about killing Jacob, his so-and-so brother. Rebekah, the great manipulator, must adjust her plans for the future and take into account that Esau, the oldest son, is ready to kill Jacob, the younger son and Rebekah's favorite son.

Rebekah and Jacob have always been disappointed with the women that Esau married (he had two wives from the Canaanite land at this time); so Rebekah decides that the perfect way to get Jacob out of Canaan and away from the anger of Esau is to send him east to take a wife from her family (as Abraham had done for Isaac, so many years previous). The whole idea is, the focus would be on finding a proper wife for Isaac; but the actual intention was to get him out of Canaan before his brother killed him.

Before Jacob is sent on his way, his father gives him a proper blessing—a blessing from cognizance. Because Jacob is sent out quickly, he is apparently sent with very little. One later passage says that he left with only his staff (which I take as being a figure of speech indicating that he had very little). My take is, he went with a very small caravan with his mother's nurse, Deborah. Whether they had 2 or 3 pack animals, we have no idea. But, in any case, Jacob traveled without a dowry to offer for his wife (actually, it will end up being *wives*).

After Jacob leaves, Esau takes a look at his own decisions, and marries a woman from his family, a daughter of Ishmael's; a more proper wife than his Hittite wives (heathen wives from the land of Canaan).

While in Bethel, Jacob's first major stop when leaving Beersheba to go east, he has a vision of angels and God speaks to him. His actual trip east is covered in the single verse Gen. 29:1.

Gen. 29 will begin with Jacob heading east to find a proper wife; but mostly to escape the wrath of his brother.

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We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 29

Characters	Commentary
Jacob	Jacob is the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham; and he is in the promised line. God has given him the name Israel, and all of his descendants will bear that name. Because of his conniving in the previous chapter, Jacob has been sent east to find a wife. In this chapter, he meets Rachel, who is the love of his life; but also in this chapter, he will find himself married to both Rachel and her sister Leah.
Laban	Laban is Jacob’s uncle, the brother of his mother Rebekah. In a previous chapter, Rebekah laid out a plan for Jacob to deceive his father and to take Esau’s blessing. Jacob agreed to this, and now finds himself 500 miles away, a guest of Laban. Whereas, Jacob’s mother manipulated situations for Jacob’s benefit (in her eyes), Laban will manipulate situations for his own benefit—something which Jacob never sees coming.
The shepherds	When arriving in the area of Haran, Jacob comes upon 3 shepherds, who are waiting in a field near a well with their sheep. It will turn out that they know Laban.
Rachel	Rachel is Laban’s youngest daughter, the first eastern relative that Jacob meets, and he falls in love with her in this chapter.
Leah	Leah is Rachel’s older sister (some think plainer); and her father Laban manipulates things so that Jacob ends up marrying Leah, when he expected to marry Rachel.
Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah	Leah and Jacob’s first 4 sons.

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Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Jacob and Laban are just not the most attractive people. They are connivers, swindlers; they are trying to outdo each other. There are some interesting things that go on in the next few chapters. From Genesis 29:1, which is when Jacob leaves the promised land and goes back to the homeland in Haran, through chapter 31 when he leaves to return to the promised land, is the Jacob-Laban section which talks about this interaction back and forth between the two. There are four observations to be made as we get into this section.*²⁹

We need to know where this chapter takes place.

²⁹ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

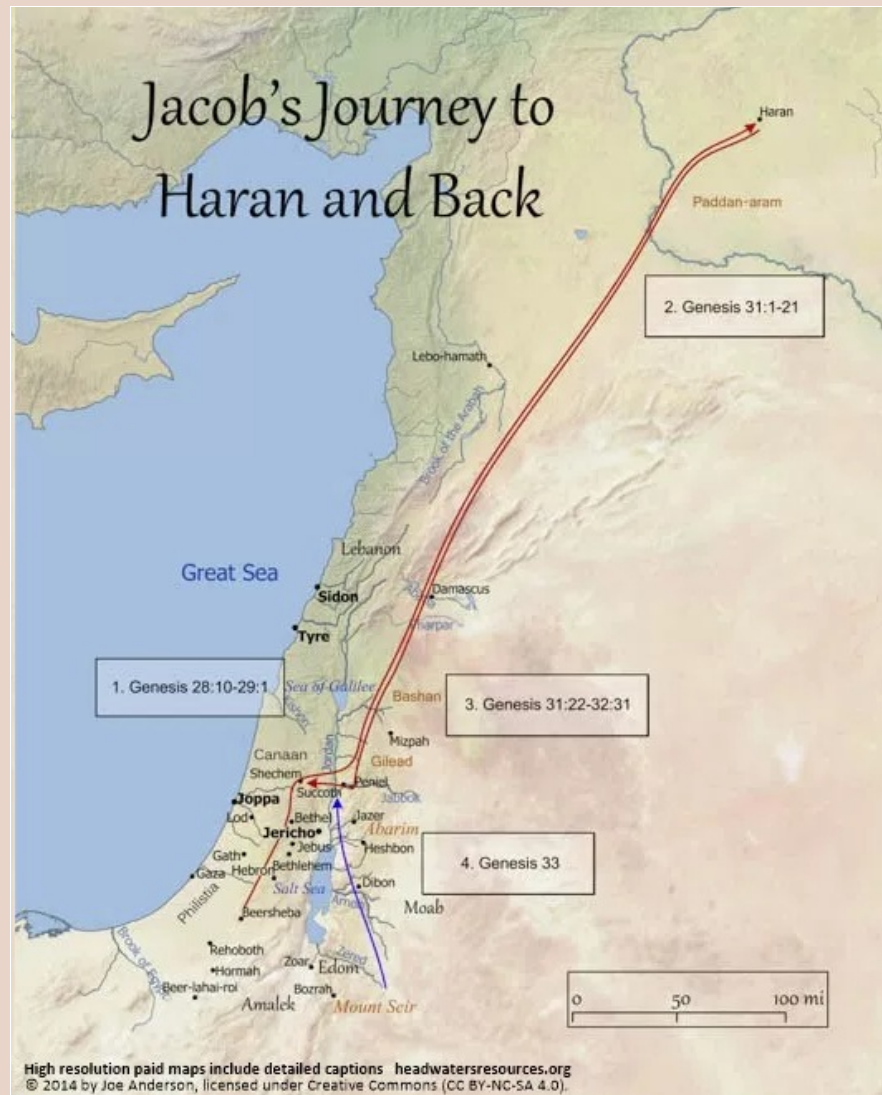
The Places of Genesis 29

Place	Description
Canaan	This is the land where Jacob is coming from. This is the geographical area which God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is why Jacob leaving this area is so important.
Haran	Haran is the city where Laban lives (or, he lives reasonably close to Haran). This place is northeast of the land of Canaan, and the place where Jacob went to find a wife from his own relations.
Paddan-aram	This is the general area where Laban lives.

The Places of Genesis 29

Place	Description
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Map of Jacob's Journey; from [Headwaters Christian Resources](#); accessed August 12, 2017.



Apart from Gen. 29:1a, the entirety of the next few chapters will take place in Haran.

Headwaters Christian Resources provides us with this outline of Jacob's travels:

1. Jacob set out in haste from Beersheba and camped at Bethel (formerly Luz) before continuing on to Paddan-aram (Genesis 28:10-29:1).
2. Jacob served in Laban’s house for 20 years before fleeing back to Canaan (Genesis 31:1-21).
3. Laban caught up with Jacob in the hill country of Gilead. Then Jacob came to Peniel where he wrestled with God (Genesis 31:22-32:31).
4. Esau came up from Seir and met Jacob in peace; Jacob then continued on as far as Shechem (Genesis 33).

From <https://headwatersresources.org/map-of-jacobs-journey-to-haran-and-back/> (for the map and list of Jacob’s travels); accessed August 12, 2017 (and slightly edited).

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These are numbers which are found in this chapter.

By the Numbers	
Item	Duration; size
Date of chapter:	Benson: 1760 B.C. ³⁰ The Bible Hub: 1928 B.C. ³¹ Reese’s Chronology Bible: 1736 B.C. Klassen: 1730 B.C. ³² This 200 year difference is being set up, as there are two very different points of view, where some believe the Egyptian slavery lasted 430 years; and others believe it to only be 215 years.
Jacob traveling from Beersheba to Haran.	Barnes: <i>The distance was about four hundred and fifty miles, and therefore it would take Jacob fifteen days to perform the journey at thirty miles a day.</i> ³³ I would have guessed such a journey to be more like a month or so.
Jacob’s age when married.	Barnes: <i>At the time of his marriage Jacob was eighty-four years of age; which corresponds to half that age according to the present average of human life.</i> ³⁴ The idea is, cut any age in half during this time period, and you will have a rough idea as to how the patriarch’s age compares to people today. So, Jacob getting married at 84 is similar to us getting married at age 42.
Jacob’s age when siring children.	Barnes: <i>Reuben may have been born when Jacob was still only eighty-four, and consequently Judah was born when Jacob was eighty-seven.</i> ³⁵
The date when Leah begins to have children.	The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge estimates this date to be 1752 B.C. ³⁶
Leah’s sons	Leah will have 4 sons immediately; arguably, the most important tribes of the Hebrew people.

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³⁰ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.
³¹ From the Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015).
³² *The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen’s dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; p. .
³³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1–8.
³⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25–30.
³⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35.
³⁶ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:32.

The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 29

Legend	
Birth or death	God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)	
Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.	

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2234 B.C.	2097 B.C.			Gen. 11:24	Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
	1978 B.C.			Gen. 11:25	Death of Nahor, Abram's uncle
	1969 B.C.		Noah is 950	Gen. 9:28–29	Death of Noah
2164 B.C.	1967 B.C.			Gen. 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
2078 B.C.	1881 B.C.	2080 B.C.	Abraham is 86	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
2064 B.C. (2066 B.C.)		2066 B.C.	Abraham is 100	Gen. 21:1–7 1Chron. 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 th generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
	1841– 1816 B.C.			Gen. 25:12–16 1Chron. 1:29–31	Ishmael's children.
	1834 B.C. 1829 B.C. (Klassen)	2054 B.C.		Gen. 22:1–19	Abraham is told by God to go to the land of Moriah to offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. This was a 3-day journey away. They then go to Beer-sheba , which could simply indicate that they are returning home to Beer-sheba .
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge ³⁷ puts this date at 1872 B.C., based upon Antiquities by Josephus.					
(2029 B.C.)	1830 B.C.	2030 B.C.	Abraham is 137	Gen. 23:1–20	The death of Sarah. She dies in Kirjatharba , it is Hebron , in the land of Canaan . Gen 23:1 Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life. She is buried in a cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre ; it is Hebron , in the land of Canaan , purchased by Abraham from the sons of Heth.

³⁷ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Gen. 22:1.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
(2026 B.C.)				Gen. 24:1–67 Gen. 25:20	Isaac (Abraham's son) and Rebecca. Gen. 25:20 Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramæan. At this time, Isaac is living in the Negev . It is likely that Abraham lived there as well; or near to there.
		2026 B.C.	Isaac is 40	Gen. 25:20	Isaac marries Rebecca. Gen. 25:20
	1826 B.C.			Gen. 25:1	Abraham marries Keturah. Smith puts the date at 1860 B.C.; and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1853 B.C.
				Gen. 25:2–4 1Chron. 1:32–33	Abraham's fathers children by Keturah.
	1817 B.C.		Shem is 600	Gen. 11:11	Death of Shem.
2004 B.C.	1807 B.C.	2006 B.C.	Abraham is 160; Isaac is 60	Gen. 25:19, 21–26	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac. Gen 25:26 After this, his brother came out grasping Esau's heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born. Therefore, Abraham would be 160 years old.
(1991 B.C.)				Gen. 25:5–6	Isaac is the heir of all things that Abraham has (but, most importantly, of the covenant of God with Abraham).
1989 B.C.	1792 B.C.	1991 B.C.	Abraham is 175	Gen. 25:7–10	Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years. He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah).
				Gen. 25:11	God blesses Isaac.
(1943 B.C.)	1788 B.C.			Gen. 25:17	The death of Ishmael. Gen 25:17 This is the length of Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people.
			Eber is 464	Gen. 11:17	Death of Eber.
	1782 B.C.	1978 B.C.		Gen. 25:27–34	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage.
	1782 B.C. 1740 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 26:1–5	A famine in the land; God renews covenant with Isaac at Gerar.
				Gen. 26:6–10	Rebecca and Isaac in Gerar.
				Gen. 26:11–16	Isaac is blessed by God in Gerar.
	1782 B.C. 1735 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 26:17–22	Strife between Isaac and Philistines in and near Gerar.
	1767 B.C.			Gen. 26:34–35	Esau marries two Canaanite women.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1757– 1739 B.C. 1733 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 26:23–25	Isaac makes an altar in Beer-sheba.
(1943 B.C.)	1744 B.C.		Ishmael is 137	Gen. 25:17–18	The death of Ishmael.
	1738 B.C. c 1732 B.C. (Klassen)	1977 B.C.		Gen. 26:26–33	Isaac's alliance with Abimelech at Beersheba.
(1929 B.C.)	1737 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1929 B.C.		Gen. 27:1–46	Jacob by deception receives a final blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau.
				Gen. 28:1–5	Jacob goes to his Uncle Laban's home in Padan-aram for a wife.
		1928 B.C.		Gen. 28:10–22	Jacob's dream; God speaks to Jacob.
				Gen. 28:6–9	Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.
		1906 B.C. (For descendants)		Gen. 36:1–42	Esau's marriages and descendants.
	1736 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1928 B.C.		Gen. 29:1–14	Jacob in Haran (Charan).
	1736– 1729 B.C. 1730– 1723 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 29:15–20	Jacob works 7 years to marry Rachel, but is deceived by Laban, and Jacob marries Leah, her older sister.
	1729 B.C. 1724 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C.		Gen. 29:21–31	Jacob marries Rachel
(1915 B.C.)	1729– 1716 B.C. 1723– 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C. 1916 B.C. (Rachel bears Joseph)		Gen. 29:32–34 Gen. 30:1–6 Gen. 29:35 Gen. 30:9, 7–8, 10–24	Jacob has 12 children by his wives, Rachel and Leah; and by their personal servants as well. Reese breaks the timeline down in smaller increments in his book.
1915 B.C.				Gen.	Joseph is born.
	1711 B.C.			Gen. 36:31–33 1Chron. 1:43–44 Gen. 26:34–39 1Chron. 1:45–50 Gen. 36:40–43 1Chron. 1:51–54	The kings of Edom.
(1909 B.C.)	1716 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 30:25–43 Gen. 31:1–16	Jacob's final years with Laban.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Gen. 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Gen. 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.
		1906 B.C.		Gen. 32:24–32 Gen. 35:10	Jacob wrestles with the angel.
		1906 B.C.		Gen. 33:1–16	Jacob meets Esau face to face.
	1715 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Gen. 33:17–20	The resumption of Jacob's journey.
	1711– 1708 B.C. 1706– 1705 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 38:1–5 1Chron. 2:3	Judah fathers 3 sons.
	1700 B.C. 1687 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Gen. 34:1–31	Dinah, daughter of Judah, is defiled.
		1906 B.C.		Gen. 35:1–15	Jacob returns to Bethel.
	1700 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1903 B.C.		Gen. 35:16–19 48:7 35:20–22	Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin.
(1898 B.C.)				Gen. 35:27 37:1	The return to Hebron.
	1699 B.C.		Joseph is 17	Gen. 37:2–11	Joseph—his early days and his dreams.
				Gen. 37:12–35	Joseph in Shechem and Dothan.
1897 B.C.		1898 B.C.		Gen. 37:36 39:1	Joseph is sold into slavery, to end up in Egypt.
	c1699– 1690 B.C.	1898 B.C.		Gen. 39:2–6	Joseph enjoys prosperity in Egypt.
	c1695 B.C. 1707 B.C. (Klassen)	1898 B.C.		Gen. 38:6–11	Judah and Tamar.
	1692 B.C.			Gen. 38:12–26	Judah's wife dies.
	1692 B.C. 1691 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 38:27–30 1Chron. 2:4	The birth of Pharez, the 41 st generation from Adam.
	c1690 B.C. 1689 B.C. (Klassen)	1889 B.C.		Gen. 39:7–19	Joseph flees adultery.
		1889 B.C.		Gen. 39:20–23	Joseph is put into jail; yet prospers in jail.
(1887 B.C.)	1688 B.C.	1887 B.C.		Gen. 40:1–23	Joseph gives the interpretation of the dreams of the baker and the butler.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
1884 B.C.	1687 B.C.		Isaac is 180	Gen. 35:28–29	The death of Isaac. Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. (Gen. 35:28)
(1885 B.C.)	1686 B.C.	1886 B.C.		Gen. 41:1–37	Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream.
		1886 B.C.		Gen. 41:38–44	Joseph is made governor.
				Gen. 41:45	Joseph marries Asenath.
1884 B.C.	1686– 1679 B.C.	1886 B.C. (Beginning)		Gen. 41:46–49	The 7 years of plenty.
	1685– 1683 B.C.			Gen. 41:50–53	Sons are born to Joseph.
	1685– 1681 B.C.			Ex. 6:16 Num. 3:17 1Chron. 6:1, 16	The descendants of Levi are born.
	1679– 1672 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Gen. 41:54–57	The seven years of famine.
(1876 B.C.)	1678 B.C. 1677 B.C. (Klassen)	1875 B.C.		Gen. 42:1–44:34	Joseph provides his family with food.
		1875 B.C.		Gen. 45:1–15	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.
		1875 B.C.		Gen. 45:16–28	Jacob hears that his son, Joseph, is still alive, and he prepares to travel to Egypt himself.
	1677 B.C.			Ruth 4:18 1Chron. 2:5	Birth of Hezron, the 40 th generation.
1873 B.C. ³⁸	1677 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Gen. 46:1–7, 28	Jacob goes to Egypt after God's assurance in Beersheba.
		1875 B.C.	Jacob is 130	Gen. 46:8–27 Ex. 1:1–5	Summary of the 70 who came to Egypt. Compare Gen. 47:8–9 and 46:27 for Jacob's age.
		1875 B.C.		Gen. 46:29–34 47:1–12	The people of Joseph are established in Egypt.
	1676– 1675 B.C.			Gen. 47:13–21	Joseph continues as prime minister in Egypt, exercising wise leadership during the famine.
				Gen. 47:22–26	The land of the priests in Egypt.
	1672– 1593 B.C.			1Chron. 2:6–8	Zerah, the brother of Pharez, and his descendants.
	1671 B.C. 1660 B.C. (Klassen)			Gen. 48:1–22	Blessings to Manasseh and Ephraim.
	1660 B.C. 1665 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Berith to Ephraim.

³⁸ Jacob moves family to the Land of Goshen in Egypt (Genesis 47:28)

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Gen. 47:28–31	The last days of Jacob; his charge to Joseph.
		1859 B.C.		Gen. 49:1–32	Jacob speaks to his sons, giving them their final blessings and encouraging them.
1857 B.C.	1660 B.C.	1859 B.C.	Jacob is 147	Gen. 49:33	The death of Jacob.
		1859 B.C.		Gen. 50:1–14	The burial of Jacob.
				Gen. 50:15–21	The fears of Joseph's brothers after the death of Jacob.
	1638 B.C. 1644 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Resheph (who is in the line between Ephraim and Joshua).
	1625 B.C. 1620 B.C. (Klassen)			Num. 26:58	Birth of Aram (Levi's grandson and Moses' father).
	1623 B.C. 1604 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Ram, the 39 th generation.
	1615 B.C. 1625 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Telah, in the line between Ephraim and Joshua.
				Gen. 50:22–23	Joseph's last days.
	1606 B.C.			Gen. 50:24–25	Joseph's last words.
1805 B.C. (1805 B.C.)		1806 B.C.	Joseph is 110	Gen. 50:26 Ex. 1:6	The death of Joseph. His brothers also die.
	1606– 1462 B.C.			Gen. 47:27 Ex. 1:7	The population explosion among the Jews living in Egypt.

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011 and August 12, 2014. Included in MacDonald's timeline is a timeline for Egypt interspersed.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

From: http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf (Christian shepherd). This source believes that the Jews live only a short time in Egypt (210 years).

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version), Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 10–54.

Many commentators put Jacob's age as 77 when he arrives in Haran (probably an area far outside of that city). I believe that this originally comes from work that Luther first did on this passage. The issues at hand are quite simple and easy to explain and understand. Those issues are dealt with in the final point.

The Age of Jacob When He Leaves Canaan for Haran

1. In my studies, I have come across 4 different ages given for Jacob when he leaves Canaan and comes to Haran. The most common age given is 77; however, I have also come across 57 (by Clarke ¹) and 60 and 70 years (60, I can't remember from where; 70³).
2. These are the typical ages ascribed to Jacob:
 - 1) 15 years old when Abraham died.
 - 2) 77 years old when he fled to Haran.
 - 3) 84 years old when he married.
 - 4) 90 years old when Joseph was sold into slavery.
 - 5) 130 years old when he moved to Egypt.
 - 6) 147 years old when he died.²
3. These are the numbers that we know for certain:
 - 1) Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah bore Jacob (and Esau). Gen 25:20–26
 - 2) Esau marries at age 40 (Jacob would be the same age). Gen. 26:34
 - 3) Ishmael lives to the age of 137; he is 13 years older than Isaac. Gen. 16:16 25:17
 - 4) Isaac lived 180 years (Gen 35:28) (Jacob is 120 years old when he died (180-60))
 - 5) Jacob worked for Laban 20 years, 14 for his daughters 6 for his flock (Gen 31:41)
 - 6) Joseph interpreted the dream for the cupbearer at 28 (Gen 41:1)
 - 7) Joseph appeared before Pharaoh at 30 (Gen 41:46)
 - 8) Benjamin was born in when Jacob was in Bethel (Gen 35) (meaning all his other children are born when he is in Laban)
 - 9) Joseph was the last son recorded to be born of Jacob before he moved back to Canaan (Gen. 30:25)
 - 10) There were 7 years of abundance 7 years of famine (which we do not know when it occurred). Jacob actually came to Egypt during the 2nd year of famine.
 - 11) Jacob (Israel) appeared before Pharaoh at 130 (Gen 47:9) (10 years after Isaac died)
 - 12) Jacob (Israel) died at 147 years old (Gen 47:28)
 - 13) Joseph died at 110 (Gen 50:22-25, Ex 13:19)³
4. Since the problems of Esau's marriages are apparent in Gen. 28, Jacob is at least 40 years old when leaving Canaan for Haran.
5. The intervening event between Esau's bad marriages (Gen. 26:34) and Jacob leaving Canaan (Gen. 28) is the deception of Gen. 27, where Isaac believes that he is getting old, to the point where he needs to make an end-of-life blessing and assign his privileges in the line of promise to Esau, his favored son.
6. Basically we are looking at two major factors...Esau's marriages have become problematic for Isaac and Rebekah—so that should not require any more than 5 years before that becomes apparent (making Jacob at least 45 years old). And, further, Isaac thinks himself as coming to the end of his life. Let me suggest, since his older brother Ishmael died at age 130, Isaac might consider that he might die at the same age (which would make Jacob 70 years old). However, Isaac might not wait until age 130; and if he had a week of feeling puny, then that in itself might be enough to make Isaac think that his life was coming to an end (and that could occur at age 110 or 120).
7. Given these reasonable assumptions, Isaac is probably between the ages of 45 and 80 when he leaves Canaan to go find a wife.
8. Now, let's bring Joseph's age into the picture.
 - 1) Joseph is 30 when he stands before Pharaoh.
 - 2) Then there are 7 years of prosperity followed by 2 years of famine, at which point, Joseph sends for his father, and his father comes to him. So Joseph would be 39 years old and his father Jacob is 130. This means that Jacob is 91 years old when Joseph is born.
 - 3) At the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me back to Canaan." (Gen. 30:25). At that point, Jacob and Laban determine a new salary schedule (Gen. 30:27–34).

The Age of Jacob When He Leaves Canaan for Haran

- 4) 4–6 years pass, and Jacob leaves Haran, as required by God.
- 5) And this is where we get the famous figure of 77 years of Jacob moving to Haran (91+6–20).

James Burton Coffman: *In terms of normal aging and life spans today, these figures could be cut almost in half to correspond to the equivalent situations in our own time. So where is any problem with the ages? The ancients had no problem with them, and only unbelievers have any problem with them now. And even if there should be thought to be a problem, the imaginative, changing, and undependable guesses of modern critics can afford no viable solution.*³⁹

¹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:20.

² From <http://www.biblecharts.org/oldtestament/interestingfactsaboutjacob.pdf> accessed July 31, 2017.

³ Mostly from <https://tben.wordpress.com/2010/08/21/the-timeline-of-the-lives-of-isaac-jacob-and-joseph/> accessed July 31, 2017.

Also referenced <http://hiswordsarepure.com/TheLifeOfJacob.htm> accessed July 31, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

One of the many places where this chapter is summarized.

The Summarized Bible on Genesis 29

Contents:	Jacob and Laban, two bargain makers (chiselers), meet.
Characters:	Jacob, Laban, Rachael, Leah, Reuben, Levi, Judah.
Conclusion:	The believer who has erred may not be forsaken of God, but he is permitted to reap the shame and sorrow of his self-chosen way. Matt. 7:2.
Key Word:	Beguiled, Gen. 29:25.
Strong Verses:	Gen. 29:20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.
Striking Facts:	Jacob at Haran, pictures the nation descended from him at the present time. He was away from the place of blessing, without an altar, but yet under the covenant care of Jehovah and eventually to be brought back.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments (edited). Brooks is one of the few commentators who see Jacob's exit from Canaan as related to Israel being subjected to the **5th Stage of National Discipline**.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Here is what to expect from Genesis 29:

Clarke's Synopsis of Genesis 29

Jacob proceeds on his journey (Gen. 29:1). Comes to a well where the flocks of his uncle Laban, as well as those of several others, were usually watered (Gen. 29:2–3). Inquires from the shepherds concerning Laban and his family (Gen. 29:4–6). While they are conversing about watering the sheep (Gen. 29:7–8), Rachel arrives (Gen. 29:9). He assists her to water her flock (Gen. 29:10); makes himself known unto her (Gen. 29:11–12).

³⁹ From <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017. Coffman cites H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; p. 455.

Clarke's Synopsis of Genesis 29

She hastens home and communicates the tidings of Jacob's arrival to her father (Gen. 29:12). Laban hastens to the well, embraces Jacob, and brings him home (Gen. 29:13). After a month's stay, Laban proposes to give Jacob wages (Gen. 29:14–15).

Leah and Rachel described (Gen. 29:16–17).

Jacob proposes to serve seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18). Laban consents (Gen. 29:19). When the seven years were fulfilled, Jacob demands his wife (Gen. 29:20–21). Laban makes a marriage feast (Gen. 29:22); and in the evening substitutes Leah for Rachel, to whom he gives Zilpah for handmaid (Gen. 29:23–24).

Jacob discovers the fraud, and upbraids Laban (Gen. 29:25). He excuses himself (Gen. 29:26); and promises to give him Rachel for another seven years of service (Gen. 29:27). After abiding a week with Leah, he receives Rachel for wife, to whom Laban gives Bilhah for handmaid (Gen. 29:28–29). Jacob loves Rachel more than Leah, and serves seven years for her (Gen. 29:30).

Leah being despised, the Lord makes her fruitful, while Rachel continues barren (Gen. 29:31). Leah bears Reuben (Gen. 29:32), and Simeon (Gen. 29:33), and Levi (Gen. 29:34), and Judah; after which she leaves off bearing (Gen. 29:35).

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Commentators have given us a brief overview of Genesis 29.

Brief Descriptions of Genesis 29 (Various Commentators)

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob met Rachel at the well and watered the flocks in spite of opposition against doing so. His love for her led him to serve Laban for seven years to obtain her as his wife. Laban deceived Jacob into marrying Leah, the first-born, so Jacob had to work another seven years for Rachel.*⁴⁰

Thomas: *Jacob is now in the greatest of all schools, that of experience, and there are many lessons to learn. These three chapters (xxix-xxxi.) cover...[probably twenty years] of his life, and are the record of a large part of his training.*⁴¹

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob Meets Come to His Relatives' Family Tribe and Marries Laban's Two Daughters (Gen. 29:1–30). Jacob's Sons are Born (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24).*⁴²

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *In the first fourteen verses God leads Jacob to his family in Haran. This leadership isn't overt. We don't see God doing anything. He is not overtly directing Jacob's steps. He is working behind the scenes, but as we look at this through the vantage point of the writer we see that God is in control of all the circumstances in bringing about His desired end. It is up to Jacob, the believer in the middle of this circumstance, to apply doctrine and to pass the test. God is teaching him certain things. In these first 14 verses we see God leading Jacob to his family and we see parallels to Genesis 23, but there are certain contrasts as well. Jacob isn't praying for God's direction, nevertheless he is being led by God. It is very clear that God is orchestrating this and that the parallels between the two chapters are divinely established.*⁴³

⁴⁰ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–30.

⁴¹ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–30. He cites Thomas, p. 269. Cf. Exodus 2:16-21.

⁴² Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1.

⁴³ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Here, we can get a good overview of this chapter.

Brief Outlines of Genesis 29

Benson:

- (1,) How he was brought in safety to his journey's end, and directed to his relations there, who bid him welcome, Gen. 29:1–14.
- (2,) How he was comfortably disposed of in marriage, Gen. 29:15–30.
- (3,) How his family was built up in the birth of four sons, Gen. 29:31–35.⁴⁴

Matthew Henry:

- Gen. 29:1–8 Jacob comes to the well of Haran.
 Gen. 29:9–14 His interview with Rachel, Laban entertains him.
 Gen. 29:15–30 Jacob's covenant for Rachel, Laban's deceit.
 Gen. 29:31–35 Leah's sons.⁴⁵

Cambridge:

- Gen. 29:1–14. Jacob at the well.
 Gen. 29:15–30. Jacob's marriage with Leah and Rachel.
 Gen. 29:31–30:24 Birth of Jacob's children.
 Gen. 30:25–43. Jacob serves Laban for a wage in flocks and herds.⁴⁶

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge:

- Gen. 29:1–8 Jacob comes to the well of Haran;
 Gen. 29:9–12 He becomes acquainted with Rachel;
 Gen. 29:13–17 Laban entertains him;
 Gen. 29:18–22 Jacob covenants for Rachel;
 Gen. 29:23–27 He is deceived by Laban with Leah;
 Gen. 29:28–31 He marries also Rachel, and serves for her seven years more;
 Gen. 29:32 Leah bears Reuben;
 Gen. 29:33 Simeon;
 Gen. 29:34 Levi;
 Gen. 29:35 and Judah.⁴⁷

Arno Gaebelein:

CHAPTER 29 Jacob with Laban

1. Jacob's arrival at Padan-aram (Gen. 29:1–14)
2. His service for Rachel (Gen. 29:15–20)
3. Laban's deception (Gen. 29:21–25)
4. Jacob receives Rachel (Gen. 29:26–31)
5. Leah's sons (Gen. 29:32–35)⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.

⁴⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.

⁴⁶ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments.

⁴⁷ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29 chapter comments (slightly edited).

⁴⁸ Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1–35.

Brief Outlines of Genesis 29

Ron Snider sets this up somewhat like a chiasm:

- I. Jacob meets his relatives. vs 1-14
- II. 7 years service for Rachel. vs 15-20
- III. Laban's deception. vs 21-26
- IV. 7 years service for Rachel. vs 27-30
- V. Jacob's sons. vs 31-35⁴⁹

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Dean prepares us for a study of this chapter.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.'s Introductory Observations of Genesis 29

- 1) The Lord who was a primary factor and focus in chapter 28 is not in view in most of chapter 29, until the end in v. 31, so His work is not in front as we come to these episodes, we simply read what Jacob is doing.
- 2) The primary mention of the Lord in chapter 29, and again in chapter 30, is restricted to His opening the womb or His work in the pregnancies of Rachel and Leah. We don't see any new revelation, any direct guidance. So the Lord is really in the far background. Behind the scenes of what is going on. We are simply watching the life of Jacob and his relationship to Laban, his marriages and what happened in those marriages. So it is a really family dynamic situation where we are seeing the outworking of certain spiritual principles as opposed to a section that is more oriented to teaching certain spiritual principles. So in some way we are looking at how God is working behind the scenes.
- 3) Twice in this section Laban recognizes that he has been blessed in terms of his relationship with Jacob because of the Lord's blessing of Jacob. So when the Lord is mentioned He is mentioned in relation to opening the wombs of Rachel and Leah, he is mentioned in terms of the source of blessing on Jacob and Laban's blessing by association. It is not until the end of chapter 31—this is a 20-year period of time between chapter 28 and chapter 31—that God is referenced by two or three different people.
- 4) So we see something going on in the background, and in that way there is some application for us because we live in an era of history when God is not working, as it were, directly or overtly in our lives in the way He did in the Old Testament. There is no special revelation. God is not giving new information or personal guidance through dreams and visions, or speaking through prophets and giving special revelation. It is a time when God is testing us to see if we are willing to walk by faith in a completed canon of Scripture and to trust Him in terms of what He has revealed, understanding that He is still at work in history and in our lives, but that is a covert ministry as opposed to an overt ministry.

From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The first title is often applicable to the entire chapter (although it may pertain just to the verses which follow it to the next section heading).

⁴⁹ From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017.

Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 29 (from Dr. Bob Utley)				
NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (FOLLOWS MT)
Jacob Meets Rachel	Jacob Meets Rachel	Jacob's Success in Haran (Gen. 29:1 to Gen. 31:55)	Jacob Arrives at Laban's Home	Jacob Arrives at Laban's Home
Gen. 29:1-3	Gen. 29:1-3	Gen. 29:1-3	Gen. 29:1-3	
Gen. 29:4-8	Gen. 29:4-8	Gen. 29:4-8	Gen. 29:4 a Gen. 29:4 b Gen. 29:5 a Gen. 29:5 b Gen. 29:6 a Gen. 29:6 b Gen. 29:7 Gen. 29:8	Gen. 29:1-8
Gen. 29:9-12	Gen. 29:9-12	Gen. 29:9-12	Gen. 29:9-12 a Gen. 29:12-14	Gen. 29:9-14 a
Gen. 29:13-14	Gen. 29:13-14	Gen. 29:13-14		Jacob's Two Marriages
Gen. 29:15-20	Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel Gen. 29:15-20	Gen. 29:15-20	Jacob Serves Laban for Rachel and Leah Gen. 29:15-17 Gen. 29:18 Gen. 29:19-20	Gen. 29:14-19
Laban's Treachery				
Gen. 29:21-30	Gen. 29:21-30	Gen. 29:21-30	Gen. 29:21-25 Gen. 29:26-27 Gen. 29:28-30	Gen. 29:20-30
Gen. 29:31-35	The Children of Jacob (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24) Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:8	Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:8	The Children Born to Jacob (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24) Gen. 29:31-35	Jacob's Children (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24) Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:8

There is clearly little agreement on the division of this chapter, some of them taking in the following chapter and one of them taking in the next 2 chapters. In my opinion, the final section of this chapter (*Jacob's Children*) should have been combined with the first half of the next chapter into a separate chapter—one which deals with Jacob's offspring.

From Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29 chapter comments).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Dr. Talmage gives us a sensual description of the scene that we are about to study: *A scene in Mesopotamia, beautifully pastoral. A well of water of great value in that region. The fields around about it white with three flocks of sheep lying down waiting for the watering. I hear their bleating coming on the bright air, and the laughter of young men and maidens indulging in rustic repartee. I look off, and I see other flocks of sheep coming, Meanwhile, Jacob, a stranger, on the interesting errand of looking for a wife, comes to the well. A beautiful shepherdess comes to the same well. I see her approaching, followed by her father's flock of sheep. Jacob accosts the shepherds and asks them why they postpone the slaking of the thirst of these sheep, and why they did not immediately proceed to water them? The shepherds reply to the effect: "We are all good neighbours, and as a matter of courtesy we wait until all the sheep of the neighbourhood come up. Besides that, this stone on the*

well's mouth is somewhat heavy, and several of us take hold of it and push it aside, and then the buckets and the troughs are filled, and the sheep are satisfied. 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."⁵⁰

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob had travelled about 450 miles from Beersheba to Haran (Gen. 29:4). Notice the absence of prayer for divine guidance to the woman of God's choosing, which dominates the story of Abraham's servant's visit to the same area for the same purpose (ch. 22).*⁵¹

I should warn you that I may get bogged down in some of the details of this chapter. The intention is, to eventually smooth out all of the action which takes place.

Changes—additions and subtractions (for Genesis 29):

I have added around 10 translations to the Genesis study and have revamped the organization of these translations. Since then, I have made some additional changes to this organization in subsequent chapters.

The Lexham English Bible: Up until this time, because I obviously did not look into the matter, I thought that the LEB was an old translation, so I have essentially ignored it. However, this is a 2010 Bible translation. On their webpage, they write: *the entire translation process of the LEB helps you identify difficult texts, idiomatic phrases, grammatical issues...[with the result that you will have] A better understanding of the Bible in English-whatever translation you use.*⁵² It appears that this is the kind of Bible designed for the computer (and there is a Logos version with a great many *mouse tips* throughout). The information available on the **computer version** is quite remarkable.

Another minor change—when the NET Bible footnote has a lot to say about the actual exegesis, I will only list it in the Hebrew exegesis and not in the NET Bible translation. There are so many language footnotes in the NET Bible, that it completely bogs down the rhythm of the NET translation. Therefore, it seemed more appropriate to place many of these footnotes with the Hebrew exegesis; or as a footnote in the text of my remarks.

Similarly, if I take some of the notes from Syndein's pages (which are notes from R. B. Thieme, Jr.), then I will list them only in one place, giving the proper attribution.

I have begun to pay closer attention to the work of Stephen Armstrong. I do not always agree with him, but I have found that he brings a unique and often very perceptive perspective to whatever Scripture he comments on. His website is <https://www.versebyverseministry.org>

Over the past few chapters that I have done, I have begun to gather the comments of others together by topic as related to the verse being examined.

I have added a new section (which may be a doctrine or it may simply be a short paragraph) explaining how Jesus Christ is found in this particular chapter. This should have been done ages ago and I have no idea why it just occurred to me. In many chapters of the Bible, there should be prophecy, foreshadowing or a further delineation of the line of Christ. Whenever this is found, I will include this section as a part of the chapter. This will be called **Jesus Christ in Genesis 29**.

I have also added a doctrinal box, **Fundamental Questions About Genesis 29** (or, whatever). As I read and study a chapter, questions about this chapter occur to me. Now I will simply formalize them by including them in

⁵⁰ *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Gen. 29:1–14.

⁵¹ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–12.

⁵² From <http://lexhamenglishbible.com/> accessed October 21, 2014.

this section. This does not mean all of these questions will be answered (or answered satisfactorily); just that they occur to me and are in my thoughts as I work through the chapter.

In the links, in the [Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#) section, portions of the text are no longer linked (like, *many commentators*).

I have come across [full page graphics](#) on a chapter which I call *graphic nutshells*. I will place these at the end of a chapter in the chapter summary; but you may choose to review them prior to studying this chapter.

You may not realize it, but personally, I have no idea what is going to happen every time I begin a new chapter from the Word of God. Will I be able to understand the material? Will the material speak to me? Will I be able to explain what these words mean so that others understand them? What I hope and pray for every time is to be able to as thoroughly exploit the material as possible, explaining and then presenting illustrations from life which help to make the concepts clear.

Many of these new charts and ideas will be eventually added to previous chapters of Genesis.

I drew from hundreds of sources for this chapter. I literally stand on the shoulders of thousands of men in order to put this document together.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young's translation (however, I do not preserve the consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

Jacob Arrives in Haran and Speaks to Some Shepherds

The description was edited heavily.

The Pulpit Commentary Outlines Genesis 29:1–14

Jacob at the well of Haran: a romantic adventure.

I. JACOB'S MEETING WITH THE SHEPHERDS.

1. The providential discovery. The well in the field with the three flocks of sheep lying by it enabled Jacob to ascertain his whereabouts, and ultimately led to his finding Rachel. God guides the steps of his people without interfering with the ordinary course of nature, simply directing them in the exercise of sense and intelligence...
2. The friendly conversation. Saluting the shepherds as his brethren, i.e. as masters of a common craft, Jacob gathers from their frank communications that he was on the outskirts of Haran, in which his uncle Laban was a prosperous and wealthy citizen, and that his cousin Rachel was on the road...with a flock of her father's sheep...Seldom anything is lost, but frequently much is gained, by courteous inquiries.
3. The prudent counsel. Observing his friends disposed to indolence, and perhaps desirous of meeting Rachel alone, Jacob recommends them to uncover the well, water their flocks, and drive them off again to pasture, since much of the day yet remained. If it was their advantage he sought, his advice was good;

The Pulpit Commentary Outlines Genesis 29:1–14

if it was his own interest he served, the stratagem was ingenious...

II. JACOB'S FIRST SIGHT OF RACHEL.

1. The gallant action. The lovely shepherdess arriving made a deep impression on her cousin's heart. Springing to his feet, he rolls the stone from the well's mouth, fills the troughs, and waters Laban's sheep—impelled thereto...by consideration for the fair girl who attended them...

2. The loving salutation. "And Jacob kissed Rachel." If before explaining who he was, it must have taken her by surprise even in those unconventional times; but it is probable he may have first announced his name, in which case his behavior was only in accordance with the manners of the age...

3. The irrepressible emotive. And Jacob lifted up his voice and wept"—expressive both of joy at finding his relatives, and of gratitude for God's goodness...

4. The important communication. "Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father."...

III. JACOB'S INTRODUCTION TO LABAN.

1. The uncle's reception of his nephew, "Laban ran to meet his sister's son, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house." Kinship and kindness should ever be allied. Laban's hospitality to Jacob was grounded on the fact of their relationship...

2. The nephew's return to his uncle. Ingenuous confidence—"Jacob told Laban all these things"—and faithful service. It is implied in Gen. 29:15 that during the month Jacob abode with Laban he served in keeping Laban's sheep...

The Pulpit Commentary; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–14 (edited).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Kukis slavishly literal:

And so lifts up Jacob his [two] feet and so he comes to a land of sons of [the] east. Genesis 29:1

Kukis moderately literal:

Jacob then lifted up his feet and came to the land of the sons of the east.

Kukis not so literal:

Jacob then traveled to the land of the east.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation⁵³; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes

⁵³ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_genesis.html and first published in 1862.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so lifts up Jacob his [two] feet and so he comes to a land of sons of [the] east.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob lifted up his feet, and came to the land of the children of the East. Cook did both of the targum translations.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob lifted up his feet lightly <u>to proceed</u> , and he came to the land of the children of the east.
Latin Vulgate	Then Jacob <u>went on in his journey</u> , and came into the east country.
Peshitta (Syriac)	THEN Jacob <u>hastened on his journey</u> , and came to the land of the people of the east.
Septuagint (Greek)	So Jacob <u>started on his journey</u> and came to the land of the east <u>to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Syrian, and the brother of Rebecca, mother of Jacob and Esau.</u>
Significant differences:	It is unclear whether <i>lifted up his feet</i> is found in Latin, Syriac or Greek (sometimes the English translation gives the gist of what the ancient languages have. At some point, either from the Hebrew to the ancient language; or from the ancient language to the English, the exact words were changed, but the general meaning was retained.

There is some additional text in one of the targums (which is to be expected). There is a lot of additional text in the Greek. The additional text merely tells us specifically who lives in that region, information which will be found in this and the next chapter.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English Easy English	Then Jacob went on his journey till he came to the land of the children of the East. Jacob marries Then Jacob went on his journey. He came to that country where the people in the east lived.
Easy-to-Read Version Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the country in the East. Jacob continued on his way and went toward the land of the East. Jacob set out again on his way to the people of the east.
NIRV	Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram Then Jacob continued on his journey. He came to the land where the eastern tribes lived.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob continued on his trip and arrived at the land in the east.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Jacob meets Rachel Jacob got to his feet and set out for the land of the easterners.
Contemporary English V. New Berkeley Version	As Jacob continued on his way to the east,... Jacob then traveled on and reached the land of the Easterners.
New Century Version	Jacob Arrives in Northwest Mesopotamia Then Jacob continued his journey and came to the land of the people of the East.
New Life Bible	Then Jacob went on his way and came to the land of the people of the east.
New Living Translation	Jacob Arrives at Padda-Aram Then Jacob hurried on, finally arriving in the land of the east.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So Jacob [resumed his journey] eastward toward the land of Laban...to the son of BathuEl the Syrian and the brother of RebekKa (the mother of Jacob and Esau)
Beck's American Translation	Rachel Jacob continued on his way and came to the country of the people in the east.
<i>God's Word</i> ™ International Standard V	Jacob continued on his trip and came to the land in the east.. Jacob Meets Rachel Jacob journeyed on and reached the territory that belonged to the people who lived in the east [Lit. <i>sons of the east</i>].
Names of God Bible	Jacob's Arrival in Haran Jacob continued on his trip and came to the land in the east.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then Jacob went on his way, and reached the eastern country.
Today's NIV	Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples.
Translation for Translators	Jacob met Laban's daughter Rachel at Haran Jacob continued on the road [MTY], and he arrived at the land that was east of Canaan.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob lifted his feet and went to the land of the ancient sons.
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Conservapedia	Jacob went on his way [Literally, "picked up his feet."], and came into the country of the sons of the east.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Jacob arose on to his feet, and went towards the land of the sons of the East...
HCSB	Jacob resumed his journey and went to the eastern country.
Jubilee Bible 2000	Then Jacob walked on and came into the land of the people of the east.
H. C. Leupold	CHAPTER XXIX 5. Jacob's Double Marriage (29:1-30) And Jacob got under way and went to the land of the children of the East. Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram Then Jacob continued on his journey and came to the land of the eastern peoples. And Jacob wandered forth, and went to the land of the sons of the East..
NIV, ©2011	
Wikipedia Bible Project	

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Jacob arrives at Laban's home Jacob set out and came to the land of the people of the east. And Jacob lifted his feet, and walked to the land of the children of the east.
The Heritage Bible	
New American Bible (2002)	After Jacob resumed his journey, he came to the land of the Easterners. Easterners: see note on ⇒ Genesis 25:6.
New American Bible (2011) ⁵⁴	<i>Arrival in Haran.*</i> After Jacob resumed his journey, he came to the land of the Kedemites. Continuing his journey, Jacob reached the Land of the Easterners. [29:1-14] Jacob's arrival in Haran. The sight of Rachel inspires Jacob to the superhuman feat of rolling back the enormous stone by himself. The scene evokes the meeting of Abraham's steward and Jacob's mother Rebekah at a well (24:11-27). The verse begins the story of Jacob's time in Mesopotamia (29:1-31:54), which is framed on either side by Jacob's time in Canaan, 25:19-28:22 and 32:1-36:43. In these chapters, Jacob suffers Laban's duplicity as Esau had to suffer his, though eventually Jacob outwits Laban and leaves Mesopotamia a wealthy man. An elaborate chiasmic (or envelope) structure shapes the diverse material: (A) Jacob's arrival in Haran in 29:1-4; (B) contract with Laban in 29:15-20; (C) Laban's deception of Jacob in 29:21-30; (D) the center, the birth of Jacob's children in 29:31-30:24; (C') Jacob's deception of Laban in 30:25-43; (B') dispute with Laban in 31:17-42; (A') departure from Laban in 31:43-54. As the chiasm reverses, so do the fortunes of Laban and Jacob. Kedemites: see note on 25:6.
New Jerusalem Bible	
Revised English Bible	JACOB, continuing his journey, came to the land of the eastern tribes. Eastern tribes: a general designation for Mesopotamia.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Continuing his journey, Ya'akov came to the land of the people of the east.
The Complete Tanach	Now Jacob lifted his feet and went to the land of the people of the East.
	Now Jacob lifted his feet: As soon as he was given the good tidings that he was assured protection, his heart lifted his feet, and he became fleet-footed. So it is explained in Gen. Rabbah (70:8).
exeGesés companion Bible	<u>YAAQOV AND RACHEL</u> Then Yaaqov lifts his feet and goes into the land of the sons of the east:...
Hebraic Transliteration	Then Ya'akov (בַּקְעִי) went on his journey, and came into the erez the people of the east

⁵⁴ Also called the revised edition.

Kaplan Translation	<i>Jacob's Journey, Marriage and Children</i> Jacob set off briskly, and headed toward the land of the people of the East. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Then Ya'akov went on his journey, and came into the eretz of the bnei kedem.
Restored Names Version	And Ya'aqob went on his journey and came to the land of the sons of the east.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Jacob went [briskly and cheerfully] on his way [400 miles] and came to the land of the people of the East.
The Expanded Bible	Jacob Arrives in Northwestern Mesopotamia Then Jacob continued his journey [^l lifted his feet] and came to the land of the people of the East [^c the area of the Arameans on the northern Euphrates].
Kretzmann's Commentary	Jacob Arrives in Mesopotamia Then Jacob went on his journey, literally, he lifted up his feet, that is, he continued on his trip cheerfully, and came in to the land of the people of the East, to Mesopotamia beyond the Euphrates, which lay to the northeast from Canaan. This journey differed somewhat from that of Eliezer, almost a hundred years before, since Jacob, now seventy-seven years old, made the entire distance afoot.
NET Bible®	<i>The Marriages of Jacob</i> So Jacob moved on [Heb "and Jacob lifted up his feet." This unusual expression suggests that Jacob had a new lease on life now that God had promised him the blessing he had so desperately tried to gain by his own efforts. The text portrays him as having a new step in his walk] and came to the land of the eastern people [Heb "the land of the sons of the east."]. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. Language footnotes will be placed in the Hebrew exegesis.
The Pulpit Commentary	Then Jacob went on his journey (literally, lifted up his feet—a graphic description of traveling. Inspired by new hopes, and conscious of loftier aims than when he fled from Beersheba, the lonely furtive departed from Bethel), and came into the land of the people of the east—literally, the land of the sons of the east, i.e. Mesopotamia, about 450 miles distant from Beersheba.
The Voice	Jacob continued on his journey until he came to the land of the people <i>who lived</i> in the east.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov [^{He restrains}] lifted up his feet and he walked unto the land of the sons the east,...
Concordant Literal Version	And lifting is Jacob his feet and is going toward the land of the sons of the east, to Laban, the son of Bethuel, the Syrian, brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau.
Darby Translation <i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And Jacob continued his journey, and went into the land of the children of the east. Then Jacob lifted up his feet,—and went his way towards the land of the sons of the East.
English Standard V. – UK	Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then Jacob lifted up his feet, and went toward the east country. This is an update of the Tyndale translation.
NASB	Jacob Meets Rachel

New European Version	Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. Jacob Falls in Love
New King James Version	Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the east. Jacob Meets Rachel
Young's Literal Translation	So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East.
Young's Updated LT	Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And Jacob lifts up his feet, and goes towards the land of the sons of the east.
The gist of this verse:	Jacob arrives in the east.

Genesis 29:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâsâ' (אָנָס) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 BDB #669
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ġuh-KOH ^B V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
regel (רֶגֶל) [pronounced REH-ge]l]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

Translation: *Jacob then lifted up his feet...* This appears to be idiomatic for Jacob traveling. Unlike the servants of Abraham, who went east to find a wife for Isaac, Jacob appears to be traveling by foot. It is unclear whether he is accompanied by any servants or not. There is nothing in the text which suggests that he is.

This is an interesting phrase, *and Jacob lifted up his feet*; and I think unique in the Bible. Most of the time, to preface action for which there is concentrated intent, we have the verb *to get up, to rise up*. It does not mean that someone is laying on the ground and then he gets up, but that he moves forward with purpose. I think that here, Jacob is becoming somewhat more introspective. He has just seen God—God has spoken to him (albeit in a dream) and he is leaving the Land of Promise (which is necessary; he has no choice here). It is as if Jacob knows that his future is in the Land of Promise, but he is cognizant of his feet carrying him in the opposite direction, away from the Land of Promise. He thinks about his direction and he finds himself being conflicted; yet he still *lifts up his feet*.

This interesting phrase suggests that Jacob may have had a new spring in his step; that he might be proceeding at this point with great enthusiasm. *The Amplified Bible* suggests this in its translation: *Then Jacob went [briskly and cheerfully] on his way [400 miles] and came to the land of the people of the East.* Surprisingly few translations gave much thought to the meaning of this phrase. The Kaplan Translation appeared to interpret this saying: *Jacob set off briskly, and headed toward the land of the people of the East.*

Genesis 29:1 *Jacob then lifted up his feet and came to the land of the sons of the east.*

Jacob, then, lifted up his feet (Many Commentators + my commentary)

Whedon: *lifted up his feet*; [which is] the necessary movement of one that walks on a journey.⁵⁵

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: The phrase "*went on his journey*" literally means that Jacob lifted his feet. It is an unusual idiom in the Hebrew and it indicates a light-heartedness on his part that is the result of what has just happened at Bethel. God has just promised him that He will protect and comfort him, and so in the wake of his confrontation with God at Bethel where he recognizes that God is behind him, God is working with him, he is light-hearted now in facing this journey. So he goes forward in anticipation of how God is going to work in his life. In these next 14 verses we see the introduction to the next seven years of his life.⁵⁶

Wenstrom: This expression indicates that Jacob went on his journey encouraged and joyful, after the Lord appeared to him at Bethel and gave him reassuring promises and now confident that the Lord had a plan for his life.

Wenstrom continues: This expression indicates that Jacob had a life changing experience at Bethel where he encountered a vision of elect angels, the preincarnate Christ, receiving promises from Him that revealed the Father's plan for his life, which was to inherit the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant and to carry on the line of Christ.

Wenstrom continues: After his encounter with the Lord at Bethel, Jacob went from being a scared, lonely, isolated individual with doubts about his future to an individual who was courageous, confident about the future and God's love for him, aware that he is not alone. His doubts about his future have been replaced by confidence in the future because he has encountered the living God.⁵⁷

I will argue that this is exactly *not* the case. Jacob was probably pretty jazzed for a few hours and perhaps, a few days, but he did not have the inner spiritual life in order to confirm the experience of the previous chapter. Therefore, that experience was not enough to carry him. It energized him; it made him feel good; it gave him some spiritual resources for a limited period of time because he believed what God said to him. But he did not have enough in his soul already to sustain this experience.

There is no one-shot experience which takes us from 0 to 100 (or even from 0 to 10). Jacob is momentarily boosted in spirit; but he is still the same old Jacob.

Wenstrom **follows up** his remarks with a page and a half of Bible doctrine, with many principles and many passages cited. Now, had Jacob had *that* in his soul, then his meeting with God would have led to Wenstrom's 2nd and 3rd paragraph of description above.

PCG: [*Jacob is*] Inspired by new hopes and conscious of loftier aims than when he fled from Beersheba, the lonely fugitive departed from Bethel.⁵⁸

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *The idea is that he journeyed with alacrity. Rashi, the Jewish commentator, says, "his heart was elated, and his feet felt light."*⁵⁹

Jamieson: [*Jacob*] resumed his way with a light heart and elastic step; for tokens of the Divine favor tend to quicken the discharge of duty (*Neh. 8:10*)⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:1.

⁵⁶ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

⁵⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf accessed August 7, 2017.

⁵⁸ The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12.

⁵⁹ The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1.

⁶⁰ The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12.

Jacob, then, lifted up his feet (Many Commentators + my commentary)

Stephen Armstrong: *It literally reads "Jacob picked up his feet" The phrase is similar to the English colloquialism, "a spring in his step" It suggests Jacob was encouraged by God's appearance in Bethel, and so Jacob leaves the land with a measure of confidence. He'll need that spring in his step because the walk to Haran is 450 miles. It is like walking from Austin, TX to Tulsa, OK...in the summer time.*⁶¹

There is the possibility that, after communing with God, that Jacob would have had more a bounce in his step; that he would begin this journey with some enthusiasm. However, having an experience—even a spiritual experience—does not dramatically move the needle from spiritually deficient to spiritually mature. What Jacob heard, understood, believed, and stored in his human spirit—that would have provided him with some spiritual growth. But, his spiritual advance would be limited.

There is also the possibility that Jacob literally walked to Paddan-aram. Did he have a pack animal with him? We honestly do not know, and there is much disagreement about this. We can be well-assured that he arrives in Paddan-aram with nothing to give for a wife (the opposite of Abraham's servant in Gen. 24). Did Jacob have literally nothing with him besides his crook, as one verse of Scripture suggests? That is certainly a possibility.

This may be hard to grasp at first—your brain may resist it—but you can grow spiritually from a pastor teacher teaching you day after day, but you experience limited growth or no growth at seeing a sign or a miracle (unless you are able to incorporate its meaning into what you already know). God has designed us so that spiritual information in your soul is no different, whether you are like Peter, listening at the foot of our Lord Jesus Christ; or if you are in a church that teaches accurate Bible doctrine.

Just so you know I am not making this up, God spoke directly to all of the sons of Israel on the exodus. They heard the Ten Commandments from God's voice. Their response was not, "Oh, cool, this has totally changed our lives." It was, "Moses, we don't want to hear God's voice. You listen to God directly and then you tell us what He has said." This is *why* we have a Bible and *why* Jesus did not remain on earth to teach every generation of believers. God is capable of teaching us directly, in every generation, by some means, either fantastical or through technology; and yet, He has chosen *not* to do that. God, instead, has given His Word to His people; and He has distributed gifts among His people by which we learn spiritually.

If you have positive volition, then God will make certain that you have everything needed to grow spiritually.

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What has happened, which is a dramatic change, is, God has come to Jacob and He spoke to Jacob and Jacob saw some amazing things. God did not say to Jacob, "Return to the Land of Promise." God said to Jacob: "**I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.**" (Gen. 28:13b–15; ESV) This is quite amazing to Jacob. Sure, he wanted the blessing of his father Isaac, and, certainly, he was looking to overtake Esau, his slightly older brother, at every turn. But this transcended all of that petty bullcrap.

Therefore, Jacob headed out east with a new spring in his step; with great anticipation in his heart. The problem is, this is not firmly impressed upon Jacob's soul. He has heard some of it before; this gives him more to place his faith in—but does he double-down on his faith in what God has told him? We don't know. We cannot see inside Jacob's soul. However, what we will be able to see is Jacob working for Laban and his interactions with Laban; and, despite this new-found spring in his step, Jacob will not reveal a life that has been completely turned around.

⁶¹ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017 (slightly edited).

God does not appear to anyone today (at least, not in a way which seems to be credible); but remember, even if God appeared to you and said, “You’re on the right track” or “Look, you need to make a few changes, and then you will be on the right track.” You may or may not listen to Him, but you might start the day with a spring in your step. However, that does not change two immutable facts: (1) you have a sin nature and (2) you live in the devil’s world (Satan is the god of this world). So, even if you have some great mountaintop experience, those two things do not change. You may react negatively to what God has said; and you may allow the world to wear away at what you saw.

Arthur W. Pink: *[W]hile we have called attention to God's faithfulness in guiding Jacob to the well where he met Rachel, we must not ignore Jacob's personal failure, a noticeable failure of omission. As he had come so near to the end of his journey and had almost arrived at his destination we would have thought, as he reached this well, that now was the time for him to very definitely commit himself into the hands of God, especially in view of the fact that he was engaged in the important and momentous undertaking of seeking a wife.*⁶²

So, Jacob may have a spring in his step, but he has feet of clay and he is about to walk through some serious mud. I know that sounded corny, but the hope is to evoke the vision of Jacob walking with a spring in his step until he finds himself knee-deep in mud. That visually describes Jacob’s life for the next 20 or so years.

Genesis 29:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth [ground]; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i>	feminine singular construct with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
qêdem (קֵדָם) [pronounced KAY-dem]	<i>east, antiquity, front, that which is before, aforeside; in front, mount of the East; ancient time, aforeside, ancient, from of old, earliest time; anciently, of old; beginning; eastward, to or toward the east</i>	noun/adverb	Strong's #6924 BDB #869 & #870

Translation: ...and came to the land of the sons of the east. The term *sons of the east* just refers to those east of Canaan, and mostly those who populate the fertile crescent area. They are referred to in Judges 6:3, 33 7:12 8:10 Job. 1:3 1Kings 4:30 Ezek. 25:4. This is not a precise term.

⁶² From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

The word for east is qêdem (קֵדְמַי) [pronounced *KAY-dem*] and it means *east, antiquity, front, that which is before, aforeside; in front, mount of the East; ancient time, aforeside, ancient, from of old, earliest time; anciently, of old; beginning; eastward, to or toward the east*. The reason that east is seen as equivalent to *ancient, from old*, is because this is the direction from which man came. This fact is built into the language. Coming from the east is the same as coming from antiquity.

Some⁶³ have claimed that the relations of Abraham in the east were all unbelievers. Although they no doubt engaged in some idolatry (20 years into the future, Ruth will steal some small religious statues from them); their interactions in Gen. 24 suggest that they began by believing in the Revealed God.

This word can simply refer to a direction, and it is possible that Jacob had no real concept of how far east is east. He would only travel to Padan-aram, which is about halfway to Babylon. His family chose to live near the Euphrates River, which is what we would expect (sheep and farms need water).

Jacob was not simply headed to the east, but to a very specific place in the east.

The College Press Bible Study on Where Jacob was Going

[Jacob's] destination was Paddan-Aram (in the A.S.V. and the R.S.V., Padan-Aram in the A.V.), the homeland of Rebekah (Gen. 25:20), and the abode of Laban (Gen. 28:2-7), [which was] called the "field of Aram" by Hosea (Hos. 12:12; A.V., "country of Syria").

Arabia, Mesopotamia, and the entire region beyond the Euphrates, are by the Bible writers included under the general designation, "the East" (cf. Job. 1:3, Judges 6:3, 1Kings 4:30). In the present instance, Mesopotamia is the country especially referred to. Paddan-Aram was a district of Mesopotamia; it is described as the large plain surrounded by mountains, in which the town of Haran was situated.

This region was closely associated with the history of the ancient Hebrew people, Abraham's family had settled there, and thither the patriarch sent his steward, Eliezer, to secure a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:10 ff; Gen. 25:20), and now we find Jacob going there to find a wife (and secondarily to escape the revenge threatened by Esau his brother).

Many commentators contend that Abraham's servant's name who went to Paddan-aram was Eliezer.

The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1-12.

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Remember that Jacob has never been here before. This is his first trip east. A servant of Abraham had come east nearly 100 years ago and that servant has probably passed on by this time. Jacob's mother came from this land, but this trip had also occurred 100 years ago.

I would postulate that there are maps in existence. Where did they come from? There were likely caravans of traders who moved about in these areas, and had to be able to go from point A to point B; they could not simply wander about. This is backed up by the fact that Rebekah, in the previous chapter, assures Jacob that she can get a message to him. How do you get a message to there? She can either send a servant (one realistic possibility) or she could employ the services of a caravan. So, my educated guess is, there were regular caravans that went through that land, going all the way to the east. These caravans could have maps and it is possible that these maps had been purchased. This trip for Jacob is sudden (to get him out of town so that his brother Esau does not kill him); but when a servant was sent on behalf of Abraham, to a land that servant possibly had not been to (we really don't know if he had or not), he may have gotten a map from a caravan. Jacob probably did not have a map, unless his mother's servant preserved it over all these years.

⁶³ Stephen Armstrong, for one. From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017.

My point is, people were able to travel from one place to another, but it was difficult, lengthy, and there was certainly the possibility that a person or persons could get lost, could use up their provisions too soon, or could be attacked by bandits. So, such trips were probably once in a lifetime, if at all.

Genesis 29:1 And Jacob lifted his feet and went to the land of the sons of the east.

Jacob had been in Bethel (= the House of God), and he saw the angels going up and down between heaven and earth; and God spoke to him. So leaving that place was difficult for him to do. No doubt, he wanted to experience that again. This has added an whole new dimension to his life.

Like the journey of Abraham's servant of perhaps 60 years previous, no description of the actual 400+ mile journey will be given. In one verse, he is in the Land of Promise; in the next verse, he is at his destination. In Gen. 28:22 and 29:1, Jacob is in the Land of Promise; and in v. 2, he is over 400 miles away.

Jacob had never made this trip before and we do not know how it was navigated. By this point in time, there were likely trading routes established that went from Egypt through Canaan and all the way to the Euphrates River. Although this is spoken of as the east, Jacob traveled more north than east to get to Paddan-aram.

We do not know many nuts and bolts from that journey. In fact, we do not even know if Jacob got there on foot or whether he traveled on camels or donkeys or what. I think that the evidence points toward Jacob being basically supplied, despite a verse where Joseph said that he traveled east with only his staff. I think that was more exaggeration of circumstance rather than a literal assessment of his situation. Whereas the servant of Abraham went east with 10 camels laden with supplies, by comparison, Jacob went east with nothing but his staff. In truth, I believe he has his mother's personal servant with him and that they may have 3 or 4 animals with them (camels, donkeys, whatever⁶⁴). By comparison to Abraham's servant, when he went east, Jacob had nothing. Jacob would arrive in Paddan-aram with nothing to offer the family of his future wife but a willingness to work for her.

It is my opinion that Jacob traveled with his mother's personal servant, Deborah, who made this trip one time before (her death will be mentioned in the Jacob narrative, not associated with Isaac or Rebekah⁶⁵). When Abraham sent his servant east to find a wife for Isaac, there was no doubt time and preparation given to this effort and his servant took with him a small crew of servants (not really mentioned in the narrative). For all we know, he have had maps or the help of a trader hired to guide him, or whatever—in other words, there was a great deal of preparation for the first trip east made by Abraham and his servants, preparation which is not described in Scripture. Regarding Jacob, his mother knew that she had to get him out of that area quickly, not knowing when Esau might suddenly lose it and kill him (Esau's plan⁶⁶ was to wait for their father Isaac to die). The preparation for Abraham's servant's trip may have taken a week or even weeks; the preparation for Jacob's trip was probably a day or two at most.

Map of Jacob's Journey East; taken from [News You Can Believe](#); accessed July 24, 2017. The *route* in red is simply straight lines going from the only three places mentioned on this trip—where Jacob began, where he had his dream/vision, and where he went to. His actual trip would have been far more circuitous than the picture below, and it is reasonable to suppose that Jacob stuck to a set of trade routes which stretched out from Egypt all the way to Mesopotamia.

⁶⁴ There is no accepted agreement on this issue. Some commentators have Jacob traveling with nothing but his staff; others understand that expression to indicate that he traveled with very little, and would arrive in Paddan-aram with nothing to offer for a wife.

⁶⁵ Rebekah's death will not be noted.

⁶⁶ This does not mean that Esau would have never been subject to sudden outbursts of anger over the blessing he sees as stolen from him.



In v. 2, we pick up with Jacob's journey⁶⁷ a month or many months later, and he has arrived in the land where his Uncle Laban lives; and, at this point, he has come to a well frequented by Laban's family (and possibly owned by Laban).

Quite obviously, our focus is upon the family of Abraham and God working through that family. However, this does not mean that the Revealed God is unknown elsewhere in the world. Leah will make many references to God at the end of this chapter; the errant prophet Balaam will come from this area, and, despite his shortcomings, he is acquainted with our God (Num. 23:7). God's primary focus will be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and, eventually, the Jewish people. However, God continues to work in the lives of all men, all over the world.

With this new spring in his step, Jacob seems to suddenly arrive at Paddan-aram, not too far from where his Uncle Laban resides.

*Joseph Benson: Providence brought him to the very field where his uncle's flocks were to be watered, and there he met with Rachel, who was to be his wife. The Divine Providence is to be acknowledged in all the little circumstances which concur to make a journey or other undertaking comfortable and successful.*⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Although the servant of Isaac makes this journey both ways and so does Jacob, we are never given any information about their trips.

⁶⁸ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:2.

And so he looks and behold a well in the field and behold there three flocks of sheep lying beside her, for from the well the that they cause to water the flocks. And the stone large [was] upon a mouth of the well.

Genesis
29:2

He looked and saw a well in the field [before him] and he observed three flocks of sheep there lying beside it, for they caused the flocks to be watered from that well. [There was] a large stone over the well opening.

He looked out and saw a well in the field that was in front of him. He observed three flocks of sheep lying beside the well. The shepherds apparently watered these sheep from this well. There was a large stone over the well opening.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he looks and behold a well in the field and behold there three flocks of sheep lying beside her, for from the well the that they cause to water the flocks. And the stone large [was] upon a mouth of the well.
Targum of Onkelos	And he looked, and saw a well in a field; and, behold, three flocks of sheep lying near it, because from that well they watered the flocks; and a great stone was upon the mouth of the well.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he looked <u>and saw</u> , and behold (there was) a well in a field, and behold there three flocks of sheep lying near it; because from that well they watered the flocks; and a great stone was laid upon the mouth of the well.
Latin Vulgate	And he saw a well in the field, and three flocks of sheep lying by it: for the beasts were watered out of it, and the mouth thereof was closed with a great stone.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he looked, and beheld 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 large stone was upon the wells mouth.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he looked, and behold, a well in the plain; and there were three flocks of sheep resting at it, for out of that well they watered the flocks, but there was a great stone at the mouth of the well.
Significant differences:	One targum has additional text. <i>He saw</i> is a legitimate translation for <i>behold</i> . The Latin leaves out <i>and he looks</i> . The Latin lacks the second <i>behold</i> (assuming that the first one is translated <i>and he saw</i>). The Greek also lacks the second <i>behold</i> .

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And there he saw a water-hole in a field, and by the side of it three flocks of sheep, for there they got water for the sheep: and on the mouth of the water-hole there was a great stone.
Easy English	He looked about and he saw a well in a field. Three *flocks of sheep were lying near the well. The stone that covered the well was very large.
Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob looked, and he saw a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well. This well was the place where these sheep drank water. There was a large rock covering the mouth of the well.
God's Word™	He looked around, and out in a field he saw a well with a large stone over the opening. Three flocks of sheep were lying down near it, because the flocks were watered from that well.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Suddenly he came upon a well out in the fields with three flocks of sheep lying around it. The flocks were watered from this well, which had a large stone over the opening.

<i>The Message</i>	He noticed a well out in an open field with three flocks of sheep bedded down around it. This was the common well from which the flocks were watered. The stone over the mouth of the well was huge.
NIRV	There he saw a well in the field. Three flocks of sheep were lying near it. The flocks were given water from the well. The stone over the opening of the well was large.
New Simplified Bible	Suddenly he came upon a well out in the fields. There were three flocks of sheep lying around it. The flocks were watered from this well. It had a large stone over the opening.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He saw a well in the field in front of him, near which three flocks of sheep were lying down. That well was their source for water because the flocks drank from that well. A huge stone covered the well's opening.
Contemporary English V.	As Jacob continued on his way to the east, he looked out in a field and saw a well where shepherds took their sheep for water. Three flocks of sheep were lying around the well, which was covered with a large rock. V. 1 is included for context.
New Century Version	He looked and saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying nearby, because they drank water from this well. A large stone covered the mouth of the well.
New Life Bible	He looked up and saw a well in the field where three flocks of sheep were lying beside it. The people gave water to the flocks from that well. The stone covering the top of the well was large.
New Living Translation	He saw a well in the distance. Three flocks of sheep and goats lay in an open field beside it, waiting to be watered. But a heavy stone covered the mouth of the well.
Translation for Translators	There he was surprised to see a well in a field, and three flocks of sheep were lying near the well. It was the well from which shepherds habitually got water for their sheep. There was a large stone covering the top of the well.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	[Finally], {Look!} [Jacob] saw a well in the plain where there were three flocks of sheep resting. It was a well that they used to water the flocks, and there was a large stone covering it.
Beck's American Translation	There he sw a well in ta field and three flocks of sheep lying near because the flocks were watered at that well. The stone over the opening of the well was large.
International Standard V	As he was observing a well that had been dug out on the open range, all of a sudden he noticed three flocks of sheep lying there, because shepherds watered their flocks from that well. There was a very large stone that covered the opening of the well, and when all the flocks had been gathered there, they would roll away the stone from the opening of the well, water their flocks, and then return the stone to its place covering the opening of the well. V. 3 is included for context.
Names of God Bible	He looked around, and out in a field he saw a well with a large stone over the opening. Three flocks of sheep were lying down near it, because the flocks were watered from that well.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Here, in the open plain, he found a well, with three flocks of sheep lying down beside it. It was here that the flocks were watered; but the mouth of the well was closed by a great stone, and it was not the custom to roll this stone away till all the flocks were assembled. A portion of v. 3 is included for context. Knox adds that this was a <i>custom</i> .

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He saw and beheld a well in the field with a great stone over the mouth of the well. He beheld there three flocks of sheep reclining by it, and from that well they watered the flocks.
Companion Bible	And he looked and behold a <i>digged well</i> in the field, and, lo, there <i>were</i> 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.
Conservapedia	He looked, and saw a well in the field, and three flocks of sheep reclining next to it. From that well they watered the flocks, and a great stone rested on the mouth of the well.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and he looked and saw a Well in the field and there were by it three flocks of sheep lying down, for from that Well they watered the flocks, ···but a great stone was on the mouth of the Well.
NIV, ©2011	There he saw a well in the open country, 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.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he saw that here is a water well in the field, and there are three herds of sheep laying by--- because from this well the herds are watered; and the stone covering the head of the well is big.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	There he saw a well and lying beside the well were three flocks of sheep, for it was at this well that the flocks were watered, and a large stone covered the mouth of the well.
New American Bible (2002)	Looking about, he saw a well in the open country, with three droves of sheep huddled near it, for droves were watered from that well. A large stone covered the mouth of the well.
New American Bible (2011)	Looking about, he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks of sheep huddled near it, for flocks were watered from that well. A large stone covered the mouth of the well. Gn 24:11-12.
New Jerusalem Bible	And there, out in the open, he saw a well with three flocks of sheep lying beside it; this well was used for watering the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was a large one, and only when all the flocks had collected there, did they roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep; then they would replace the stone over the mouth of the well. V. 3 is included for context.
Revised English Bible	There he saw a well in the open country with three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because flocks were watered from that well. Over its mouth was a huge stone.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	As he looked, he saw a well in a field; and there were three flocks of sheep lying there next to it; because they watered the sheep from that well. The stone on the well's mouth was large.
The Complete Tanach	And he looked, and behold! a well in the field, and behold! three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because from that well they would water the flocks, and a huge rock was upon the mouth of the well.

they would water the flocks: The shepherds would water the flocks. The verse is elliptical.

exeGesés companion Bible	...and he sees, and behold, a well in the field and behold, three droves of flocks crouch by it; for from that well they moisten the droves: and a great stone is on the mouth of the well:...
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Hebraic Transliteration	And he looked, and Hinei 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.
Kaplan Translation	[He came to a place] where he saw a well in a field. Three flocks of sheep were lying beside it, since it was from this well that the flocks were watered. The top of the well was covered with a large stone.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he looked, and hinei a be'er in the sadeh, and, hinei, there were shloshah edrei tzon lying by it; for out of that be'er they watered the edarim: and a great even (stone) was upon the mouth of the be'er.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	He looked and saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying nearby, because they drank water from this well. A large stone covered the mouth of the well.
Kretzmann's Commentary	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 their flocks; and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. Knowing that he must be near his destination, Jacob took more careful note of his surroundings and saw this well, or cistern, in the field, with a great stone covering its opening.
Lexham English Bible	And he looked, and behold, [there was] a well in the field, and behold, there [were] three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. And the stone on the mouth of the well [was] large.
NET Bible®	He saw [Heb "and he saw, and look." As in Gen 28:12-15, the narrator uses the particle הִנֵּה (hinneh, "look") here and in the next clause to draw the reader into the story.] in the field a well with [Heb "and look, there."] three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because the flocks were watered from that well. Now ⁵ a large stone covered the mouth of the well.
The Pulpit Commentary	And he looked (either to discover where he was, or in search of water), and behold a well in the field,—not the well at which Eliezer's caravan halted, which was a well for the village maidens, situated in front of the town, and approached by steps (vide Gen. 14:1–24.), but a well in the open field for the use of flocks, and covered at the time of Jacob's arrival with a huge stone—and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it. A frequent Oriental scene (cf. Gen. 14:11; Ex. 2:16). "Who that has traveled much in this country has not often arrived at a well in the heat of the day which was surrounded with numerous flocks of sheep waiting to be watered? I once saw such a scene in the burning plains of Northern Syria. Half-naked, fierce-looking men were drawing up water in leather buckets; flock after flock was brought up, watered, and sent away; and after all the men had ended their work, then several women and girls brought up their flocks, and drew water for them. Thus it was with Jethro's daughters; and thus, no doubt, it would have been with Rachel if Jacob had not rolled away the stone and watered her sheep". For out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. "Most of the cisterns are covered with a large thick, flat stone, in the center of which a hole is cut, which forms the mouth of the cistern. This hole, in many instances, we found covered with a heavy stone, to the removal of which two or three men were requisite".
The Voice	As he approached, he saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying beside it because the flocks were used to being watered from the well. The stone on the well's mouth was large;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he saw and look, a well in the field and look, there were three droves of flocks stretching out upon her given that from that well the droves will drink and the stone upon the mouth of the well was magnificent,...
Concordant Literal Version	And seeing is he, and, behold! A well in the field. And, behold! There are three droves of small cattle reclining at it, for from that well are they giving the droves a drink. And the stone on the mouth of the well is great.
Context Group Version	And he looked, and noticed a well in the field, and saw three flocks of sheep lying there by it. For out of that well they watered the flocks. And the stone on the well's mouth was great.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And he looked, and lo! a well, in the field and lo! there, three flocks of sheep, lying down near it, for out of that well, do they water the flocks, but, the stone, is great, on the mouth of the well:...
The Geneva Bible	And he looked, and behold a well in the field [Thus he was directed by the providence of God, who brought him to Labans house.], 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 wells mouth.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And as he looked about, behold there was a well in the field, and three flocks of sheep lay thereby (for at that well were the flocks watered) and there lay a great stone at the well mouth.
New European Version	He looked, and behold, a well in the field, and, behold, three flocks of sheep lying there by it. For out of that well they watered the flocks. The stone on the well's mouth was large.
New King James Version	And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth.
Third Millennium Bible	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.
Webster's Bible Translation	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.
Young's Updated LT	And he looks, and lo, a well in the field, and lo, there three droves of a flock crouching by it, for from that well they water the droves, and the great stone is on the mouth of the well.

The gist of this verse: Jacob comes to a field and he sees three flocks of sheep near a well, and there is a large stone over the mouth of the well.

Genesis 29:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 29:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
<p>This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i>. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.</p>			
<p>When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i>. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i>.</p>			
<p>Wenstrom: <i>The expression "He looked and saw (hinneh, "behold")" brings the reader alongside of Jacob, capturing the scene for us emphasizing the parallel between Jacob arriving seeking a wife for himself and Eliezer seeking a bride for Isaac who was of course, Rebekah.</i>⁶⁹</p>			
b ^e êr (בְּעַיִן) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #875 BDB #91
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^eh</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>saw-DEH</i>]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961

Translation: He looked and saw a well in the field [before him]... I have taken some slight liberties with the demonstrative particle and have translated it like a verb (*observed*). It seems to have that sense when used in this way. Many times, the intention of the word *behold* is to grab the reader and throw him right into the midst of the action.

The gist of this passage is easily understood. I have my own particular peculiarities; one being a dislike for the archaic words *lo* and *behold*. *Lo* is actually the translation of a demonstrative particle from the Hebrew which is not too different from our English words *see, see here, look, observe*. What sounds reasonable several hundred years ago does not sound reasonable today and translators are always stuck with the problem to choose between a literal translation or to paraphrase considerably; the latter approach often making the Scriptures more accessible. I personally tend toward some occasional paraphrasing, such as I have done in this verse.

One of the very literal translations, and one which I refer to often, is Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*. An invaluable source book set to me has also been John Joseph Owen's *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* (in 4 volumes). Also, much to my surprise, I have discovered that in general, the *King James Version* is a very accurate often word-for word rendering of the original languages (in fact, it is quite easy to find a KJV which includes Strong's numbers for each word, either online or for whatever Bible program you might use). I often refer to these more literal sources to make certain that my rendering as given here is not unacceptable when it comes to an accurate rendering of the action and thoughts expressed.

⁶⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf accessed August 7, 2017.

While I am on the topic of translations, the *New International Version* seems to be a very accurate rendering when it comes to ideas and actions (but it is not a word-for-word translation). All translations have their problems. For instance, when it comes to v. 2, the watering of the sheep has the verb in the Hiphil stem, which is causative stem. Therefore, the most accurate translation would be *for out of the well were the flocks caused to be watered*. Rotherham, generally a literalist, translated this *for out of that well do they water the flocks* where *water* is translated as an active voice with the unclear subject *they*, a relative pronoun which has no antecedent (*they* is actually the sheep, which are caused to be watered). The also renders *water* in the active voice. In neither case is this any great cause for alarm. The general meaning that the sheep are generally watered there but they are not getting any water right at this moment is the gist of the passage. In a narrative, sometimes great latitude can be taken with the rendering so that a word-for-word translation along with the proper rendering of the stems and tenses is not found, yet the understanding of the passage is increased because the resultant English translation is easier to understand.

I personally aim, as do most translators, to find a happy middle ground between a word-for-word translation and a meaning-for-meaning translation. I probably fail more often than I succeed, conveniently blaming this on a limited life span. However, if you were to do a word for word study, you would be better off to consult a Hebrew concordance or a Greek concordance before looking to an English concordance. That would point you more in the right direction of the shades of meanings of the various words and to the double and triple meanings which some words carry.

As a result of the difficulties of attempting to find the right balance between a literal translation and a translation which may be understood, I have opted for producing 3 original translations, the first being very literal; the second being readable and very nearly literal; and the third one designed to convey the meaning, even though every word of the original may not be properly represented in the end product.

Jacob has never been out this way before. The last person who went out that way, insofar as we know, is the servant of Abraham—who went with a number of people. However, his mother, Rebekah, came from this area. Therefore, she would have described what to look for and what to expect. However, bear in mind that she left there when Isaac was 40; they did not have children until 20 years had passed, and Jacob is now about 77 years old. So, what she has described to Jacob is landscape which she saw 60 years ago.

So Jacob is looking hard at this landscape, comparing it in his mind with what his mother told him about.

It is not out of the question that other wells had been dug since that first well that his mother had gone to.

Barnes: *This is not the well near Haran where Abraham's servant met Rebekah. It is in the pasture grounds at some distance from the town.*⁷⁰

Genesis 29:2a [He looked out and saw a well in the field that was in front of him.](#)

Jacob Arrives at a Community Well in Aram (Various Commentators)

Gill: *[Once Jacob arrives in Paddan-aram,] he might purposely look out for a well, as knowing that there people frequently came for water for their families, or shepherds to water their flocks, of whom he might get intelligence concerning Laban's family, and where they dwelt; or he might lookout for this particular well, where his grandfather's servant had met with his mother Rebekah, of which he had been informed, and very probably had some directions how to find it.*⁷¹

⁷⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1–8.

⁷¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:2.

Jacob Arrives at a Community Well in Aram (Various Commentators)

Alford: *This well is apparently not the same as that in Chron. Gen. 24:11, etc. It seems to be further from the city, and different in its management. This well is closed by a large stone, which is only removed at the assemblage of the flocks and shepherds in the evening.*⁷²

L. M. Grant: *After many days of travel Jacob came to the land of his relatives. He could not phone to find his directions to their home, nor did he have any street and house number, but it did not take long for him to contact them. A well was of course the most likely place to meet people.*⁷³

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
<p>This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i>. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.</p>			
<p>When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i>. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i>.</p>			
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
sh ^e lôshâh (שְׁלוֹשָׁה) [pronounced <i>shiloh-SHAW</i>]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
'êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced <i>GAY-der</i>]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5739 BDB #727
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
râbats (רָבַט) [pronounced <i>raw^b-VAHTS</i>]	<i>is lying down, lying in wait; reclines, is stretching out, settles upon; sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7257 DB #918

⁷² *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:2.

⁷³ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah/</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Gesenius breaks down the prepositional use of ʿal (עַל) [pronounced *gah/*] into 4 categories: (1) It is used much like the Greek preposition ἐπὶ, when one thing is placed *upon, over, on* something else. This can be different things, when one is *over* the other; or it can refer to the top part of something being *over* the bottom part. This can refer to clothing being *on* a person; as well as something which is super-added to another thing. (2) This preposition can be used to express a relationship between two things that are not touching, with the idea of *impending, being high, being suspended over* something else. (3) ʿAl can be used to express *neighborhood or continuity*. It can be translated *at, by, near*. (4) Finally, ʿal can denote motion *unto or towards* something. One thing can rush *upon, towards, to, against* another thing.

Translation: ...and he observed three flocks of sheep there lying beside it,... He also notices 3 flocks of sheep.

Twice, we have the demonstrative particle here, hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*]. Both times, I took quite a bit of translational latitude by rendering it, *and he observed*. But it does call our attention to two important things: (1) Jacob has found a well near to where he should be able to find Laban. People will gather water at this well sometime this day; so Jacob will either be greeted with people who know Laban or people who can set him off in the right direction. Besides this, Jacob will be able to get water for himself and his animals (and possibly for his mother's personal maid⁷⁴). (2) The second *behold* takes note of there being 3 shepherds waiting. So, Jacob does not have to go to the well and wait for someone to eventually show up and provide him guidance; people are there right now, right at this moment. This is like walking into your own state's Department of Motor Vehicles and finding out that the line only has 5 people in it (rather than the 55 I usually see).

These men with their flocks as sitting *upon, beyond, beside* the well. Let me suggest that they are some distance from the well and that the well is at a lower level than the shepherds and their sheep. Based upon the well from Gen. 24, it would seem very likely that there are water troughs nearby and that a shepherd would dip water from the well and carry it over to the troughs and pour it there. Then he would bring his flock over to the troughs to drink. This would keep the contamination of the well to a minimum.

Although this is a minor point, Jacob probably saw the sheep and their shepherds first, and then determined where the well was.

It is not out of the question that there has been some communication between Rebekah and her brother Laban. They did not exchange letters as we did prior to the internet, but it appears that messages were carried by trading caravans. We might assume that this has been done, but we really do not know.

There are a lot of observations occurring at this point in time, and you may wonder, *what's up with that?* This is the first time the Jacob sees the woman that he loves—Rachel—and he went out of his way to remember everything about that day.

Clarke: *The three flocks...which were lying now at the well, did not belong to Laban, but to three other chiefs; for Laban's flock was yet to come, under the care of Rachel.*⁷⁵

⁷⁴ She is never mentioned during this trip; but her death is noted in association with Jacob returning to the land of promise. This implies that she has been with him the entire time. She is someone who actually made this trek 100 years previous.

⁷⁵ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:2.

The Geneva Bible: *Thus he was directed by the providence of God, who brought him to Laban's house.*⁷⁶

Genesis 29:2c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
min (מן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
b ^e êr (באר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91
hîy' (היא) [pronounced <i>hee</i>]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , is implied; with the definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
shâqâh (שקה) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAW</i>]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink, to make drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
êder (עד) [pronounced <i>GAY-der</i>]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5739 BDB #727

Translation: ...for they caused the flocks to be watered from that well. The verb takes a masculine plural subject, and we do have a masculine plural noun here; but I believe that the masculine plural noun refers to the *shepherds* taking care of the flocks, even though there is no word for *shepherds* here. If this was a Niphal (passive) verb, then the flocks would be watered from the well; but this is the Hiphil, which is the causal stem; so someone *causes* the flocks to be watered from the well. That someone would refer to the masculine plural subject.

Genesis 29:2d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

The NET Bible: *The disjunctive clause (introduced by the noun with the prefixed conjunction) provides supplemental information that is important to the story.*⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Gen. 29:2.

⁷⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen29.htm> accessed November 11, 2014 (footnote).

Genesis 29:2d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH ^B -ven]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6
g ^e dûwllâh (גְּדוּלְלָהּ) [pronounced ghed-ool-LAW]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud; elder, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1420 BDB #153
'al (עַל) [pronounced ġahʃ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced b ^e -AIR]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91

Translation: [There was] a large stone over the well opening. Jacob is very observant. He looks about and sees that there is a large stone over the opening of the well.

We do not know exactly why the sheep are there, but not drinking. There are a few possibilities. (1) It might have simply been a custom for all of the flocks to gather around the same time and then drink together. With more shepherds there, perhaps the moving of the water was easier with several hands. (2) The rock may have been intentionally large, keeping others out—but it will appear that Jacob moves the rock by himself later. (3) This well may belong to Laban and he is very particular about it. There might need to be someone official from his house (a son or a daughter) in order to authorize the using of the well. I lean toward the latter explanation.

Genesis 29:2 He looked out and saw a well in the field that was in front of him. He observed three flocks of sheep lying beside the well. The shepherds apparently watered these sheep from this well. There was a large stone over the well opening.

Whereas, we today have a picture of a well based upon either wells we have seen today, or wells we have heard about in storybooks, the wells of the ancient world do not appear to be much more than holes in the ground. In the case of this well, a very large stone was placed over the mouth of the well.



A Modern-day Well-pump (a photograph); from Homebuilding.com; accessed July 24, 2017.

The well of the little prince (a graphic); from DeviantArt; accessed July 24, 2017. This is the classic view wells from storybooks.



The well in Paddan-aram was probably nothing more than a hole in the ground, possibly with some surrounding rock to strengthen the area around the well; with a large rock over the well.

Picture of a Primitive Well (a photograph); from Ted Lewis; accessed July 24, 2017. There is no way of knowing how close this picture is to the well spoken of here, but this would be a closer depiction. The only difference is, there would have been a very large stone over the mouth of the well to seal it and protect it.



Wells of the Ancient World (Various Commentators)

Hawker: *A well of water was considered a great treasure in those hot eastern countries. Hence Jesus is often spoken of under that similitude. Isa. 32:2; John 4:14; John 7:37.*⁷⁸

The Cambridge Bible: *A well was a cistern or tank, often covered with a large stone requiring two or three men to remove it. This stone protected the water from the rays of the sun and from mischief or pollution. In the present instance the well seems to have belonged to the community, and was not opened for use, until all the herdsmen and shepherds had come.*⁷⁹

Keil and Delitzsch: *[T]he well was very differently constructed from that at which Abraham's servant met with Rebekah. There the water was drawn at once from the (open) well and poured into troughs placed ready for the cattle, as is the case now at most of the wells in the East; whereas here the well was closed up with a stone, and there is no mention of pitchers and troughs. The well, therefore, was probably a cistern dug in the ground, which was covered up or closed with a large stone, and probably so constructed, that after the stone had been rolled away the flocks could be driven to the edge to drink.*⁸⁰

I see the problem of Keil and Delitzsch's assessment as three-fold: (1) you have hundreds of cattle every day walking by this well to drink, which strikes me as very destructive to the ground all around the well; and which also opens up the well to contamination by the defecation and urination of the animals in close proximity to it. (2) bringing the livestock to walk along this small open well to drink strikes me as being very inefficient as well (the well could not have a very large mouth, if the stone over it could be rolled away). (3) Would anyone want to drink of the water from this well after so much livestock have stuck their muzzles into it to drink?

⁷⁸ Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Gen. 29:2.

⁷⁹ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:2.

⁸⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:1-4.

Wells of the Ancient World (Various Commentators)

The servant of Gen. 24 was very detail-oriented, telling us about every moment and thought that danced through his head. Jacob may have taken one look at Rachel and lost all interest in the feeding and watering of animals (and therefore, simply does not record the details of providing water for the animals). V. 3 reads: *[W]hen all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.* (ESV) This verse does not tell us that the flocks were driven by the well, and they put their muzzies in and drank; nor does it tell us that water was transported into nearby watering troughs. The latter approach makes the most sense to me.

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Perhaps we could see this stone as an ancient lock and key?

Genesis 29:2 He looked out and saw a well in the field that was in front of him. He observed three flocks of sheep lying beside the well. The shepherds apparently watered these sheep from this well. There was a large stone over the well opening.

The Stone Over the Well's Mouth (Various Commentators)

*Biblical Researches: Over most of the cisterns is laid a broad and thick flat stone, with a round hole cut in the middle, forming the mouth of the cistern. This hole we found in many cases covered with a heavy stone, which it would require two or three men to roll away.*⁸¹

*Benson: This might be intended either to prevent the lambs of the flock from being drowned in it; or to secure the water, which was and still is scarce in that country; or to save the well from receiving damage from the heat of the sun, or the sand put into motion by the winds, which, probably, would soon have filled and stopped it up. This last we know is the reason why they cover their wells in Arabia, and several other parts of the East.*⁸²

*Bob Utley: [T]he stone on the mouth of the well...was [there] (1) to stop evaporation; (2) keep the water clean; [and/]or (3) for the purpose of security (unauthorized use).*⁸³

*Dr. Peter Pett: It would appear that the stone was so large that it was not easy to move. So every day the various flocks would gather at the well (water-source), waiting until all were gathered, and then the stone guarding the well would be removed and all the flocks would water there. It was possibly a private cystem owned by a group, with restricted access.*⁸⁴

*Clarke: It is very likely that the stone was a large one, which was necessary to prevent ill-minded individuals from either disturbing the water, or filling up the well; hence a great stone was provided, which required the joint exertions of several shepherds to remove it; and hence those who arrived first waited till all the others were come up, that they might water their respective flocks in concert.*⁸⁵

*Gill: In Arabia, owing to the shifting sands and in other places, owing to the strong evaporation, the mouth of a well is generally covered, especially when it is private property. Over many is laid a broad, thick, flat stone, with a round hole cut in the middle, forming the mouth of the cistern. This hole is covered with a heavy stone which it would require two or three men to roll away. Such was the description of the well at Haran.*⁸⁶

⁸¹ Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:2. He cites *Biblical Researches*, vol. i, p. 490.

⁸² Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:2.

⁸³ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:2.

⁸⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:2–3.

⁸⁵ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:3.

⁸⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:3.

The Stone Over the Well's Mouth (Various Commentators)

S. R. Driver: *Cisterns and sometimes wells were covered in by a broad and thick flat stone with a round hole cut in the middle, which in its turn is often covered with a heavy stone, which it requires tow or three men to roll away, and which is removed only a particular times.*⁸⁷

Wenstrom: The large stone covering the well indicated that the well was private property. The large stone would not only keep the well clean and to protect against anyone accidentally falling into it but it would also restrict the use of the well to a select group of shepherds who were authorized by the owner of the well to move it.⁸⁸

We would reasonably assume that, as early as possible, the sons of shepherds are put in charge of a flock (or whatever size they can handle) and they begin shepherding (after spending time with their father or with their father's hired shepherds). The youngest of these shepherds would not be able to move the stone by themselves; Rachel was probably unable to move the stone by herself.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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

Jacob is going to be very descriptive here and throughout this entire chapter. This will be the day that he first meets Rachel, the love of his life. This will account for all of the detail found here.

Jacob, despite what we have seen from him so far, is a romantic individual; and he will fall very much in love with Rachel. Furthermore, by some things which we will observe here, it will be clear that all of this is recorded by Jacob. Quite obviously, who else would have recorded this information, which is clearly a first-hand account. Furthermore, there will be other things which will be said from time to time that make it apparent that this is all from Jacob's perspective.

The Bible tends to focus upon the life of one patriarch at a time. We have studied Abraham, then Isaac and now Jacob. Just as we never went back to Abraham's life in narrative form once we turned to Isaac; we will not go back to Isaac at a later time. He will be mentioned again, but we are no longer following his life. We will study a time when God comes and speaks to Jacob again; but God will not come and speak with Isaac. So, Isaac will be mentioned again, but not in a narrative form where it is clear that we are hearing his words describe his situation. This would suggest that each patriarch spoke about the historical occurrences while they were alive.

Right at this point and time, Isaac is still alive. He is about 130 years old and he will live another 50 years (Gen. 35:28). You will recall that our study of Isaac's narratives were fairly straightforward and they centered on major events (births, marriages and deaths).

My guess is that Jacob records the narrative in Gen. 28:1–35:29 (give or take). In Gen. 37:1, Joseph will appear to take up the narrative. At that point, Jacob will still be alive and one of the characters in the narrative, but it will be clear that this will be Jacob as seen through the eyes of his son Joseph.

The principle is, each generation stands on its own. Each generation is responsible for its own decisions.

It ought to be clear that I unequivocally reject the idea that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. At the most, he was the final editor—but, my guess is, this book existed in its final form at the time that Moses was born. Whether it was in the thinking of the people of Jacob (that is, they memorized it) or had been committed to writing by the time of Moses is unknown.

⁸⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf accessed August 7, 2017. Wenstrom cites S.R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, London: Methuen 1916, p. 269, cited by Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary*, Zondervan, p. 400.

⁸⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf accessed August 7, 2017.

At this point, we are with Jacob and will be with him until Gen. 35; and for the next 7 chapters of Genesis, everything will be presented from his perspective. The thread which holds Gen. 28–35 together is, Jacob is a witness to all of it.⁸⁹ This is key to understanding the authorship of any portion of Scripture—whose viewpoint are we getting (on the human side)? The text may be written in 3rd person, but most often, there are specific people who were there and witnessed the events—one or more of those witnesses would be the logical original author.

A Review of Genesis 29:1–2: The entire journey of 400 miles is described in v. 1; and Jacob coming upon the land of Laban is found in vv. 2–3:

Genesis 29:1–2 Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large,... (ESV)

The first 14 verses of Gen. 29 could be easily summed up to read: *And Jacob arrived in Padan-aram and met his cousin Rachel by their well, and she brought him to her father Laban's house.* But, instead of 1 verse, there are 14. You might be wondering, *what are all of these details about?* There are all of these 3 flocks of sheep near a well and a stone over the opening of the well; and then there is this conversation. Jacob makes this off-handed remark; the shepherds point out Rachel, his cousin, coming from afar. Why is this recorded? Jacob is remembering the first day that he sees Rachel; and he remembers all of these details of that first day. It is likely that, many days after this, while working for Laban, that he replays all of this day in his head, and remembers back to this first meeting—holding onto this wonderful memory, recalling the first day that he sees the woman of his life. It is this memory which gives him the strength to work for his Uncle Laban for 7 years; and yet, these 7 years pass by quickly as if only a few days in his own mind. When Jacob is unable to be near Rachel, he is thinking about her and this day that they first meet. Hence, all of the details that we read.

Jacob has been sent to Paddan-aram for two reasons—to escape the emotional revolt of Esau's soul (his brother Esau wanted to kill him), and to find a wife from his own family. During this long trip, Jacob has begun to think more and more about this trip and about his potential future wife.

There are two things on Jacob's mind. He is over 40 years old⁹⁰ and is not yet married; and this is something he desires. Furthermore, he might be giving some thought to his spiritual heritage as well, which flows from Abraham to Isaac to him. This spiritual heritage continues through his seed as promised him by God. That requires a wife and children as well. At this point, Jacob has none of that.

Jacob knows that this spiritual heritage is real, because God has appeared to him and spoke to him, and has confirmed these promises to him—the same promises that God had also made to Abraham. What his father Isaac (or mother Rebekah) has told him has been confirmed by God.

This is the divine view; and, unfortunately, Jacob will not be focused upon this the whole time.

This next verse tells us what would typically happen here at this well. Jacob, at this time, was probably unaware of this custom, but he learned of it; and prepares us for what is coming, by giving us the custom of that area. We are never told exactly *why* things were done this way, but many commentators have come up with fairly **reasonable explanations** for these customs.

⁸⁹ Maybe not Gen. 34.

⁹⁰ Many suppose him to be 77 at this time (which is roughly equivalent to us at 40 years today).

And have assembled there all the flocks and they have rolled away the stone from upon a mouth of the well and they have give drink to the sheep and they have caused to return the stone upon the mouth of the well to her place.

Genesis
29:3

The [shepherds typically] gathered all the flocks there and then they would roll away the stone from over the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they returned the stone over the mouth of the well to its place.

The shepherds gathered their flocks there in order to give them water. They would first remove the stone from its place, give water to the sheep, and then place the stone back over the well's opening.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And have assembled there all the flocks and they have rolled away the stone from upon a mouth of the well and they have give drink to the sheep and they have caused to return the stone upon the mouth of the well to her place.
Targum of Onkelos	And thither all the flocks were gathered together; and they withdrew the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock, and returned the stone upon the mouth of the well unto its place.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And they gathered the flocks there, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and set the stone on the mouth of the well in its place.
Latin Vulgate	And <u>the custom was</u> , when all the sheep were gathered together, to roll away the stone, and after the sheep were watered, to put it on the mouth of the well again.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And all the flocks were gathered there; and the shepherds rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the sheep, and then put the stone back in its place upon the wells mouth.
Septuagint (Greek)	And there were all the flocks gathered, and they used to roll away the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the flocks, and set the stone again in its place on the mouth of the well.
Significant differences:	The Latin introduces the verbiage <i>and the custom was</i> ; which is apropos, but not found in the original Hebrew. My guess is, this was added by way of interpretation by Saint Jerome.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And all the flocks would come together there, and when the stone had been rolled away, they would give the sheep water, and put the stone back again in its place on the mouth of the water-hole.
Easy English	The *shepherds used to gather all the *flocks there. Then they rolled the stone from the well and they gave water to the sheep. After that, they put the stone back to cover the well.
Easy-to-Read Version	When all the flocks gathered there, the shepherds rolled the rock away from the well. Then all the sheep could drink from the water. After the sheep were full, the shepherds put the rock back in its place.
God's Word™	When all the flocks were gathered there, the stone would be rolled off the opening of the well so that the sheep could be watered. Then the stone would be put back in place over the opening of the well.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Whenever all the flocks came together there, the shepherds would roll the stone back and water them. Then they would put the stone back in place.
The Message	When all the flocks were gathered, the shepherds would roll the stone from the well and water the sheep; then they would return the stone, covering the well.

NIRV	All of the flocks would gather there. The shepherds would roll the stone away from the well's opening. They would give water to the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place over the opening of the well.
New Simplified Bible	When all the flocks came together there, the shepherds would roll the stone back and water them. Then they would put the stone back in place.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Shepherds would roll the rock away when all their sheep had gathered there. Then after the sheep had been watered, the shepherds would roll the rock back over the mouth of the well.
New Life Bible	When all the flocks were gathered there, the men would roll the stone from the top of the well. Then after giving water to the sheep, they would put the stone again in its place on top of the well.
New Living Translation	It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before removing the stone and watering the animals. Afterward the stone would be placed back over the mouth of the well.
Translation for Translators	When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would work together to roll the stone away from the top of the well and get water for the sheep. When they finished doing that, they would put the stone back in its place over the top of the well.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	For after all the flocks had gathered there, they used to roll the stone away from the mouth of the well to water the flocks, then push it back over the mouth of the well to cover it again.
Beck's American Translation	After all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the opening of the well, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the opening of the well.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Here, in the open plain, he found a well, with three flocks of sheep lying down beside it. It was here that the flocks were watered; but the mouth of the well was closed by a great stone, and it was not the custom to roll this stone away till all the flocks were assembled. When these had had their fill, the stone was put back on the well mouth. All of v. 2 is included for context.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	There all the flocks gathered. They rolled the stone from over the mouth of the well, watered the sheep, and returned the stone over the mouth of the well in its place.
Conservapedia	All the flocks were gathered there, and they rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, watered the sheep, and then restored the stone to its place on the mouth of the well.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So when all the flocks had collected there, they rolled away the stone and watered the sheep, and then returned the stone on to the mouth of the Well until another time.
HCSB	When all the flocks were gathered there, the <i>shepherds</i> would roll the stone from the opening of the well and water the sheep. The stone was then placed back on the well's opening.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And the shephards gathered there, and rolled the stone from the head of the well, and they watered their flocks, and restored the stone to the head of the well, to its place.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And all the droves were gathered there, and they rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock animals, and returned the stone upon the mouth of the well in its place.
New American Bible (2002)	Only when all the shepherds were assembled there could they roll the stone away from the mouth of the well and water the flocks. Then they would put the stone back again over the mouth of the well.
New American Bible (2011)	When all the shepherds were assembled there they would roll the stone away from the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back again in its place over the mouth of the well.
Revised English Bible	...and all the herdsmen used to gather there and roll it off the mouth of the well and water the flocks; then they would replace the stone over the well.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	...and only when all the flocks had gathered there would they roll the stone away from the opening of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place on the well's opening.
The Complete Tanach	And all the flocks would gather there, and they would roll the rock off the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and [then] they would return the rock onto the mouth of the well, to its place.

would gather there: They were accustomed to gather because the rock was huge.

and they would roll: Heb. וַיִּלְלוּגוּ [like] וַיִּלְלוּגוּ. The Targum renders: וַיִּרְדְּנָגְמוּ, and they would roll. Every present tense [i.e. every verb expressing continuous action] changes to speak [sometimes] in the future tense and [sometimes] in the past tense, because everything that occurs constantly has already transpired and is destined to transpire [again].

and [then] they would return: Heb. וַיִּבְיָתְמוּ; which the Targum renders: וַיִּבְיָתְמוּ, and they would return.

exeGesés companion Bible	...and all the droves gather there: and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well and moisten the flock and return the stone in place on the mouth of the well.
Kaplan Translation	When all the flocks would come together there, [the shepherds] would roll the stone from the top of the well and water the sheep. Then they would replace the stone on the well.
Natural Israelite Bible	Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And to there were all the edarim gathered: and they rolled the even (stone) from the mouth of the be'er, and watered the tzon, and put the even (stone) again upon the mouth of the be'er in its place.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	As he looked, he saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was a big one, And when all the flocks were gathered there, [the shepherds] would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and replace the stone on the well's mouth. V. 2 is included for context.
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The Expanded Bible	When all the flocks would gather there, the shepherds [they] would roll the stone away from the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And thither were all the flocks gathered, there they were driven at stated times during the day; and they, the shepherds, 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. Water was apparently not too plentiful in the neighborhood, and it was necessary to use the greatest care in keeping the available supply pure.
Lexham English Bible	And [when] all the flocks were gathered there, they rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well. And they watered the sheep and returned the stone upon the mouth of the well to its place.
NET Bible®	When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds [Heb "they"; the referent (the shepherds) has been specified in the translation for clarity] would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place over the well's mouth.
The Pulpit Commentary	And thither were all the flecks gathered. "Fifteen minutes later we came to a large well in a valley among the swells, fitted up with troughs and reservoirs, with flocks waiting around". And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, find watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. From the middle of Gen. 29:2 the words are parenthetical, the watering of the flocks not having taken place till Rachel had arrived (Gen. 29:9) and Jacob had uncovered the well (Gen. 29:10).
The Voice	...and when all of the flocks were gathered, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, give water to the sheep, and then roll the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and all the droves gathered unto there and they rolled the stone from upon the mouth of the well and the flocks drank and they returned the stone back upon the mouth of the well to her place,...
Context Group Version	And there were all the flocks gathered. And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again on the well's mouth in its place.
English Standard Version	...and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well.
Green's Literal Translation	And all the flocks were usually gathered there, and they rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the sheep, and replaced the stone on the mouth of the well, to its place.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And the manner was to bring the flocks over there, and to roll the stone from the wells mouth, and to water the sheep, and to put the stone again upon the wells mouth unto his place.
New King James Version	Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.
Young's Updated LT	(When there have all the droves been gathered, and they have rolled the stone from off the mouth of the well, and have watered the flock, then they have turned back the stone on the mouth of the well to its place.)

The gist of this verse: Once all of the flocks had been gathered, the stone would be removed and the flocks would be watered and then the stone would be put back.

Genesis 29:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âçaph (אָפַף) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i>]	<i>to be assembled, to be gathered, to assemble, to gather</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #622 BDB #62
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb with the directional hê	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
This simply means <i>there</i> ; hê acts almost like a demonstrative.			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced <i>GAY-der</i>]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5739 BDB #727

Translation: The [shepherds typically] gathered all the flocks there... Jacob appears to observe what happened over a period of time. It is possible that Jacob stopped there for a period of a few hours, possibly near his destination or believing himself to be near there.

Shepherds would bring their flocks to this area. He originally saw three flocks of sheep there. He either deduced their pattern of behavior or he was there long enough to observe it. Or, he was informed of the customs of that area, and records those customs for us right here.

Genesis 29:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâlal (גָּלַל) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAHL</i>]	<i>to roll, to roll away</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1556 BDB #164
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH^B-ven</i>]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6

Genesis 29:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>‘ahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from</i> . Some translators rendered this <i>away from</i> .			
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91

Translation: ...and then they would roll away the stone from over the mouth of the well... When the shepherds arrived there with their sheep, then they would roll this stone away from the opening of the well. Quite obviously this was a stone of just the right size, and the verb here means *to roll, to roll away*; suggesting that this stone may have been large, but it was round, so that it could be rolled out of the way.

There are some questions about the translation, and I have had to insert a word so that it makes more sense: **The [shepherds typically] gathered all the flocks there and then they would roll away the stone from over the mouth of the well...** The Samaritan text⁹¹ apparently has *shepherds* rather than *sheep*; but I think that was a change made simply to make the text more understandable.

Think of this as somewhat of a primitive manhole cover. Cecil Adams once wrote a column on the brilliance of the round **manhole cover**.⁹²

Genesis 29:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Owens has that this is a wâw consecutive, but it appears to be a wâw conjunction to me.

⁹¹ According to Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:3.

⁹² Cecil Adams: *This may require some thought. You take your squares, for instance. A square cover you can tip up on edge and drop through the hole on the diagonal, if you follow me. Similarly with ovals. A circular hole, however, will defy the most determined efforts in this regard. (Bear in mind that there's a lip around the inside of the manhole that the cover rests on; this effectively makes the diameter of the manhole an inch or so less than that of the cover.) This means manholes are one of the few things in the universe that are absolutely goofproof.*

Genesis 29:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâqâh (שָׁקַח) [pronounced shaw-KAW]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink, to make drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

Translation: ...and water the sheep. I would assume that they would dip some sort of container like a bucket into the well and bring the water out.

You may recall that there were troughs for the camels already there when Abraham's servant went to this same family 60 years previous to fetch a wife for Isaac. This is very likely a different well; and we will discuss, as this narrative unfolds, whether or not there are troughs for the animals.

Genesis 29:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH ^e -ven]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6
'al (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Genesis 29:3d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced b ^e -AIR]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced maw-KOHW]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

Translation: Then they returned the stone over the mouth of the well to its place. Once the sheep had been watered, then stone was placed back over the well opening.

Several suggestions have been given as to why all of the shepherds waited before the stone was rolled away. Some translators ventured a guess, but we really have no more information than, all of them gathered, and then they watered the sheep. These translators have an opinion as to why this was done, and include that opinion as a part of their translation (Kretzmann uses the KJV and includes additional information to help round out the translation).

New Living Translation	It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before removing the stone and watering the animals. Afterward the stone would be placed back over the mouth of the well.
Translation for Translators	When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would work together to roll the stone away from the top of the well and get water for the sheep. When they finished doing that, they would put the stone back in its place over the top of the well.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Here, in the open plain, he found a well, with three flocks of sheep lying down beside it. It was here that the flocks were watered; but the mouth of the well was closed by a great stone, and it was not the custom to roll this stone away till all the flocks were assembled. When these had had their fill, the stone was put back on the well mouth. All of v. 2 is included for context.
New American Bible (2002)	Only when all the shepherds were assembled there could they roll the stone away from the mouth of the well and water the flocks. Then they would put the stone back again over the mouth of the well.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And thither were all the flocks gathered, there they were driven at stated times during the day; and they, the shepherds, 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. Water was apparently not too plentiful in the neighborhood, and it was necessary to use the greatest care in keeping the available supply pure.

If I was to guess, much of this was probably under the direction of Laban, who may have had very good reason for it (to preserve his well, to possibly inspect his herds, to indicate ownership of the well).

What is occurring here is in order for everyone to receive a fair share of the water from the well, there was a designated time for the sheep herders to go to this well and water their sheep. One man cannot go there earlier and take as much water as he chooses to and then leave because, by himself, he could not move the stone. In fact, it is possible that several men are required to move this stone (although in this chapter, Jacob will be said to move the stone).

So this appears to be a daily ritual presumably to conserve water in this area. Perhaps wells would sometimes run dry. It probably will be based upon ownership; where Laban (Jacob's uncle in this area) possibly has claim to this well. What Jacob will see is a continual influx of sheep herders until Rachel, his cousin arrives and then the stone will be removed and everyone will be able to water their animals.

There is no failsafe way to secure this well, any more than there is a way to secure your own house. You can make things difficult for a person to enter your house uninvited, but making it impossible is unlikely, unless you have armed guards standing at every window.

This large stone was probably difficult for most men to move (although Jacob will move it by himself); and moving it would be such a difficult task in itself that, the approved flocks would arrive at a specific time, wait until all have gathered there, and then move the stone away in order to water the livestock. The large stone made unauthorized usage difficult and it also protected the well from evaporation and contamination. What is done here is an orderly way for the various flocks to be watered; and then the well is sealed the rest of the time (we do not know if it was opened again at night for women to come to fetch water for their homes).

Genesis 29:3 The [shepherds typically] gathered all the flocks there and then they would roll away the stone from over the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they returned the stone over the mouth of the well to its place.

Various Commentators on the Custom of the Stone of this Well

Scott: *This verse describes what was usually done by some mutual compact among the shepherds, and shows the purpose for which the flocks lay by the well; for the stone was not removed till all the flocks had been collected.*⁹³

Barnes: *On its mouth was a large stone, indicating that water was precious, and that the well was the common property of the surrounding natives. The custom was to gather the flocks, roll away the stone, which was too great to be moved by a boy or a female, water the flocks, and replace the stone.*⁹⁴

Gill: *[There was] a great stone...[over] the well's mouth; so that until that was rolled off, the sheep could not be watered, which was the reason the three flocks were lying by it. This stone was laid upon it, partly to keep the water from flowing out, and being wasted, so that there might be a sufficiency for the flocks; and partly to keep the water pure and clean, that it might be wholesome for the flocks, as well as entire for the use of those that had a property in it.*⁹⁵

Keil and Delitzsch: *The remark in Gen. 29:2, that the stone upon the well's mouth was large (גָּדוֹלָה without the article is a predicate), does not mean that the united strength of all the shepherds was required to roll it away, whereas Jacob rolled it away alone (Gen. 29:10); but only that it was not in the power of every shepherd, much less of a shepherdess like Rachel, to roll it away. Hence in all probability the agreement that had been formed among them, that they would water the flocks together. The scene is...thoroughly in harmony with the customs of the East, both ancient and modern.*⁹⁶

⁹³ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:3.

⁹⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1–8.

⁹⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:2 (edited).

⁹⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:1–4.

Various Commentators on the Custom of the Stone of this Well

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge appears to offer the most logical explanation: *In Arabia, and other places in the East, they cover up their wells of water, lest the sand, which is put in motion by the winds, should fill and quite stop them up. So great was their care not to leave the well open any length of time, that they waited till the flocks were all gathered together before they began to draw water; and when they had finished, the well was immediately closed again.*⁹⁷

Wenstrom goes into great detail on this subject: *The term “high day” refers to noon time. Jacob knew the shepherding business since he was one himself and therefore knew that noon time was not the time to gather the livestock so he tells them to water the sheep and go pasture them.*

Wenstrom: *Now on the surface, it appears that either the shepherds are lazy or young boys waiting for adults to move the stone but neither is the case. It appears that Jacob thought they were lazy as well since it made little sense to him for these shepherds to be sitting around the well waiting until later to water their sheep when they could water them now and take them back to pasture for several hours.*

Wenstrom: *The practical thing to do was to water the sheep now and not to wait until later. Jacob’s question was foolish to the shepherds because he was ignorant of the fact that the owner of the well had established certain procedures for the use of the well. Jacob was right that the procedure was impractical but he is ignorant that this procedure was set by the owner of the well, which he in the end disregards demonstrating his impatience and lack of respect for the property of others.*

Wenstrom: *The shepherds knew that sheep grew faster grazing on the grassland rather than standing about the well where the grass had long before been con-sumed. However, the well, it seems, was not theirs to be used at their convenience.*

Wenstrom: *In the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a well was a valuable resource, much as an oil well would be today. As such, it had to belong to somebody, and that person would prescribe how and when the well was to be used, and probably at what price. The agreement between the well owner and the shepherds seems to be that the well could be used once a day.*

Wenstrom: *The shepherds must first be gathered at the well with their flocks. Then the owner or his hired servants (“they,” verse 8) would roll the large stone away and the sheep could be watered, perhaps in the order that the flocks arrived. This would explain why the shepherds and their flocks were there so early. In this way, what was most profitable (this is what Jacob’s question was getting at) was not practical. The owner’s stipulations must be adhered to.*⁹⁸

This is not much different than the collection of comments for v. 2 on the stone over the well.

Wenstrom: *The fact that Genesis 29:2 describes the stone as being large emphasizes Jacob’s great strength since Genesis 29:10 records him moving it all by himself without any help from the shepherds after being told that Laban’s daughter Rachel was arriving with her flock.*⁹⁹

I think that we can boil this down to two factors. The well belongs to Laban, so he sets the rules. The stone is too much for Rachel to move herself, so the requirement was, all the shepherds would meet there to water their sheep and it would all be done at the same time, starting whenever Rachel arrived. Obviously, the most important thing to Laban is that his sheep get water, and this procedure insured that.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

All of the detail here, from the human perspective, is Jacob remembering each moment of this day when he meets his wife, the love of his life. He remembers every bit of it. The divine side of this narrative is, God is connecting

⁹⁷ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:2.

⁹⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 447–448) accessed August 9, 2017.

⁹⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf accessed August 7, 2017.

the rock of this well (wherein is the life-sustaining waters) to the rock where Jacob lay his head, back in Gen. 28; which was the rock which he stood up on end as the testimony that God appeared to him and spoke to him in Bethel. God provides this as a way for Jacob to think back at what had happened to him recently; to review the words that God spoke to him and the assurances which God gave to him. Jacob never made the connection; but we, as readers, some 4000 years later, are able to. We are able to see the faithfulness and continuity of God in Jacob's life (and, by extension, in our own lives).

Given Jacob's continued rebellion against God, it is quite amazing that we find God remaining faithful to him, and attempting to reach Jacob's thinking. God speaks to the lukewarm believer, saying, "Look, I am standing at [your] door and knocking; if anyone hears my voice [i.e., the sound of my knocking], and opens the door, I will [surely] come in to him and eat with him and he [will eat] with me." (Rev. 3:20; AUV). God is always available to fellowship with us; but we have to be aware of how and when He is speaking to us. Primarily God speaks to us through His Word; but, on occasion, there are circumstances in our life which synch up with His Word.

The strength that Jacob has to remove this stone should be indicative of his inner strength, which could be developed if he would focus his mind on the Word of God.¹⁰⁰

Genesis 29:3 And all the flocks were gathered there. 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 its place.

What is described in v. 3 is what typically happens. The flocks begin to gather at the well at a particular time each day. Then the stone is rolled away from the opening to the well so that the sheep can be given water. Afterwards, the stone is rolled back over the hole. Jacob will observe this on this occasion; but he will observe this on many occasions.

Jacob had never been to this place before. Whatever description that he had from Rebekah was from 100 or so years ago (and this may not even be the same well that Abraham's servant had gone to). The servant of Abraham who actually made the trip to and back was probably dead by now. So Jacob has a description of the route and the area that he is to go to. We have reason to believe that his mother's personal servant, Deborah, is with Jacob; and that she might have been helpful in identifying the area that they were in (although she had not been here for some 80–100 years¹⁰¹). So, what he sees here, he takes a mental inventory; and there is likely some parallels to the place where Rebekah has sent him. We don't know exactly what things stood out to tell Jacob that he was approximately in the right place. It is possible that Deborah, his mother's personal servant, took a mental inventory of this place, as she and Rebekah rode out for Canaan.

Deborah, his mother's personal nurse (or nanny), has actually seen this place before, as a young woman—perhaps many times. She at least knows the general area (we do not know if we are at the same well or not). The reason that we think that Deborah might be with Jacob is, he will record her death in Gen. 35:8 (the implication being that she has been with him the whole time).

However, it should be pointed out that the vocabulary here used to describe this water source is quite different from the vocabulary used to describe the well in Gen. 24. So, they may be at the same place, but the source of water is different, as is the access, as the vocabulary and the description is quite different.

So Jacob has come to the area which is near Haran, which is where his grandfather Abraham originally settled.

Gen. 29:2–3 As he [Jacob] looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were

¹⁰⁰ These past three paragraphs are based, to some extent, on https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (on the writings of Wenstrom and Nahum Sarna); accessed August 7, 2017 (p. 446).

¹⁰¹ She and Rebekah would have been young women when they moved to Canaan, being guided by Abraham's servant. She married Isaac but did not give birth to a child (actually twins) until 20 years later. And now these twins are 77 years old (by some estimations). So it has been nearly 100 years since she has been in this area. Clarke believes Jacob to only be 57 years of age. Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:20.

gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well. (ESV)

Arthur W. Pink remarks: *Without doubt there is a spiritual meaning to each detail here. It cannot be without some good reason that the Spirit of God has told us this was in a field, that there were three flocks of sheep lying by it, and that there was a great stone upon the well's mouth. But we confess we discern not their significance, and where spiritual vision be dim it is idle, or worse, to speculate.*¹⁰²

I think much of what is happening is, Jacob is remembering every single detail of the first day that he met his true love.

And so says to them Jacob, "My brothers, from where you?" And so they say, "From Haran us."

Genesis
29:4

Jacob said to them, "My brothers, from where [do] you [come]? They answered [him], "We [are] from Haran."

Jacob asked them, "My brothers, where do you all come from?" And they answered, "We come from Haran."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says to them Jacob, "My brothers, from where you?" And so they say, "From Haran us."
Targum of Onkelos	And Jakob said to them, My brethren, whence are you ? And they said, From Haran are we.
Latin Vulgate	And he said to the shepherds: Brethren, whence are you? They answered: Of Haran.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob said to them, My brethren, where do you come from? And they said, We are from Haran.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob said to them, Brothers, where are you from? And they said, We are from Haran.

Significant differences: As would be expected, we will find verbs inserted, either in the ancient language or added to their English translations to smooth it out. The Latin and Greek both lack the 1st person suffix with *brothers*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob said to the herdmen, My brothers, where do you come from? And they said, From Haran.
Easy English	Jacob said to the *shepherds, 'My brothers, where do you come from?' They said, 'We are from Haran.'
Easy-to-Read Version <i>God's Word</i> TM	Jacob said to the shepherds there, "Brothers, where are you from?" Jacob asked some people, "My friends, where are you from?" "We're from Haran," they replied.
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob said, "Hello friends. Where are you from?" They said, "We're from Haran."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹⁰² From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

Contemporary English V.	Jacob asked the shepherds, "Where are you from?" "We're from Haran," they answered.
New Century Version	Jacob said to the shepherds there, "My brothers, where are you from?" They answered, "We are from Haran."
Translation for Translators	<i>On that day</i> , Jacob asked the shepherds who were sitting there, "Where are you from?" They replied, "We are from Haran."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So Jacob asked: 'Brothers, where are you from?' And they replied: 'We're from Haran.'
Beck's American Translation	Jacob asked them, "My friends, where do you come from?" "We are from Haran," they said.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Whence come you, brethren? he asked the shepherds. From Haran, they answered.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where <i>are</i> you from?" They said, "We <i>are</i> from Harran."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Jacob, therefore, asked them, " Brothers where do you come from?" and they replied, "We are from Kharan."
NIV, ©2011	Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?" "We're from Harran," they replied.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New Jerusalem Bible	Jacob said to the shepherds, 'Friends, where are you from?' They replied, 'We are from Haran.'
Revised English Bible	Jacob said to them, 'Where are you from, my friends?' 'We are from Harran,' they replied.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov says to them, My brothers, whence are you? And they say, Of Haran - we.
Hebraic Transliteration	And Ya'akov (יַעֲקֹב) said unto them, My brethren, whence [be] ye? And they said, Of Haran [are] we.
Kaplan Translation	[Some shepherds were there.] 'From where do you come, brothers?' asked Jacob. 'We are from Charan.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov said unto them, My brethren, where are you from? And they said, Of Charan are we.
Restored Names Version	And Ya'aqob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Charan."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Jacob said to the shepherds there, "My brothers, where are you from?" They answered, "We are from Haran [11:31]."
NET Bible®	Jacob asked them, "My brothers, where are you from?" They replied, "We're from Haran."
The Pulpit Commentary	And Jacob said unto them (the shepherds of the three flocks), My brethren (a friendly salutation from one who was himself a shepherd), whence be ye?

Anticipating that their reply would reveal his whereabouts. **And they said, Of Haran are we.** This could scarcely fail to remind Jacob of God’s promise to guide him in his journey.

The Voice

Jacob spoke to them *as he approached*.

Jacob (to the shepherds): Brothers, where do you come from?

Shepherds: We are from Haran.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] said to them, my brothers, from where are you and they said, we are from Hharan ^[Burning] ,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying to them is Jacob, "My brethren, whence are you?And saying are they, "From Charan are we.
Context Group Version	And Jacob said to them, My brothers, where are you { pl } from? And they said, We are of Haran.
The Geneva Bible	And Jacob said unto them, My brethren [It seems that in those days the custom was to call even strangers, brethren.], whence [be] ye? And they said, Of Haran [are] we.
New European Version	And Jacob said unto them: brethren, from where be ye? And they said: of Haran are we.
New King James Version	And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where <i>are</i> you from?" And they said, "We <i>are</i> from Haran."
World English Bible	Jacob said to them, "My relatives, where are you from?" They said, "We are from Haran."
Young’s Updated LT	And Jacob says to them, "My brothers, from where are you?" And they say, "We are from Haran."

The gist of this verse: Jacob asks the shepherds where they are from and they tell him Haran.

Genesis 29:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong’s # BDB #510
Ya’âqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-’guh-KOH ^{BV}]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #3290 BDB #784

Genesis 29:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'achîym (אָחִיִּם) [pronounced <i>awhk-EEM</i>]	<i>brothers, kinsmen, close relatives; tribesmen; fellow-countrymen</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'ayin (אֵינַי) [pronounced <i>AH-yin</i>]	<i>where; with regards to time it means to what point; with 'ad, it means how long</i>	adverb	Strong's #370 BDB #32
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61

Translation: Jacob said to them, “My brothers, from where [do] you [come]? You will note that the verbiage here is very sparse. Jacob is using no verbs; he is using three very small words (“From where you?”). This suggests that he is not sure exactly what dialect they speak, and he is attempting to communicate with them, using the simplest words possible.

Genesis 29:4 Jacob asked them, “My brothers, where do you all come from?” And they answered, “We come from Haran.”

Using the familiar words, *my brothers* (Various Commentators)

The Geneva Bible: *It seems that in those days the custom was to call even strangers, brethren.*¹⁰³

Gill: *[Jacob approaches them, using] a kind and affable way of speaking, used even to strangers, since all men are brethren by nature; or might be used by Jacob, because they were of the same occupation with himself, shepherds.*¹⁰⁴

Matthew Poole: *[Jacob calls them “my brothers”] partly in token of respect and affection, and partly because they were of the same nature and employment with himself.*¹⁰⁵

Utle: *“brothers”...is the use of the term (BDB 26) for a greeting without implying a family relationship. We use this same greeting among fellow Christians in the southern USA today.*¹⁰⁶

This word can also be used of relatives, as in Gen. 29:12, 15.

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Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob apparently spoke the Hebrew language with which we are familiar. Since Abraham originally came from further east, that suggests that was more or less the language the he spoke there (it would make little sense for him to have developed his own language).

¹⁰³ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:4.

¹⁰⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:4.

¹⁰⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:4.

¹⁰⁶ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:4–8.

Nothing is ever said of the language spoken in Haran; and this is the only passage (that I recall) where their communication begins at such a basic level.

I was certainly not the only person to recognize that there might be a language barrier here. However, there were a very limited number of commentators who discussed this.

Genesis 29:4 is literally translated: *And so says to them Jacob, "My brothers, from where you?" And so they say, "From Haran us."*

The Language of Aram in this Era

There was not a lot of discussion of this that I found. However, when Jacob is speaking to the shepherds at the well, it is clear that the words used were quite basic.

Logically, since we are in Aram, we would expect the dominant language to be Aramaic. If I were to make a guess at this, based upon the history of the Bible, it would seem that Hebrew is a dialect of Aramaic which continued to develop both during the 260+ years the patriarchs were in Canaan, which development continued in great isolation in Egypt for another 400 years.

If I am correct in this statement, then Jacob should have little trouble communicating with these shepherds (assuming, of course, that they spoke and understood Aramaic as well¹⁰⁷).

Clarke: *The language of Laban and his family was Chaldee and not Hebrew; (see Gen. 31:47); but from the names which Leah gave to her children we see that the two languages had many words in common, and therefore Jacob and the shepherds might understand each other with little difficulty. It is possible also that Jacob might have learned the Chaldee or Aramitish language from his mother, as this was his mother's tongue.*¹⁰⁸

James Burton Coffman: *That this conversation took place so easily indicates that these diverse branches of Terah's family spoke Aramaic, the language of Ur of the Chaldees, from which place Terah and Abraham had migrated.*¹⁰⁹

Henry Morris: *The language of Haran was Aramaic, or Chaldee, and was evidently a language well known to Abraham, and therefore also to Isaac and Jacob. The means by which these patriarchs communicated with the Canaanites, and even with the Egyptians, in the course of their travels, is never mentioned. Their languages were certainly quite different. Evidently they either spoke through interpreters or else they themselves were good linguists and had learned several languages. As far as the immediate family of Abraham was concerned, however, it is reasonable that they all had continued to speak Aramaic, as well as Hebrew.*¹¹⁰

Arno Gaebelein: *There is every reason to believe that these dialects were then so nearly alike that there was no difficulty in passing from one to the other.*¹¹¹

When it comes to the language that the people spoke, we are really just guessing. It does not seem logical that Abraham would necessarily pick up a brand new language in Canaan, unless it was necessary. Did he incorporate words from the Canaanite language into his language? There are a great many similarities between Aramaic and Hebrew; and the Aramaic language continued for thousands of years.

¹⁰⁷ We have no idea how many people moved to Haran from other areas.

¹⁰⁸ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:4.

¹⁰⁹ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; p. 457.

¹¹¹ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Gen. 30:1–8 (29:1–8?) (Homiletical and Practical).

The Language of Aram in this Era

Is it possible that we simply have the same language which grew apart because of Geography? It is clear that the English of the southern states is different from that in, say, Ohio. Our English is different from that spoken in Great Britain, Australia, Scotland or Ireland. I much prefer an overseas DVD with subtitles, even if the principle language spoken is English.

As I have suggested in other passages, the mind of the men of this era was very sharp, and in cases of immersion, they probably had a better ability to learn other languages than we do. However, this is very little said about the languages spoken when they are different. I can recall a passage when Joseph (Jacob's 11th son) is in Egypt, and he will speak Egyptian harshly to his brothers (a servant will interpret for them all). So there is clearly that language difference; but the fact that they spoke a different language was integral to the narrative.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
min (מן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Chârân (חרן) [pronounced <i>khaw-RAWN</i>]	<i>parched; mountaineer; road, path transliterated Haran, Charan</i>	masculine singular proper noun/location	Strong's #2771 BDB #357
'ânach ^e nûw (אנחנו) [pronounced <i>uh-NAHKH-noo</i>]	<i>we; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person plural pronoun; pausal form	Strong's #587 BDB #59

Translation: They answered [him], “We [are] from Haran.” Their response is equally sparse, containing the proper noun *Charan*. Now, even though Jacob speaks the same language of Laban does, this does not mean that he and the shepherds are easily conversant.

The shepherds lead their flocks around the hills and the valleys, grazing on various land sites and then moving on to a new site with more foliage. Most probably have a route through peaceful lands and have along this route along with, perhaps, a list of wells to which they travel. At any given well, particularly at one like this, one might meet herdsmen from a half dozen different areas from perhaps as much as 50–100 miles away.

Jacob has never traveled here before and, although he likely has maps or some semblance of directions; and he would have some sense of direction, his exact destination would be difficult to attain. There are reasons to

assume that he traveled with his mother's personal maid (Deborah), who previously lived in this area and would have traveled from here to Canaan with Rebekah. Therefore, she may have some sense of the geography as well.

So Jacob has arrived at a place within walking distance of Haran; and the answer of these shepherds allows him to ask about his uncle, who also lives in these parts.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[Jacob finds] from the shepherds who were reposing there with flocks and who all belonged to Haran, that his relatives in Haran were well and that one of the family was shortly expected, he enquired why they were idling the best part of the day there instead of watering their flocks and sending them back to pasture.*¹¹²

Dr. Peter Pett points out an obvious fact that many commentators miss: *Jacob discovers he has arrived at his destination, Haran, and asks after the man he seeks. A water-source was the natural place to find people to question, for it was a place where many would come. We note elsewhere how many meetings take place at water-sources. (One way of ensuring you met people was to wait at a water-source).*¹¹³

Genesis 29:4 And Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran."

Jacob takes all of this in. Where he is was described to him by his mother, and he thinks that he might be in the right place. Or, Deborah, his mother's nanny, identifies this as probably being the right place.

More than likely, there were only a few roads in that era (they would appear to be more like trails to us today); so Jacob can get onto a trade route and it would take him where he wanted to go. This would not be a confusing road system, with roads going all over the place. There would be some primary routes which would have been followed.

Jacob finally approaches the shepherds at the watering hole, and asks about them. Although you cannot read this in the English, the Hebrew conversation begins as very sparse and simple. It is possible that they are struggling to communicate with one another.

Arthur W. Pink: *Years before, when the servant of Abraham was upon a similar mission, seeking a wife for Isaac, when he arrived at a well we are told that "he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray You, send me good speed this day" (Gen. 24:12). But here in connection with Jacob we read of no prayer for Divine guidance and blessing, instead, we find him interrogating the Haran shepherds.*¹¹⁴

Syriac and Hebrew are very similar languages, but they are not equivalent. The people in this area speak Syriac; Jacob speaks Hebrew (see Gen. 31:47, where Jacob and Laban both name a pile of rocks representing a covenant between them with the same name, but in different languages).

The term *brothers* has been used for a great many centuries to mean something other than a person's literal brother. This is an attempt by Jacob to establish a rapport between himself and these shepherds. It is unlikely that he believes himself to be related to these men.

I have often remarked how far more people know Abraham than know the names of any kings of that era. John Trapp makes a similar observation here: *These petty passages are recorded, when the acts of mighty monarchs are unmentioned; to show God's dear respect to his poor servants. The lion and*

¹¹² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:4.

¹¹³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:4–6.

¹¹⁴ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017 (slightly edited).

*eagle were not offered in sacrifice as the lamb and dove were. Mr Fox being asked, whether he knew such an honest poor man, answered, I remember him well: I tell you, I forget lords and ladies, to remember such. So does God.*¹¹⁵

We have covered *Haran* (or, *Charan*) in the past; so I will offer up a few passages instead: Gen. 11:26, 31 24:10 27:43 28:10 2Kings 19:12 Isa. 37:12 Acts 7:2, 4. This would have been quite a famous city, being a last stop before one heads west, away from the Euphrates.

And so he says to them, “Have you known Laban ben Nahor?” And so they say, “We have known.”

Genesis
29:5

He asked them, “Do you know Laban ben Nahor?” They answered, “We do know [him].”

He asked them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” They answered, “Yes, we know him.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says to them, “Have you known Laban ben Nahor?” And so they say, “We have known.”
Targum of Onkelos	And he said to them, Know you Laban bar Nachor? And they said, We know.
Latin Vulgate	And he asked them, saying: Know you Laban, the son of Nachor? They said: We know him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he said to them, Do you know Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We do know him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said to them, Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.
Significant differences:	None.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And he said to them, Have you any knowledge of Laban, the son of Nahor? And they said, We have.
Easy-to-Read Version <i>God’s Word</i> TM	Then Jacob said, “Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?” He asked them, “Do you know Laban, Nahor’s grandson?” They answered, “We do.”
NIRV	He said to them, “Do you know Nahor’s grandson Laban?” “Yes, we know him,” they answered.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Translation for Translators	Then he asked, “Do you know Nahor’s grandson Laban?” “Yes we do,” they replied. He asked them, “Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nahor?” They replied, “Yes, we know him.”
--	---

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then he asked: ‘Do you know Laban, the son of NaHor?’ And they answered: ‘We do!’
------------------------	--

¹¹⁵ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:4 (slightly edited).

International Standard V	"Do you happen to know Nahor's son Laban?" he inquired. "We do," they replied.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	And his next question was, whether they knew Laban, son of Nachor. Yes, they said, we know him.
Today's NIV	He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" "Yes, we know him," they answered.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then he asked them if they knew Laban the son of Nahor ? When they answered, " We know him."
NIV, ©2011	He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" "Yes, we know him," they answered.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011)	Then he asked them, "Do you know Laban, son of Nahor?" "We do," they answered.
New RSV	He said to them, `Do you know Laban son of Nahor?' They said, `We do.'
Revised English Bible	He asked them if they knew Laban the grandson [<i>lit.</i> son] of Nahor. They answered, `Yes, we do.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	He asked them, "Do you know Lavan the [grand]son of Nachor?" They said, "We do."
Hebraic Transliteration Kaplan Translation	And he said unto them, Know ye Lavan ben Nachor? And they said, We know [him]. 'Do you know Nachor's grandson, Laban?' 'We know him.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible Restored Names Version	And he said unto them, Know ye Lavan ben Nachor? And they said, We know him. And he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nachowr?" And they said, "We know him."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[Jacob] said to them, Do you know Laban the grandson of Nahor? And they said, We know him.
The Expanded Bible	Then Jacob asked, "Do you know Laban, ·grandson [descendant] of Nahor?" They answered, "We know him."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he said unto them, Know ye Laban, the son (in the wider sense, for he was the grandson) of Nahor? And they said, we know him.
NET Bible®	So he said to them, "Do you know Laban, the grandson [Heb "son."] of Nahor?" "We know him [Heb "and they said, `We know.'" The word "him" is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the translation several introductory clauses throughout this section have been placed after the direct discourse they introduce for stylistic reasons as well.]," they said.
The Pulpit Commentary	And he said unto them (with the view of discovering his kinsmen), Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?—i.e. the grandson, Laban's father having been Bethuel, who, however, here, as in Gen. 14:1–24; retires into the background. And they said, We know him. The language of the shepherds being Chaldaean (vide Gen. 31:47), Jacob, who spoke Hebrew, was able to converse with them either because he had learnt Chaldee from his mother (Clericus), or, as is more probable, because the dialects were not then greatly dissimilar (Gosman in Lange).
The Voice	Jacob: Do you know Laban, son of Nahor?

Shepherds: We do.**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he said to them, do you know Lavan ^[White] the son of Nahhor ^[Snorting] and they said we know,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he to them, "Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? And saying are they, "We know him.
Context Group Version	And he said to them, Do you { pl } know Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.
Darby Translation	And he said to them, Do ye know Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We do know [him].
Green's Literal Translation	And he said to them, Do you know Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know <i>him</i> .
Young's Updated LT	And he says to them, "Have you known Laban, son of Nahor?" And they say, "We have known."

The gist of this verse: Jacob asks if these people know Laban, his uncle. They say that they do.

Genesis 29:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHG</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

Genesis 29:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle;</i> and is transliterated <i>Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Nâchôwr (נָחֹר) [pronounced <i>naw-KHOHR</i>]	<i>snorting [of a horse]; hoarse, dry hot;</i> transliterated <i>Nahor</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #5152 BDB #637

Translation: He asked them, "Do you know Laban ben Nahor?" Jacob is looking for his Uncle Laban. He is Jacob's mother's brother. Rebekah (Jacob's mother) is the daughter of Bethuel, who is the son of Nahor (Abraham's brother) (Gen. 11:26 22:23 24:24).

Now, in some cases, there would have been some kind of an announcement of a trip like this. A message might be sent with a trading caravan. However, Jacob is clearly just showing up because he left his family suddenly.

The cover story is a true story. He is there to find a wife. Jacob is a normal male. So, even though he left so that his brother Esau does not kill him, the story is, he will leave to find a wife; and that is clearly what he will do.

He knows that he is in the area and takes a stab at these men. Today, when inquiring about someone, we might say "Do you know Laban Ben Nahor?" We identify people with a first and last name, and, often to distinguish them from everyone else, we use their middle name. In those days, a man was tied directly to his father (or grandfather), who perhaps lived almost 200 years, and often became well known. So each person was known by his given, first name, and by the name of his father's first name. In the ancient world, they could not depend upon the first name alone because (1) there would be other persons of that era by the same first name, and (2) the son, by definition, may not be as well known as the father; therefore, if only the son's name is mentioned, it is possible that they may not recall who he is until hearing the name of the father (or, in this case, the grandfather).

Dr. Peter Pett: 'Son of' means 'descended from'. Laban is actually the son of Bethuel, and is Nahor's grandson.¹¹⁶

Utey: Here is a good example where the word "son" (BDB 119) in Hebrew can refer to "father" or "grandfather." Bethuel is Laban's father and Nahor is his grandfather (cf. Gen. 24:24; Gen. 24:29).¹¹⁷

I am not sure if this means that Jacob is less familiar with Bethuel than Nahor; or if he simply determined that Nahor would be better known as a tribe/family. The Cambridge Bible suggests that Nahor would have been better known than Bethuel.¹¹⁸

Gill: Nahor might be more known than Bethuel, Haran being Nahor's city, Gen. 24:10.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:4–6.

¹¹⁷ Dr. Bob Utey, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:4–8.

¹¹⁸ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:5.

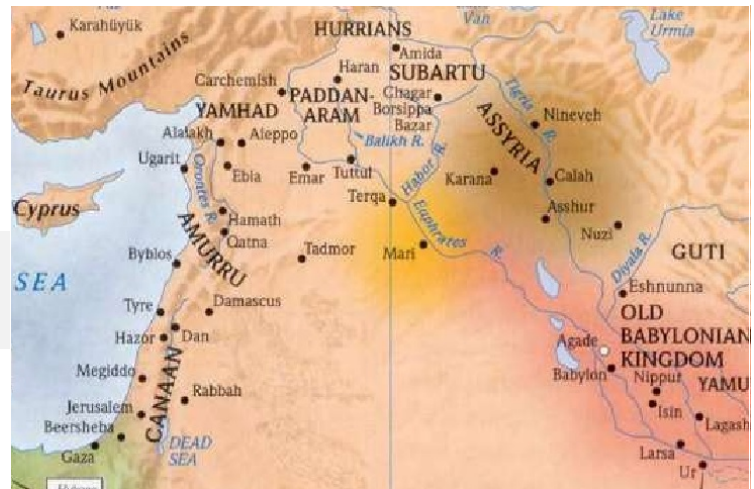
¹¹⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:5.

Genesis 29:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
yāda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 st person plural, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

Translation: They answered, “We do know [him].” The men that Jacob meets—the shepherds—know Laban. Even though I have smoothed out the translation, they are still using a minimal number of words to communicate. However, this time, verbs are used.

Interestingly enough, I have come across two sources¹²⁰ (at least) which suggest that there is no word for yes in the Hebrew language. To answer yes, they repeat the words of the question. We find this here and in v. 6. However, when doing a quick word search for yes in the ESV Old Testament, I came up with 27 matches.

Map of the Middle East around the time of the patriarchs from Bible Atlas Maps in e-sword, p. 18. Ur is off in the far right corner. Haran is in Paddan-aram in the north. So Jacob traveled northeast to get to Haran.



Chapter Outline
Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:5 And he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know him.”

Laban is Rebekah’s brother and Jacob’s uncle. Nahor is Abraham’s brother. *Laban ben Nahor* is very similar to our first and last name way of identifying one another. Although names were not unique, and then, as now, some family names would be used again and again, if Jacob was in the right place, then these people should know who Laban ben Nahor is.

¹²⁰ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017 (one source).

The College Press Bible Study: *Evidently Laban was not a city-dweller, but a nomad sheik; the life that is depicted here is everywhere that of the desert.*¹²¹

We do not know how widespread the language of Abraham's family was. Recall that Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees (Iraq) and moved originally to Haran (Charan) and then to the Land of Promise. A fairly large contingent of Abraham's family settled in Haran, and Abraham himself lived there for a period of time. They are all Semitic peoples, so it is possible that they spoke dialects of the same language (like those in Ireland, Scotland and Wales). In any case, they are all able to communicate, but much of the Hebrew is fairly simplistic, nevertheless.

Based upon Gen. 31:47, it will appear that those living in Paddam-aram all spoke Syrian and that Abraham spoke Hebrew.

And so he says to them, "[Is there] peace to him?" And so they say, "Peace, and behold, Rachel is daughter is coming with the sheep."

Genesis
29:6

He then asked them, "[Are things] well with him?" And they answered, "[Things are] well [with him]. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming [this way] with the sheep."

He then asked them, "Are things well with him?" And they replied, "He is doing well. In fact, look, here comes Rachel his daughter with the sheep."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says to them, "[Is there] peace to him?" And so they say, "Peace, and behold, Rachel is daughter is coming with the sheep."
Targum of Onkelos	And he said, Hath he peace? And they said, Peace; and, behold, Rahel his daughter cometh with the sheep.
Latin Vulgate	He said: Is he in health? He is in health, say they: and behold, Rachel, his daughter, cometh with his flock.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he said to them, Is he well? And they said, He is well; and, behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said to them, Is he well? And they said, He is well. And behold Rachel his daughter came with the sheep.

Significant differences: *To them* in not found in the targum or the Latin.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	Jacob then asked whether Laban was well. The *shepherds said, 'Yes. Look! Rachel, Laban's daughter, is coming with the sheep!'
Easy-to-Read Version <i>God's Word</i> TM	Then Jacob said, "How is he?" "How is he doing?" Jacob asked them. "He's fine," they answered. "Here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
<i>The Message</i>	"Are things well with him?" Jacob continued. "Very well," they said. "And here is his daughter Rachel coming with the flock."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹²¹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12.

Contemporary English V.	"How is he?" Jacob asked. "He's fine," they answered. "And here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
New Century Version	He said to them, "Is he well?" They said, "He's fine. In fact, this is his daughter Rachel now, coming with the flock."
New Life Bible	He asked them, "Is he well?" They said, "He is well. And see, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."
Translation for Translators	Jacob asked them, "Is Laban well?" They replied, "Yes, he is well. Look! Here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And he asked: 'Is he doing well?' Then they replied: 'He is well. Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with his sheep!'
International Standard V	So he asked them, "How's he doing?" "Very well," they answered. "As a matter of fact, look over there! That's his daughter Rachel, coming here with his sheep."
Names of God Bible	"How is he doing?" Jacob asked them. "He's fine," they answered. "Here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Is all well with him? asked Jacob. Yes, said they, all is well with him. That is his daughter, Rachel, yonder, coming towards us with her flock.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He said to them, "Peace to him!" They said, "Peace! Rachel his daughter comes here with the sheep."
HCSB	"Is he well?" Jacob asked. "Yes," they said, "and here is his daughter Rachel, coming with his sheep."
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he asked "Is he ok?" and they said "yes, ok--- and here is Rachel his daughter, coming with the sheep."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nachowr?" And they said, "We know him."
New American Bible (2011)	He inquired further, "Is he well?" "He is," they answered; "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
New Jerusalem Bible	Then he asked them, 'Is he well?' 'He is,' they replied, 'and here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock.'
Revised English Bible	'Is he well?' Jacob asked; and they answered, 'Yes, he is well, and there is his daughter Rachel coming with the flock.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	He asked them, "Are things going well with him?" "Yes," they answered, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
The Complete Tanach	And he said to them, "[Are things going] well with him?" And they said, "[Things are going] well, and behold, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."

is coming with the sheep: Heb. הָאֵב. The accent is on the "aleph," and the Targum renders אֵבִיתָ. [In verse 9,] "and Rachel came הָאֵב," the accent is on the first syllable, on the "beth," and the Targum renders. The former is in the present tense, whereas the latter is in the past tense.

exeGesés companion Bible	And he says to them, Is he at shalom?
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	And they say, He is at shalom: and behold, Rachel his daughter comes with the flock.
Hebraic Transliteration	And he said unto them, [Is] he well? And they said, [He is] well: and, Hinnei, Rachel (רַחֵל) his daughter cometh with the sheep.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And he said to them, "Are things going well with him?" And they said, "Things are going well, and behold, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep.
Kaplan Translation	'Is he doing well?'
	Well enough! Here's his daughter Rachel, coming with the sheep.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he said unto them, Is the shalom with him? And they said, Shalom; and, hinei, Rachel his bat cometh with the tzon.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He said to them, Is it well with him? And they said, He is doing well; and behold, here comes his daughter Rachel with [his] sheep!
The Expanded Bible	Then Jacob asked, "How is he?" They answered, "He is well. Look, his daughter Rachel is coming now with his sheep."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he said unto them, Is he well? "Is there peace to him?" And they said, He is well; and, behold, Rachel, his daughter, cometh, is even now coming, with the sheep.
NET Bible®	"Is he well?" [Heb "and he said to them, `Is there peace to him?'"'] Jacob asked. They replied, "He is well [Heb "peace."]. Now look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep."
The Pulpit Commentary	And he said unto them, Is he well? Literally, is there peace to him? meaning not simply bodily health, but all manner of felicity; ὑγιαίνει (LXX.); sanusne est? (Vulgate). Cf. the Christian salutation, <i>salvum vobiscum</i> And they said, He is well (literally, peace): and, behold, Rachel—"Ewe" (Gesenius)—his daughter cometh with the sheep.
The Voice	Jacob: Is he well? Shepherds: Yes, he is. Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep right now.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he said to them, is completeness to him and they said completeness and look, Rahhel ^[Ewe] his daughter was coming with the flocks,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he to them, "Fares he well? And saying are they, "Well fares he. And behold! Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the flock.
The Geneva Bible	And he said unto them, [Is] he well [Or, "he is in peace?" by which the Hebrews mean prosperity.]? And they said, [He is] well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.
Green's Literal Translation	And he said to them, Well-being to him? And they said, Well-being. And, behold, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he said unto them: is he in good health? And they said: he is in good health: and behold, his daughter Rahel comes with the sheep.
Webster's Bible Translation	And he said to them, [Is] he well? And they said, [He is] well: and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.
World English Bible	He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well. See, Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the sheep."
Young's Updated LT	And he says to them, "Has he peace?" and they say, "Peace; and lo, Rachel his daughter is coming with the flock."

The gist of this verse: Jacob asks after his Uncle Laban and he is said to be well; and then they announce that his daughter Rachel is coming up with the flock.

Genesis 29:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
shâlôwm (שלוּם) or shâlôm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHM</i>]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: He then asked them, “[Are things] well with him?” Jacob continues to speak using the most basic of words, barely saying enough to suggest a full sentence. All he says here is, “Peace to him?” The word *peace* was a common greeting among Hebrews, and essentially, Jacob is asking if Laban is doing well. It is a general term, used here to inquire after a person’s health, welfare and prosperity.

Gill: *And he said unto them, is he well?... In good health, he and his family, or "is peace unto him"...does he enjoy prosperity and happiness? for this word was used in the eastern nations, and still is, for all kind of felicity.*¹²²

¹²² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:6.

Genesis 29:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced shaw-LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: *And they answered, "[Things are] well [with him].* The shepherds continue speaking in like manner, using the barest of answers. All they say is, "Peace."

We do not know to whom these shepherds belong; whether they work for Laban or simply know him. It would make sense that he is a well-known person in that parts, having become quite successful in livestock.

NEV commentary: *The structure of the Hebrew language seems to reflect something of God's way of thinking. In Biblical Hebrew, there's no term for "yes" in replying to a question. Instead, the person answering repeats the question. Thus here Jacob asks: "Is he well?"; and the shepherds reply "Well". God's way of saying "Yes" to our prayers / requests is to repeat back to us as it were our requests; and thus the form and wording of our prayers becomes in some sense important; for what we ask for is what we will receive back, if He answers positively.*¹²³ I am presently digesting this comment.

In this passage, all we have to go on, regarding the language of these shepherds and Jacob is, much of the conversation is carried out with very simple words. One thing that we clearly know is, Jacob is able to communicate with these shepherds, even though their conversation appears to begin on a very elementary level.

Genesis 29:6c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

¹²³ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017.

Genesis 29:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i> . This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.			
When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i> . I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i> .			
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
bôw' (אוֹב) [pronounced boh]	<i>entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; those entering [going, coming (in)]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
tsô'n' (צֹאן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

Translation: *And look, his daughter Rachel is coming [this way] with the sheep.*” Then, suddenly, out of nowhere, these shepherds put together a complete sentence. “In fact, look, here is his daughter Rachel right now, coming with the sheep.”

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Just as he arrives Rachel shows up. This is what is meant by the covert work of God. We don't see God out in front but we know that God is behind the circumstances, behind the scenes, to work out the timing of this situation.*¹²⁴

One of the great themes of the book of Genesis is, God is at work in His (fallen) creation. Sometimes He enters into the events on earth in a very notable way (such as His destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah); sometimes God interacts with individuals directly (as He did with Jacob in Bethel); and most often, God is there, behind the scenes, often not named or even spoken of, working out details and timing, as we find in this chapter. Interestingly enough, Leah will have more to say about God than anyone else in this chapter.

Again, it seems like there is a lot of useless detail here; but it is my contention that Jacob wrote this himself, and that he recalls all of these details, because this will be the day that he first sees the woman that he loves. Therefore, he remembers most everything.

This is the first time that Jacob will see Rachel, the woman with whom he will spend the rest of his life (well, actually, the rest of her life, as she will die long before Jacob does). God has always brought a man's right woman

¹²⁴ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

to him. We may not recognize her, we may be in a downward spiritual spiral, we may be sexually (and, therefore, wrongly) involved. Jacob, for all of his faults, had waited for his right woman. She is a shepherdess. She will be the first person from his family that Jacob will see.

It is my opinion that Jacob remembers this particular day very well, the first day that he laid his eyes upon Rachel; and that accounts for all of the details found in this chapter.

Genesis 29:6 And he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And, look, his daughter Rachel comes with the sheep."

The word translated *look* is often translated *lo!*, *behold*; but in this context, it is calling attention to something happening off in the distance. It would be reasonable to translate this word as, *in fact, look over there*. This would give us:

Genesis 29:6 And he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. In fact, look over there: his daughter Rachel comes with the sheep."

Probably, Rachel is just a figure far off in the distance. The shepherds there would know her; her walk, her demeanor, her clothing, and her sheep. She catches Jacob's eye as well.

These men are not relatives to Jacob. Otherwise, they would not say, "Here is Laban's daughter approaching us;" they would say, "Yes, we are Laban's sons" or "We are Laban's servants. Our sister now approaches." However, just as they said, they know Laban but they are not related to him.

Matthew Poole makes this observation: *According to the manner of those times, Ex. 2:16 Son. 1:7,8, when humility, innocency, simplicity, and industry were in fashion, both among men and women of great quality. There are some that quarrel with the Scripture, and question the truth of such relations, because they judge of the state of ancient times and things by the present age, whereby they discover great folly and deep ignorance of the state of former ages.*¹²⁵

Gen. 29:4–6 Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" (ESV)

The Providence of God (Several Commentators)

Arthur W. Pink: *[T]here are no chance-happenings, no chance-meetings, no chance delays, no chance losses, no chance anythings in our lives. All is of Divine appointment.*¹²⁶

Utley correctly points out: *There are no coincidences in the lives of God's servants (cf. Gen. 24:15; Ex. 2:16...). There is the unseen hand of God here, as with Joseph in Gen. 37:15–17 (also in the book of Esther where God's name never appears but His presence and guidance are obvious).*¹²⁷

John Wesley: *Providence brought Jacob to the very field where his uncle's flock's were to be watered, and there he met with Rachel that was to be his wife. The Divine Providence is to be acknowledged in all the little circumstances which concur to make a journey or other undertaking comfortable and successful. If, when we are at a loss, we meet with those seasonably that can direct us; if we meet with a disaster, and those are at hand that will help us; we must not say it was by chance, but it was by providence: our ways are ways of pleasantness, if we continually acknowledge God in them.*¹²⁸ Providence, by the way, is an older term which refers to God or to God's Will and Action. Many of our early presidents used this term.

¹²⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:6.

¹²⁶ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

¹²⁷ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:4–8.

¹²⁸ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:2.

The Providence of God (Several Commentators)

Gill: *...and, behold, Rachel his daughter comes with the sheep; at that very instant she was coming out of the city with her father's flock of sheep, to water them at the well; an instance of great humility, diligence, and simplicity; this was very providential to Jacob.*¹²⁹

Benson: *Providence made that which seemed contingent and fortuitous to give a speedy satisfaction to Jacob's mind, as soon as ever he came to the place he was bound for.*¹³⁰

Trapp takes this a tad bit too far: *[O]ur least and ordinary actions are ordered and directed by God; as Nathanael's being under the fig tree, {John 1:48} &c. Birds flying seem to fly at liberty, yet are guided by an overruling hand of Heaven: so are our thoughts, affections, actions.*¹³¹ See below:

I think it is better to understanding that God allows our free will to function; and His plan moves forward, despite what our choices in life are. The book of Genesis and a careful study of the lives of Jacob and Joseph reveal this to be true.

Our founding fathers often used the word *Providence* when meaning *the active will of God in our country's founding*.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 29:1–6 Then Jacob went on his journey, toward the land of the sons of the east. And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. And Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." And he said to them, "Do you know laban the son of Nahor?" And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well with him." "And behold Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep."

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:1–6

1. This chapter contains many elements which are unique or somewhat strange.
2. The first is the phrase "lifted up his feet" which indicates the following:
 - a. Jacob was physically walking on this journey, not riding.
 - b. This was his volitional choice. Gen. 41:44
3. One might suspect that he was merely in this position due to the actions of his mother, but he has concurred with her plans.
4. Jacob is a believer who has gotten bad advice from another believer, whom he trusted.
5. There was no point 5.
6. Jacob continued on his journey toward Haran from Bethel, and travels eastward.
7. When he arrives at some unnamed place, he sees a well in the field.
8. He observes three flocks of sheep around the well, which also means that there were three shepherds there although they are not mentioned.
9. This well was used as a watering spot for many shepherds of that region.
10. There was a large stone which covered the mouth of the well, likely designed to keep the water supply clean and pure.
11. The stone was too large for one shepherd to easily remove, and certainly could not be moved by a female.
12. They would wait for one another and use their combined strength and move the stone.

¹²⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:6.

¹³⁰ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9.

¹³¹ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:6.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:1–6

13. Jacob immediately asks these shepherds where they live.
14. They tell him that they are from the city of Haran, which means that his journey is nearly complete.
15. He asks them about Laban, mentioning the older and likely more revered Nahor.
16. They acknowledge that they are familiar with both of these men.
17. Jacob then asks about their state of affairs.
18. They respond with the fact that everything is in order as far as they know.
19. They seem to imply that if Jacob wants further information, he should ask Laban's daughter who is approaching.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so he says, “Behold, still the day the great; not a time of gathering the cattle? Water the sheep and go; pasture [them].”

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29:7

He said, “Look, [there is] still more day [remaining]. [Is this] not a time to gather the cattle? Water the sheep and go; put [them out] to pasture.”

Then Jacob remarked, “Look, there is a lot of day left. Is this not the time that you gather your cattle and water and pasture them?”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says, “Behold, still the day the great; not a time of gathering the cattle? Water the sheep and go; pasture [them].”
Targum of Onkelos	And he said, Behold, the <u>time of the day</u> is great; it is not time to gather home the cattle; water the sheep, and let them go (again) to pasture.
Latin Vulgate	And Jacob said: <u>There is yet much day remaining</u> , neither <u>is it time to bring the flocks into the folds again</u> : first give the sheep drink, and so lead them back to feed.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob said, Lo, <u>the sun is still high</u> , it is not yet time that the cattle should be gathered together; water the sheep, and go and feed them.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob said, <u>it is yet high</u> day, it is not yet time that the flocks be gathered together. Water the flocks, and go and feed them.

Significant differences: The targum adds an additional phrase to what Jacob says. The Latin, Greek and Syriac all appear to be trying to interpret what Jacob means in that first phrase. The Latin appears to give a whole different approach to gathering up the cattle (or flocks). The Latin also takes the final two phrases and makes them into a single phrase.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob said, The sun is still high and it is not time to get the cattle together: get water for the sheep and go and give them their food.
Easy English	Jacob said, ‘Look! It is still midday. It is not time to gather the *flocks together. Give water to your sheep and take them away to grass.’

Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob said, "Look, it is still day and long before the sun sets. It is not yet time for the animals to be gathered together for the night. So give them water and let them go back into the field."
God's Word™	"It's still the middle of the day," he said. "It isn't time yet to gather the livestock. Water the sheep. Then let them graze."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob said, "Since it is still broad daylight and not yet time to bring the flocks in, why don't you water them and take them back to pasture?"
The Message	Jacob said, "There's a lot of daylight still left; it isn't time to round up the sheep yet, is it? So why not water the flocks and go back to grazing?"
NIRV	"Look," he said, "the sun is still high in the sky. It's not time for the flocks to be brought together. Give water to the sheep and take them back to the grasslands."
New Simplified Bible	»It is still the heat of the day. It is not time for livestock to be gathered. Would you like to water the sheep so they can get back to grazing?«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	He said to them, "It's now only the middle of the day. It's not time yet to gather the animals. Water the flock, and then go, put them out to pasture."
Contemporary English V.	Jacob told them, "Look, the sun is still high up in the sky, and it's too early to bring in the rest of the flocks. Water your sheep and take them back to the pasture."
New Berkeley Version	He remarked, "But the day is still in its prime; it is not yet time to bring in the livestock [More grazing time was needed. While Esau had been hunting, Jacob had mastered the technique or animal husbandry]—water the sheep and take them grazing."
New Century Version	Jacob said, "But look, it is still the middle of the day. It is not time for the sheep to be gathered for the night, so give them water and let them go back into the pasture."
New Life Bible	Jacob said, "See, the sun is still high. It is not time for the flocks to be gathered. Give water to the sheep, and return them to their field."
New Living Translation	Jacob said, "Look, it's still broad daylight—too early to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?"
Translation for Translators	Jacob said, "Hey! The sun is still high in the sky. It is not time for the flocks to be gathered for nighttime. Give the sheep some water and then take them back to <graze/eat grass> in the pastures!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Jacob said: 'It's still mid-day. it isn't time for the flocks to be gathered yet. So why not just water the flocks, then take them back out to graze?'
Beck's American Translation	"But the day isn't over at all," he said. "It isn't time yet to gather the flocks. Water the sheep, and then go and let them graze."
International Standard V	"Look!" Jacob replied. "The sun [Lit. <i>day</i>] is still high. It's not yet time for the flocks to be gathered. Let's water the sheep, then let them graze."
Names of God Bible	"It's still the middle of the day," he said. "It isn't time yet to gather the livestock. Water the sheep. Then let them graze."
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then Jacob said, The sun is still high, and it is a long time before the flocks need to be folded; why do you not water the sheep at once, and take them back to their pasture again?

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He said, "Behold, the day is still great with no period to gather the livestock. Go water and feed your sheep."
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Conservapedia	And he said, "Look, it's still the hight of the day, and this isn't the time for gathering cattle. Give the sheep water to drink, and go and let them graze."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then he asked; "Look! it is full day already ; - is it not time to water the cattle and sheep that they may go and feed ? "
HCSB	Then Jacob said, "Look, it is still broad daylight. It's not time for the animals to be gathered. Water the flock, then go out and let them graze."
NIV, ©2011	"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."
Urim-Thummim Version	And he said, the sun is high in the sky and it is not time to round up the cattle, so water your sheep, and take them back out to pasture.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he said: since the sun is still strong, the cattle won't yet need to be gathered; water the sheep, and herd them.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And he said, Lo, it is yet high day; it is not time to gather the livestock; water the flock, and walk and shepherd <i>them</i> .
New American Bible (2002)	Then he said: "There is still much daylight left; it is hardly the time to bring the animals home. Why don't you water the flocks now, and then continue pasturing them?"
New American Bible (2011)	Then he said: "There is still much daylight left; it is hardly the time to bring the animals home. Water the sheep, and then continue pasturing them."
New Jerusalem Bible	Then he said, 'But it is still broad daylight, not the time to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and take them back to graze?'
New RSV	He said, `Look, it is still broad daylight; it is not time for the animals to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them.'
Revised English Bible	Jacob said, `It is still broad daylight, and not yet time for penning the sheep. Water the flocks and then go and let them graze.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	He said, "Look, there's still plenty of daylight left; and it isn't time to bring the animals home; so water the sheep; then go, and put them out to pasture."
The Complete Tanach	And he said, "The day is yet long; it is not the time to take in the livestock. Water the sheep and go, pasture."

The day is yet long: Since he saw them lying down, he thought that they wished to gather the livestock to return home and that they would no longer graze. So he said to them, "The day is yet long," i.e., if you have been hired for the day, you have not completed the day's work, and if the animals are yours, it is, nevertheless, not the time to take in the livestock, etc. (Gen. Rabbah 70:11).

exeGesés companion Bible	And he says, Behold, the day is great, it is not time to gather the chattel: moisten the flock and go and tend them.
Hebraic Transliteration	And he said, behold, [it is] yet high day, neither [is it] time that the cattle should be gathered together: mayim ye the sheep, and go [and] feed [them].
Judaica Press Complete T.	And he said, "The day is yet long; it is not the time to take in the livestock. Water the sheep and go, pasture."
Kaplan Translation	'But it's still the middle of the day. It's not yet time to bring the livestock together. Why not water the sheep and go on grazing?'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he said, Look, the sun is still high, neither is it time that the flock should be gathered together; water ye the tzon, and go and feed them.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible	He said, The sun is still high; it is a long time yet before the flocks need be gathered [in their folds]. [Why not] water the sheep and return them to their pasture?
The Expanded Bible	Jacob said, "But look, it is still the middle of the day [broad daylight]. It is not time for the sheep to be gathered for the night, so give them water and let them go back into the pasture."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together, for he assumed that the shepherds would immediately afterwards take them to the enclosure or corral for the night; water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. This was not an undue assumption of authority on the part of Jacob, but merely a scheme to remove the shepherds, for naturally he would have preferred to meet his cousin, whom he even now regarded as a probable wife, alone, and not in the presence of the slaves.
Lexham English Bible	And he said, "Look, [it is] still {broad daylight}; it is not the time [for] the livestock to be gathered. Give water to the sheep and go, pasture them."
NET Bible®	Then Jacob [Heb "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, "Since it is still the middle of the day [Heb "the day is great."], it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. You should water the sheep and then go and let them graze some more [Heb "water the sheep and go and pasture [them].]" The verbal forms are imperatives, but Jacob would hardly be giving direct orders to someone else's shepherds. The nuance here is probably one of advice[.]"
The Pulpit Commentary	And he said, Lo, it is yet high day (literally, the day is yet great, i.e. much of it still remains), neither is it time that the cattle should he gathered together (i.e. to shut them up for the night): water ye the sheep, and go and feed them—being desirous to get the shepherds away from the well that he might meet Rachel alone (Keil, Lange, Murphy), though perhaps his words with as much correctness may be traced to that prudent and industrious habit of mind which afterwards shone forth so conspicuously in himself, and which instinctively caused him to frown upon laziness and inactivity (Starke, Kalisch, Bush).
The Voice	Jacob: Look, it's still broad daylight, too early to gather the livestock together for the evening. Why don't you water the sheep and take them out to graze in the pasture?

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he said, while it is yet a magnificent day it is not the appointed time for the gathering of the livestock, make the flocks drink, walk and feed,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Jacob to them, "Behold! Still is the day great. It is not seasonable to gather the cattle. Give a drink to the flock, and go, graze them.
English Standard Version	He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them."
Green's Literal Translation	And he said, Behold, the day <i>is</i> still high; <i>it is</i> not time to gather the livestock. Water the sheep and go feed <i>them</i> .
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he said: lo, it is yet a great while to night, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water the sheep, and go and feed them.
New European Version	He said, Behold, it is still the middle of the day, not time to gather the livestock together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them.
Webster's Bible Translation	And he said, Lo, [it is] yet high day, neither [is it] time that the cattle should be collected: water ye the sheep, and go [and] feed [them].
World English Bible	He said, "Behold, it is still the middle of the day, not time to gather the cattle together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them."
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "Lo, the day <i>is</i> still great, <i>it is</i> not time for the cattle to be gathered; water you the flock, and go, delight yourselves."

The gist of this verse: Jacob suggests, based upon the time of day, that the shepherds give their flocks water; and then feed them.

Genesis 29:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
<p>This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i>. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.</p>			
<p>When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i>. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i>.</p>			
'ôwd (וְעוֹד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today or this day (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud; elder, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective with a definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

Translation: He said, "Look, [there is] still more day [remaining]. It appears at this point, Jacob realizes that they are able to communicate. He is now just making conversation with them. Whereas, I would have thought Jacob would say, "So where does Laban live? Can you point me in the right direction?" Instead, he says, "There is a lot of daylight that remains."

Quite obviously, he knows that Rachel can lead him back to Laban. Is this simply banter, so that she will see him and notice him? Another commentator suggested that he was getting rid of these men so that he could speak to this Rachel directly. However, since he is related to her and since he came to meet her father, there is no need for subterfuge.

Genesis 29:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lō' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'êth (תֵּן) [pronounced <i>gayth</i>]	<i>time, the right time, the time proper ; opportunity</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6256 BDB #773
'âçaph (אָפַף) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i>]	<i>to be assembled, to be gathered, to assemble, to gather</i>	Niphal infinitive construct	Strong's #622 BDB #62
The full BDB meanings (and some from Gesenius) for the Niphal are <i>to assemble, be gathered; to be gathered to one's fathers; to be brought in or into (association with others), to be received; to be taken away, removed, perish.</i>			
mîq ^e neh (מִקְנֵה) [pronounced <i>mik-NEH</i>]	<i>cattle, livestock (specifically sheep, cows and goats); herds, flocks</i>	masculine singular (collective) noun with the definite article	Strong's #4735 BDB #889

Translation: [\[Is this\] not a time to gather the cattle?](#) This appears to be a question which demands a positive answer. Isn't this the time to gather up your cattle? Perhaps Jacob is indicating that he knows this profession (which he does)?

Genesis 29:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâqâh (שָׁקַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAW</i>]	<i>give drink to, furnish drink, cause to drink, make drink; water [cattle, land]; irrigate [land]</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced <i>raw-ĠAWH</i>]	<i>shepherd, pasture, tend, graze, feed</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7462 BDB #944

Translation: [Water the sheep and go; put \[them out\] to pasture.](#) Essentially, Jacob is saying, "Go ahead; tend to your business. Water and feed your animals." He is not ordering them to do these things. He is using the imperative mood by way of permission.

I believe that he is saying, "Go ahead; don't let me stop you. Take care of what you need to take care of." The idea is, they are here, the well is right there; so, "Go ahead and take care of what you came here for."

Jacob is a shepherd, so he knows the time schedule of a shepherd. At the end of the day, the sheep are gathered and put to rest somewhere. But, in the midst of the day, they are taken out to get water and then to eat. These flocks are gathered there, but no one is doing anything (that is, opening up the well to give water to their sheep). So, this strikes Jacob as odd.

Genesis 29:7 Then Jacob remarked, "Look, there is a lot of day left. Is this not the time that you gather your cattle and water and pasture them?"

Why Jacob is telling these shepherds what to do (Several Commentators)

I believe that Clarke gives the best translation/interpretation here: *The day is but about half run; neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together - it is surely not time yet to put them into the folds; give them therefore water, and take them again to pasture.*¹³²

On the other hand, I think that Gill misses the meaning here: *[T]his he said not in an authoritative way, or in a surly ill natured manner, and as reproving them for their slothfulness; but kindly and gently giving his advice, who was a shepherd himself, and knew what was proper to be done; and this appears by the shepherds taking in good part what he said, and returning a civil answer.*¹³³ Do these shepherds really need this advice? Are they just sitting around, waiting and hoping that someone will tell them what to do?

Utle: *Jacob was a shepherd and he knew that what was being done was against the best shepherding practices (this knowledge will impress Laban).*¹³⁴

Jamieson: *Jacob's object evidently was to get these shepherds out of the way, in order that his introduction to his fair cousin might take place in private, and the conversation relative to their respective families might not be heard by strangers*¹³⁵

Starke, Bush, Kalisch: *Or was his attitude here due to "the prudent and industrious habit of mind which "shone forth so conspicuously in himself and which instinctively caused him to frown upon laziness and inactivity"?*¹³⁶

Mathews has an interesting perspective: *True to his character, Jacob proceeds arrogantly, questioning the shepherds' carefree behavior (Gen. 29:7). For all the criticism one might level at Jacob's conduct, he was no slacker in his labor ethic (Gen. 31:6; Gen. 31:38–41).*¹³⁷

Keil and Delitzsch: *When Jacob thereupon told the shepherds to water the flocks and feed them again, for the day was still "great," - i.e., it wanted a long while to the evening, and was not yet time to drive them in (to the folds to rest for the night) - he certainly only wanted to get the shepherds away from the well, that he might meet with his cousin alone.*¹³⁸

Kalisch: *[Jacob was] strengthened by the consciousness of his brilliant mission, addressed the unknown shepherds not only with cordiality, but with self-assurance and authority, and ventured even a gentle reproof of indolence.*¹³⁹

¹³² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:7.

¹³³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:7.

¹³⁴ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:4–8.

¹³⁵ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12. They cite Jamieson, CECG, 202; also Lange, Murphy, Keil (for having the same sentiments).

¹³⁶ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12. They cite Jamieson, CECG, 202; also Lange, Murphy, Keil (for having the same sentiments).

¹³⁷ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–12. He cites Mathews, Genesis 11:27-50:26, p. 462.

¹³⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:5–14.

¹³⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:7.

Why Jacob is telling these shepherds what to do (Several Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob is puzzled why they are sitting around waiting. Sheep would normally be brought towards evening, but these have come while the sun is still high. Why do they then sit and wait, when they could water them and then take them where they can feed?*¹⁴⁰

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary (Bush): *As it was yet too early to gather the flocks into their stalls for the night, Jacob, who was well versed in pastoral life, was at a loss to account for the fact that they were not watered and turned again to pasture instead of wasting a good part of the day idly about the well. After being watered and allowed to rest themselves awhile in the shade, in the middle of the day (Song 1:7), the flocks were usually turned out again to feed till sunset.*¹⁴¹

I like Bush's view here. Jacob does not understand what is happening, and he seems to be chiding these men in a friendly way, as to their work habits. If this is the case, then watering the sheep probably did involve hauling water to nearby troughs (which is actually a small area of dissension, where at least one commentator believed that the animals were brought to the well to drink directly from it).

James Burton Coffman has an interesting take on this: *It is absolutely untenable to suppose that the shepherds thus admonished by Jacob could have been grown men. The language here would never have been addressed to grown men, being clearly beyond what any stranger would have uttered. Their being juveniles prompted Jacob to rebuke them, in essence, for not getting on with feeding the flock, especially since it was about high noon, or at least a long while still until nightfall. Also, the admitted inability of these boys to remove the stone indicates the same thing.*¹⁴² Their inability seems to be more a matter of custom or well regulation rather than a physical inability. However, the way that Jacob speaks to them, this is an interesting point of view, to say the least, that they are considerably younger.

Not knowing the customs or the rules concerning this well, these shepherds seem to be wasting their time, just sitting out with their sheep, not giving them water or allowing them to graze. He asks, "Shouldn't you water your flock and then take them out to graze?"

Jacob seems to be exerting his authority over these shepherds, which suggests that they are quite young. He is telling them how to do their job.

It is interesting and possibly significant that Jacob is here considering these shepherds and their duties; and Rachel, whose name means *ewe lamb*; is walking towards them with her own flock.

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His focus would change from these men to the young woman he has just met—his cousin Rachel.

Genesis 29:7 And he [Jacob] said, "Lo, the day is yet high. It is not yet time for gathering the cattle together. Water the sheep, and go feed them."

Jacob uses 3 imperatives in this verse. However, Jacob is not telling these men what to do. He is not saying, "You all have jobs to do, right; now, therefore, go back to work!" Let me suggest the tenor is more like he is saying, "Look, don't let me keep you from what you have to do. I know you need to tend to your sheep, and that is fine by me." Or perhaps he is using the imperative somewhat in jest; or as indicative of their limited ability to communicate with one another. In any case, Jacob is not telling them what they must do. Quite obviously, there must be a way that Jacob says this, so that it is clear to these men that he is not telling them what to do.

Jacob was looking to speak with someone related to Laban, and now his daughter has arrived. Therefore, he is going to speak with her rather than with these shepherds.

¹⁴⁰ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:7.

¹⁴¹ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:7.

¹⁴² From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

As Rachel approaches, perhaps Jacob thinks to himself, “And I would much rather talk with this lovely woman here anyway.”

And so they say, “We cannot until are gathered all the flocks and they have rolled the stone from upon the mouth of the well and we have watered the sheep.”

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29:8

They answered, “We are unable [to do those things] until the flocks have been gathered and they have rolled the stone away from over the well opening—then we [can] water the sheep.”

They answered, “We are unable to water the sheep and put them out to pasture. First all the flocks must be gathered and then they roll the stone away from over the well opening—then we can water the sheep.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so they say, “We cannot until are gathered all the flocks and they have rolled the stone from upon the mouth of the well and we have watered the sheep.”
Targum of Onkelos	And they said, We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and we roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep.
Latin Vulgate	They answered: We cannot, till all the cattle be gathered together, and we remove the stone from the well's mouth, that we may water the flocks.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And they said, We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the <i>shepherds</i> roll the stone from the wells mouth; then we water the sheep.
Septuagint (Greek)	And they said, We shall not be able, until all the <u>shepherds</u> are gathered together, and they shall roll away the stone from the mouth of the well, then we will water the flocks.

Significant differences: The Greek has *shepherds* rather than *flocks*. The Hebrew has *they* referring back to shepherds, I would think); as does the Greek. The Syriac inserts the word *shepherds*; and the targum and Latin have *we* instead.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And they said, We are not able to do so till all the flocks have come together and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the water-hole; then we will get water for the sheep.
Easy English	But the *shepherds said, `We cannot do that until all the sheep are here. Then we roll away the stone from the well and we give water to the sheep.'
Easy-to-Read Version	But this shepherd said, “We can’t do that until all the flocks are gathered together. Then we will move the rock from the well, and all the sheep will drink.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	They answered, “We can’t do that until all the flocks are here and the stone has been rolled back; then we will water the flocks.”
<i>The Message</i>	“We can’t,” they said. “Not until all the shepherds get here. It takes all of us to roll the stone from the well. Not until then can we water the flocks.”
NIRV	“We can’t,” they replied. “We have to wait until all of the flocks are brought together. The stone has to be rolled away from the opening of the well. Then we’ll give water to the sheep.”
New Simplified Bible	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.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	They said to him, "We can't until all the herds are gathered, and then we [Or they] roll the stone away from the well's opening and water the flock."
Contemporary English V.	But they replied, "We can't do that until they all get here, and the rock has been rolled away from the well."
New Berkeley Version	The replied, "We can't until all the flocks are collected and they roll the stone off the well's mouth; then we water the sheep." The shepherds had joined their strength, it seems, to do what Jacob did alone.
New Century Version	But they said, "We cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered. Then we will roll away the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep."
New Life Bible	But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered and they roll the stone from the top of the well. Then we will give the sheep water."
New Living Translation	"We can't water the animals until all the flocks have arrived," they replied. "Then the shepherds move the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water all the sheep and goats."
Translation for Translators	They replied, "No, we cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered here and the stone is removed from the top of the well. After that, we will give water to the sheep."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But they said: 'We can't, until all the shepherds get here. They will roll away the stone from the mouth of the well and then we will water the flocks.'
International Standard V	But they responded, "We can't do that until all the sheep have been gathered and the stone has been rolled away from the opening of the well. Only then can we water the flock."
Names of God Bible	They replied, "We can't until all the flocks are gathered. When the stone is rolled off the opening of the well, we can water the sheep."
New Advent (Knox)Bible	That cannot be done, they answered, until all the herds have assembled here; we wait till then, before we move the stone from the well mouth and water our flocks.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	They said, "We can not, until all the flocks gather, and they roll the stone from over the mouth of the well to water the sheep."
Companion Bible	And they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and <i>till</i> they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."
Conservapedia	And they said, "We can't do that until all the flocks are gathered together, and they roll the stone off the mouth of the well; then we give the sheep water to drink."
Urim-Thummim Version	But they replied, we cannot until all the flocks are rounded up together, and until they roll the stone from the well's opening, then we can water the sheep.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And they said: "We cannot until all the herds are gathered, and then they roll the stone from the head of the well, and we will water the sheep."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	But they said, "We cannot do that until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled away from the mouth of the well; it's then we water the sheep."
New American Bible (2002)	"We cannot," they replied, "until all the shepherds are here to roll the stone away from the mouth of the well; only then can we water the flocks."
New American Bible (2011)	They replied, "We cannot until all the shepherds are here to roll the stone away from the mouth of the well; then can we water the flocks."
Revised English Bible	But they replied, "We cannot, until all the herdsmen have assembled and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well; then we can water our flocks."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	They answered, "We can't, not until all the flocks have been gathered together, and they roll the stone away from the opening of the well. That's when we water the sheep."
The Complete Tanach	And they said, "We cannot [do that], until all the flocks are gathered together, and they will roll the rock off the mouth of the well, and we shall [then] water the sheep."
	We cannot: water [them] because the stone is huge.
	and they will roll: Heb. וּלְלָגוּ: This is translated וּנְהַרְגוּ, and they will roll, because it is the future tense.
exeGeses companion Bible	And they say, We cannot, until all the droves gather and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well: then we moisten the flock.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And they said, "We cannot <i>do that</i> , until all the flocks are gathered together, and they will roll the rock off the mouth of the well, and we shall then water the sheep."
Kaplan Translation	'We can't until all the flocks have come together. [All of us] then roll the stone from the top of the well. Only <i>then</i> can we water the sheep.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And they said, We cannot, until all the edarim be gathered together, and till they roll the even (stone) from the mouth of the be'er; then we water the tzon.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	But they said, "We are not allowed until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth, then we shall water the sheep."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	And they said, We cannot, until that all the flocks are gathered together, and they roll away the stone, from off the mouth of the well,—and then can we water the sheep.
Kretzmann's Commentary	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. Ordinarily, therefore, it took two or more men to roll the stone away from the opening of the cistern, and they had received orders to come together at a stated time, lest there be delay and trouble in the care of the flocks.
NET Bible®	"We can't," they said, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled off the mouth of the well. Then we water [The perfect verbal forms with the vav (?) consecutive carry on the sequence begun by the initial imperfect form.] the sheep."
The Pulpit Commentary	And they said, We cannot,—not because of any physical difficulty (Kalisch), since three men could easily have accomplished what Jacob by himself did, but because they had agreed not to do so (Rosenmóller, Murphy), but to wait—until all the flocks be gathered together (when the watering was done at once, instead of at so many different times), and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth;—more correctly rendered, and (sc. then, i.e. when the flocks are assembled) they (i.e. the shepherds) roll away the stone—then (or, and) we water the sheep. The object of watering the flocks collectively may have been, as above stated, for convenience, or to prevent the well from being opened too frequently, in which case dust might rapidly accumulate within it (Kalisch), or perhaps to secure an equal distribution of the water (Murphy).
The Voice	Shepherds: We can't-not until all of the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well. Then we water the sheep..

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and they said, we will not be able until all the droves be gathered and they will roll the stone from upon the mouth of the well and they will make the flocks drink,...
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And they said: we may not, until all the flocks be brought together, and the stone be rolled from the wells mouth, and so we water our sheep.
Webster's Bible Translation	And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks are collected, and [till] they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.
World English Bible	They said, "We can't, until all the flocks are gathered together, and they roll the stone from the well's mouth. Then we water the sheep."
Young's Updated LT	And they say, "We are not able, till that all the droves be gathered together, and they have rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and we have watered the flock."

The gist of this verse: The shepherds who are there say that they cannot water the sheep until all the flocks of the area have been gathered first. Then they can roll away the stone from the well opening.

Genesis 29:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'āmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lō' (לא or לו) [pronounced low]	not, no	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yākôl (יכול) [also yākôwl (יול)] [pronounced yaw-COAL]	to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
With the negative, this means <i>cannot, to be unable to, to lack the ability to, to be powerless to, to lack permission to, to lack the power to.</i>			
'ad (עד) [pronounced gahd]	as far as, even to, up to, until	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
'āsher (אשר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, 'ad + 'āsher literally mean <i>as far as which</i> ; they are correctly translated <i>until, until that, until the time, until that time, until then</i> ; referring generally to past time when used with a perfect tense and future when used with an imperfect tense.			

Genesis 29:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âçaph (אָפַף) [pronounced aw-SAHF]	<i>to be assembled, to be gathered, to assemble, to gather</i>	3 rd person plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #622 BDB #62
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced GAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5739 BDB #727

Translation: They answered, “We are unable [to do those things] until the flocks have been gathered... There is a reason that it appears to Jacob that things have come to a standstill. The shepherds tell him, “We cannot do these things until the flocks are gathered...”

This could be understood that they simply lacked the authority to do this. At this point, it is unclear as to *why* they cannot water their flocks. They are said to be unable to do these things—but this does not necessarily mean that they are *physically* incapable of doing these things.

Also, one more thing must be done:

Genesis 29:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâlal (גָּלַל) [pronounced gaw-LAHL]	<i>to roll, to roll away</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1556 BDB #164
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH ^B -ven]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Genesis 29:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from</i> . Some translators rendered this away from.			
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
b ^e êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91

Translation: ...and they have rolled the stone away from over the well opening... These shepherds are not the ones to roll away the stone from the mouth of the well. We have the 3rd person plural verb here—not the 1st person plural.

What appears to be the case is, *they* (someone else) must roll away the stone. That is not necessarily a matter of manpower but a matter of authority. Those who are low on the totem pole would gather first, to make certain that they do not miss out on watering their sheep. Those who have the authority to remove the stone can gather late, if need be, because they will open it up when they are there.

Genesis 29:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâqâh (שָׁקַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAW</i>]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink, to make drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	1 st person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

Translation: ...—then we [can] water the sheep.” Once the stone is moved, then they are able to water the sheep.

The men who Jacob has been chatting with—they are able to water their own sheep, but someone else must come in first and move the stone. They leaves two possibilities—they are physically unable to move the stone (but Jacob will appear to move the stone himself) or they lack the authority to move the stone. The latter appears to be the case, and is consistent with the other material in this chapter.

Genesis 29:8 They answered, “We are unable to water the sheep and put them out to pasture. First all the flocks must be gathered and then they roll the stone away from over the well opening—then we can water the sheep.”

Commentators on the Regulation of Well Usage

Stephen Armstrong: *Wells were often sealed by rocks to protect them from people or animals falling in or sand storms covering it over, or anything else that might contaminate or ruin it. Rachel's herd is the last one of the group to gather, so she is the one everyone has been waiting for.*

Armstrong continues: *This well is owned by Laban, and Rachel is his daughter we're told. All these shepherds are probably grazing on Laban's land. Some of them might have been employed by Laban. But in either case, they were obligated to follow Laban's rules if they use his well. It's likely that Rachel did not have the strength by herself to roll the stone away. So Laban probably required the men to wait for Rachel everyday before watering their own flocks. This way Rachel could gain access to the water as well.*¹⁴³

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *A moral inability is intended. The idea conveyed is that it was not permitted—it was contrary to usage. This commonly understood rule may have been agreed upon in order to secure a fair distribution of the water.*¹⁴⁴

Robertson: *All had a right to move the stone from the well, and take water therefrom, at any hour of the day; but they agreed only to open it once a day, and then take sufficient for the wants of the day, otherwise the well would have been left uncovered, for the stone was too heavy to be so frequently moved on and off for everyone separately, and the consequence would have been that the well would have become impure and the water dried up.*¹⁴⁵

Jamieson: *[Perhaps this was done] in order to prevent the consequences of too frequent exposure in places where water is scarce, it is not only covered and secured, but it is customary to have all the flocks collected around the well before the covering is removed in the presence of the owner, or one of his representatives; and it was for this reason that those who were reposing at the well of Haran with the three flocks were waiting the arrival of Rachel.*¹⁴⁶

Barnes: *On its mouth was a large stone, indicating that water was precious, and that the well was the common property of the surrounding natives. The custom was to gather the flocks, roll away the stone, which was too great to be moved by a boy or a female, water the flocks, and replace the stone.*¹⁴⁷

This explains their tradition which allowed everyone to obtain a fair share of the water. This was a bit of law and order for this area. Jacob was not familiar with it, which is why he didn't understand, at first, why they didn't begin to water the sheep.

Dr. Thomas Constable: *The well was probably a cistern that had a mouth with a large circumference (Gen. 29:8). A very large stone that required several men to remove it evidently covered it. After someone moved the stone, the flocks would gather around the edge of the well to drink. The well from which Rebekah drew water for Eliezer (Gen. 24:16) may have been a different kind.*

Constable continues: *The male shepherds may have been unable to roll the stone away because the well belonged to Laban; their inability may have been moral rather than physical.*¹⁴⁸

If this is a private well, or a joint-owned well, it would be easier to enforce usage if everyone who used it gathered together at the same time.

¹⁴³ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017.

¹⁴⁴ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:8.

¹⁴⁵ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:7–8 (suggestive comments).

¹⁴⁶ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12. They cite CECG, 202.

¹⁴⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1–8.

¹⁴⁸ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–12. For the second point, Constable cites Bush, 2:116-17.

If Laban owns the well, which appears to be the case; then Armstrong makes the excellent observation that Rachel probably could not roll the rock away. Therefore, Laban simply set up some simple regulations to follow, which assured that Rachel's flock would get watered.

ICCG: *Jacob is puzzled by the leisurely ways of these Eastern herdsmen, whom he ironically supposes to have ceased work for the day. He is soon to show them how things should be done, careless of the conventions which they plead as an excuse.*¹⁴⁹

L. M. Grant presents an interesting perspective: *[This] is a picture...of men waiting for the time of universal blessing, which will take place in the millennial age.*¹⁵⁰

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:8 And they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks have been gathered together. And they roll the stone from the well's mouth, then we water the sheep."

There is a great deal of speculation which results from these next few verses. These men are gathered near the water hole with their sheep to get some water; but they cannot move the stone out of the opening of the well yet. All of the flocks have to be gathered together first.

I must admit that this was not clear to me at first. One possibility is, several men are required in order to roll this stone away. However, it sounds as if there are enough shepherds there at this time to move the stone. Jacob will, apparently by himself, move the stone, a few verses from now.

The stone is placed there probably to keep unauthorized persons from using the well. It possibly hides the well from the untrained eye as well. It is an indication of ownership and control, much like the lock on the front door of a house.

What is most likely is, only certain men are given the authority to roll back the stone. The men to whom Jacob is speaking do not have the authority to roll the stone out of the way. They might pay Laban a fee for this; and there are specific rules that must be obeyed in order to use the water from this watering hole.

Remember back to Gen. 24 where the servant of Abraham could not stop talking about the guidance of God. Jacob, perhaps a month or two earlier, was visited by God and given some reassurance. But he does not appear to acknowledge God at any point in this narrative. Both men were subject to the Providence of God; Abraham's servant recognized it; Jacob does not mention it, *if* he thinks about it at all.

*Stephen Armstrong: Here Jacob never bothers to seek the Lord's help, either taking it for granted or overlooking it entirely. And yet God's fingerprints all over these circumstances. God is no less in control; the only thing that's changed is the beneficiary's perspective. Unlike the servant, Jacob remains unaware of the Lord working in this moment.*¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12. They cite ICCG, 382.

¹⁵⁰ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

¹⁵¹ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017 (slightly edited).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jacob Meets Rachel and the Rest of His Family

Yet his speaking with them and Rachel has come with the sheep which [are] to her father, for [was] a shepherdess she.

Genesis
29:9

[While] he yet spoke with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, for she [was] a shepherdess.

Yet while he was speaking with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts: most of these are messtup; v. 8 instead

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Yet his speaking with them and Rachel has come with the sheep which [are] to her father, for [was] a shepherdess she.
Targum of Onkelos	While he spake with them, Rahel came, with the flock of her father; for she was a shepherdess.
Latin Vulgate	They were yet speaking, and <u>behold</u> Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she <u>fed the flock</u> .
Peshitta (Syriac)	And while he was still conversing with them, Rachel came with her fathers sheep; for she was a shepherdess.
Septuagint (Greek)	While he was yet speaking to them, <u>behold</u> , Rachel the daughter of Laban came with her father's sheep, for she <u>fed the sheep of her father</u> .

Significant differences: Both the Latin and Greek add in the word *behold*. The Latin has *fed the flock* at the end, rather than *shepherdess*. The Greek is the same as the Latin, but it adds more text: *she fed the sheep of her father*. Like nearly all of the differences found in Scripture, there are no actual theological differences.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	When Jacob was speaking, Rachel came. She brought her father's sheep with her. She was a shepherdess. A shepherdess is a woman who keeps sheep safe.
Easy-to-Read Version	While Jacob was talking with the shepherds, Rachel came with her father's sheep. (It was her job to take care of the sheep.)
<i>The Message</i>	While Jacob was in conversation with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep. She was the shepherd.
NIRV	He was still talking with them when Rachel came with her father's sheep. It was her job to take care of the flock.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	While he was still talking to them, Rachel came with her father's flock since she was its shepherd.
Contemporary English V.	While Jacob was still talking with the men, his cousin Rachel came up with her father's sheep.
New Berkeley Version	While he was still conversing with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep; for she was a shepherdess.

The Living Bible	As this conversation was going on, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.
New Century Version	While Jacob was talking with the shepherds, Rachel came with her father's sheep, because it was her job to care for the sheep.
New Life Bible	He was still talking with them when Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she cared for them.
New Living Translation	Jacob was still talking with them when Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she was a shepherd.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, while he was still speaking to them, {Look!} Laban's daughter Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, because she was in charge of grazing them.
International Standard V	While he was still talking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, since she was a shepherdess.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	The words were scarcely spoken, when Rachel came up with her father's sheep; Rachel herself was their shepherdess.
Translation for Translators	While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep. She was the one who took care of her father's sheep.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Truth (Tyndale)	While he yet talked with them, Rachel came with her fathers sheep, for she kept them.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And while he yet spoke with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was the pastor.
Lexham English Bible	While he was speaking with them, Rachel came with the sheep which belonged to her father, for she was pasturing [them].
Tree of Life Version	While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with the flock that belonged to her father (for she was a shepherdess).
Urim-Thummim Version	Now while he still spoke with them, Rachel came with her dad's sheep, because she tended them.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And while he spoke to them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, because she was a shepherd.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	He was still speaking when Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she looked after them.
New American Bible (2011)	While he was still talking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was the one who tended them.
Revised English Bible	While he was talking to them, Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she was a shepherdess.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, because she took care of them.
exeGesés companion Bible	And while he still words with them, Rachel comes with the flock of her father - for she tends them.
Kaplan Translation	While he was still conversing with them, Rachel appeared with her father's sheep. She was the shepherdess.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And while he yet spoke with them, Rachel came with the tzon of her av; for she was a ro'ah (shepherdess).

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	While ·Jacob [^L he] was talking with ·the shepherds [^L them], Rachel came with her father's sheep, because ·it was her job to care for the sheep [^L she was a shepherdess].
Kretzmann's Commentary	Verses 9-14 Jacob Meets Rachel And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. Rachel was a shepherdess of her father, just as the virgin daughters of the Arabians are to this day.
NET Bible®	While he was still speaking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was tending them [<i>Heb</i> "was a shepherdess."].
The Pulpit Commentary	And while he yet spake with them (literally, he yet speaking with them), Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them—or, she was a shepherdess, the part. הָעֵר being used as a substantive (Gesenius, 'Lex.,' sub. nom.).
The Voice	While Jacob was still speaking to the shepherds, Rachel came with her father's sheep for she, too, was a shepherd.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...while he was speaking with them then Rahhel ^[Ewe] was coming with the flocks which belonged to her father given that she was feeding,...
Concordant Literal Version	At his still speaking with them, Rachel, the daughter of Laban, comes with the flock which is her father's, for the grazier is she of her father's flock.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	While yet he was speaking with them, Rachel, had come in with the sheep which belonged to her father, for a shepherdess, was she.
Green's Literal Translation	He still was speaking with them, and Rachel came with the sheep which were her father's; for she was feeding them.
New King James Version	While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.
Webster's Bible Translation	And while he was yet speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.
World English Bible	.
Young's Updated LT	He is yet speaking with them, and Rachel has come with the flock which her father hath, for she [is] a shepherdess.

The gist of this verse: While Jacob is speaking to the shepherds, Rachel comes there with her father's sheep.

Genesis 29:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿōwd (וּד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5750 BDB #728

Genesis 29:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>speaking, talking [and backed with action], giving an opinion, expounding, making a formal speech, speaking out; promising, proposing, speaking kindly of, declaring, proclaiming, announcing</i>	Piel participle	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: [While] he yet spoke with them,... Literally, this is, *his yet speaking with them*; which suggests that *while he was speaking with them*.

Genesis 29:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
’âb (אָב) [pronounced aw ^b v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

Translation: ...Rachel came up with her father's sheep,... At this point, Rachel comes into view. The shepherds to whom Jacob was speaking could recognize her from a distance by her clothing and gait and mannerisms; but

Jacob only saw what appeared to be a figure afar off. However, at this point in the narrative, Rachel comes up and Jacob can now see her. She is with her father's sheep.

Rachel is Jacob's first cousin and there is no Biblical prohibition against marriage between first cousins at this time. As was mentioned with Isaac's marriage, this was a stronger, more viable gene pool. If a breed of dog is further subdivided, the resulting breed will be generally weaker than the stock from which it was taken (weaker does not mean weak, as dogs can be bred for more strength). What is important here is that they possess a similar spiritual background.

Genesis 29:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced <i>raw-GAWH</i>]	<i>shepherding, tending [a flock]; a shepherd, herdsman, one who tends sheep</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #7462 BDB #944
hîy' (אִיהָ) [pronounced <i>hee</i>]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is, is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Translation: ...for she [was] a shepherdess. The most literal meaning here is, *for she is a shepherdess*. However, it is reasonable to say that *for she is shepherding [them]*.

Now, I don't know how common it was to have young women as shepherds; and this is the first historic recorded incidence of this in the Bible. It would seem logical that a shepherd, if he has only daughters, would put his daughters to work at the family business. Laban later will be found to have sons; and my guess is, they are much younger than Rachel and Leah.

Genesis 29:9 While he still spoke with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them.

At this point, Jacob is able to get a good look at Rachel, who would become his wife.

Discussion of Rachel being a shepherdess: This is unusual—she is a woman and she is in charge of a herd of sheep. Is this what she wants? Is she somewhat of a tomboy? Or is this the charge of her father, who would rather use his daughter to watch the sheep than to hire someone or to purchase another slave? Based upon what we will find out about Laban, it is likely the latter reason. Laban does have sons, but they become a part of the narrative later on—so many of them may be too young at this time or not even born (his sons will not become a part of the narrative until 20 years later).

We should note that Laban has 2 daughters (this will be a part of the narrative to come). One of them is out shepherding sheep and the other is apparently not shepherding sheep (based upon the fact that she is not a part of this portion of the narrative). So, it would logically follow that Rachel had some choice in being a shepherdess. It is also possible that Leah had weak vision (to be discussed later) and was unable to oversee a flock of sheep. The point I am trying to make is, although Laban is not going to come off very well in this chapter, the fact that his daughter is a shepherdess does not necessarily reflect poorly on him.

Clarke makes this observation: *So we find that young women were not kept concealed in the house till the time they were married, which is the common gloss put on המלע almah, a virgin, one*

*concealed. Nor was it beneath the dignity of the daughters of the most opulent chiefs to carry water from the well, as in the case of Rebekah; or tend sheep, as in the case of Rachel.*¹⁵²

I think that we need to be careful about making generalizations. It would be my guess that quite often families would protect their daughters from harm and exploitation, if for no other reason than to preserve their virginity until marriage (most families would protect their daughters because that is the right thing to do). But here we have Rachel roaming about with the sheep in full view of the other shepherds. Remember what we know about Laban already. We met him as a young man back in Gen. 24, when the servant of Abraham had come to his family to find a wife for Isaac. What impressed him was the jewelry that the servant brought for his sister Rebekah. That got his attention. Wealth impressed Laban, and that appears to be the motivation in his life. He has built up his business, which is shepherding, and then he has two daughters and possibly no sons (at this time). Now, how we go from that which we can reasonably assume to *why* Rachel is shepherding his sheep cannot be assumed, thinking Laban only taking advantage of his daughter. Perhaps there are elements of that; and perhaps Rachel simply wants to do it.

Now, where is Leah in all of this? Gill suggests: *Leah, the eldest daughter, having tender eyes, could not bear the open air, and light of the sun, nor so well look after the straying sheep; and therefore the flock was committed to the care of Rachel the younger daughter.*¹⁵³ All of these are suppositions on the part of Gill; but they may not be far off the mark.

Laban, later in this chapter, will do things which are reprehensible (but justifiable in his own mind). This does not mean that he is out for his own self at every turn. It is not unlikely that a daughter of a shepherd might grow up to love animals and want to be a shepherdess (compare to Exodus 12:16–17).

I will, in fact, be heaping no little scorn upon Laban in the very near future; but we need to be judicious in our evaluation of him when we do not know all of the facts.

Genesis 29:9 *Yet while he was speaking with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.*

Commentators on a young female being a shepherdess in the ancient world

Gill, on this very topic: *[S]ome ascribe it to his covetousness that he did this; but there is no need to suggest anything of that kind; for keeping sheep in those times and countries was a very honourable employment, and not below the sons and daughters of great personages, and still is so accounted. Dr. Shaw^(f) says it is customary, even to this day, for the children of the greatest Emir to attend their flocks; the same is related of the seven children of the king of Thebes, of Antiphus the son of Priam, and of Anchises, Aeneas's father^(g).*¹⁵⁴ I am with Gill on this. Despite Laban's considerable character flaws, we need not ascribe everything that he oversees to greed and dishonest business practices.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown concurs: *Among the pastoral tribes the young unmarried daughters of the greatest sheiks tend the flocks, going out at sunrise and continuing to watch their fleecy charges till sunset.*¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9.

¹⁵³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9.

¹⁵⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9. He cites ^(f) Travels, p. 240. No. 2. Ed. 2.

^(g) Hom. Il. 1. ver. 313. Il. 6. ver. 424. Il. 11. ver. 106.

¹⁵⁵ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:9–11.

Commentators on a young female being a shepherdess in the ancient world

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *In those primitive times, a pastoral life was not only considered useful but honourable. Nor was it beneath the dignity of the daughters of the most opulent chiefs to carry water from the well, or tend the sheep. Jacob, Moses, and David were shepherds.*¹⁵⁶

The characters whom we study in Scripture were real people. We will certainly be able to recognize the good and bad in most of them.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

A great deal of what we will study in the next few chapters of Genesis is this relationship between Jacob and his soon-to-be father-in-law Laban (Rachel's father). We have found Jacob to be a schemer, a manipulator, a man out for himself. We will find Laban to be very similar in temperament; and much better at manipulation than Jacob.

Jacob and Laban are both certainly manipulators and flawed individuals. This does not make them the worst people on the planet. Laban is simply a sharp businessman looking out for his business; and we will find Jacob to be a hard worker and an honest employee. God places these two men together, in part, so that Jacob is able to see what it is like to interact with a person so similar to himself.

Ballinger translates Genesis 29:1–9 *Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.*

Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?"

And they said, "We are from Haran."

He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?"

And they said, "We know him."

And he said to them, "Is it well with him?"

And they said, "It is well, and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep."

He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them."

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."

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

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:1–9: Jacob Meets Rachel

1. Beginning with this chapter and continuing thru chapter 31 we have Jacob's involvement with Laban his uncle.
2. This opening episode of this chapter sees Jacob invited into Laban's company (vv. 1-14) while its second episode has Jacob severely manipulated into working for Laban for 14 years in order to acquire two wives (vv. 15-30).
3. This chapter concludes with the account of the birth of his first four sons by his wife Leah (vv. 31-35).
4. Vv. 1-14 set the stage for Jacob's betrothal to Rachel.

¹⁵⁶ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:9.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:1–9: Jacob Meets Rachel

5. The setting of vv. 1-8 presents Jacob's encounter with the shepherds of Haran.
6. The long journey from Bethel to Haran is presented colorfully in v. 1 where the Hebrew reads: "And Jacob lifted up his feet and walked to the land of the sons of the east" (this exact expression only occurs here in the OT).
7. The expression suggests a self-confident and energetic young man who relies on his own wits to achieve his objectives.
8. The expression "sons of the east" (cf. Job 1:3) in a broad designation referring to peoples living east of Canaan.
9. In other words the expression is another way of saying Jacob headed "eastward."
10. V. 2 sees Jacob nearly arriving at his destination and coming to a community well just outside the town of Haran.
11. The scene is presented here through the eyes of Jacob (v. 2).
12. The land around the well was open grazing ground rather than cultivated land ("a well in a field").
13. He observes "three flocks of sheep" around the well at around noontime.
14. The well was covered with a very large stone which by itself was a security measure of sorts.
15. In v.3 the narrator provides background information regarding the arrival of "all the flocks" at a certain time of day.
16. Once all the flocks arrived at the well on any given day the shepherds would proceed to remove the large heavy stone from the well and proceed to water their flocks and return to grazing.
17. It took a number of men to remove the stone and return it to its place.
18. Jacob takes the initiative and proceeds to ask the three shepherds a series of four questions (vv. 4-8).
19. He ingratiates himself with the men by calling them "My brothers" asking where they are from (v.4).
20. Jacob is brash and exudes self-confidence.
21. Even though he is engaged in energy of the flesh tactics God is for him and has blessed his journey as evidenced by the reply of the shepherds: "We are from Haran."
22. Jacob was told by his parents to get to Haran (27:42; 28:2) and to his uncle Laban so he could secure a wife from one of Laban's daughters.
23. The next natural thing for Jacob to ask the men is if they knew a man named Laban (v.5a).
24. They respond in the affirmative: "We know him" (v. 5b).
25. His third question has to do with his uncle's well being (v. 6a "Is it well with him") and the shepherds reply "It is well..." (v. 6b).
26. As divine providence would have it at the very moment of their exchange another part approaches the well with a flock of sheep.
27. The shepherds direct Jacob's attention to the fourth shepherd saying, "here is Rachel his [Laban's] daughter with the sheep" (v. 6b).
28. Rachel's timely arrival at the well to water her flock at midday echoes Rebekah's arrival at the well of Haran while the servant was praying for the divinely appointed "girl" (Gen. 24:11ff.).
29. Rachel is still at some distance from the Jacob's view and so he is not able to fully see her at this juncture.
30. Jacob's final question for the shepherds is kind of rude and pushy (v. 7).
31. He asks them why they are standing around the well at midday when the sheep could be watered and gotten back to their grazing.
32. But the reader must understand that Jacob is calculating actions that will impress the woman.
33. At some length the shepherds offer an explanation as to why they are not wasting valuable time in not watering the flocks (v. 8).
34. They tell him that they are waiting for more man power to remove the stone from the well's mouth a point previously made by the narrator in v. 3.
35. At this juncture Rachel comes into full view.
36. The narrator explains that Rachel "was a shepherdess" meaning that the sheep were her father's.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen29.htm> accessed August 7, 2017.

And so he is as which saw Jacob Rachel daughter of Laban a brother of his mother and sheep of Laban a brother of his mother. And so he comes near [to her, to the well] and so he rolls the stone from over mouth of the well and so he waters sheep of Laban a brother of his mother.

Genesis
29:10

And it was as Jacob saw Rachel (the daughter of Laban his uncle) and the sheep of his Uncle Laban, he [lit., *Jacob*] approaches [her; the well?] and rolled the stone from over the well opening and watered the sheep of his Uncle Laban.

Then, after Jacob saw Rachel (the daughter of his Uncle Laban) and the sheep belonging to his Uncle Laban, he went up and rolled the stone away from over the well and he watered his Uncle Laban's sheep.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is as which saw Jacob Rachel daughter of Laban a brother of his mother and sheep of Laban a brother of his mother. And so he comes near [to her, to the well] and so he rolls the stone from over mouth of the well and so he waters sheep of Laban a brother of his mother.
Targum of Onkelos	<u>While they were speaking with him, Rahel came with her father's sheep; for she was a shepherdess at that time, because there had been a plague from the Lord among the sheep of Laban, and but few of them were left, and he had dismissed his shepherds, and had put the remaining (flock) before Rahel his daughter.</u> And it was when Jakob saw Rahel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother that Jakob went nigh, and rolled the stone with one of his arms from the mouth of the Well; and the well uprose, and the waters ascended to the top of it; and he watered the sheep of Laban his mother's brother; <u>and it uprose for twenty years.</u> The underlined text is not a part of v. 10.
Latin Vulgate	And when Jacob saw her, and <u>knew her to be his cousin german</u> , and that they were the sheep of Laban, his uncle: he removed the stone wherewith the well was closed.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mothers brother and the sheep of Laban his mothers brother, that Jacob drew near and rolled the stone from the wells mouth and watered the sheep of Laban his mothers brother.
Septuagint (Greek)	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 came and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

Significant differences: The second phrase in the Latin does not match the Hebrew exactly. That Jacob comes near is not found in the Latin either. Also, the Latin does not tell us that Jacob watered Laban's sheep.

The final text in the targum does not match the Hebrew and is hard to understand.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, coming with Laban's sheep, he came near, and rolling the stone away from the mouth of the hole, he got water for Laban's flock.
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Easy English	Jacob saw Rachel with Laban's sheep. Jacob went up to the well. He rolled away the stone that was covering the well. And he gave water to Laban's *flock. Laban was the brother of Jacob's mother, and Rachel was Laban's daughter.
Easy-to-Read Version	Rachel was Laban's daughter. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's mother. When Jacob saw Rachel, he went and moved the rock and gave water to the sheep.
God's Word™	Jacob saw Rachel, daughter of his uncle Laban, with his uncle Laban's sheep. He came forward and rolled the stone off the opening of the well and watered his uncle Laban's sheep.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When Jacob saw Rachel with his uncle Laban's flock, he went to the well, rolled the stone back, and watered the sheep.
The Message	The moment Jacob spotted Rachel, daughter of Laban his mother's brother, saw her arriving with his uncle Laban's sheep, he went and single-handedly rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban.
NIRV	Rachel was the daughter of Laban. He was the brother of Jacob's mother. When Jacob saw Rachel with Laban's sheep, he went over to the well. He rolled the stone away from the opening. He gave water to his uncle's sheep.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When Jacob saw her and his uncle's sheep, he rolled the rock away and watered the sheep.
New Berkeley Version	When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, with the sheep of his uncle Laban, Jacob stepped up, rolled the stone off the well's mouth and watered his uncle Laban's sheep.
New Century Version	When Jacob saw Laban's daughter Rachel and Laban's sheep, he went to the well and rolled the stone from its mouth and watered Laban's sheep. Now Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's mother.
New Life Bible	When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, and the sheep of his mother's brother Laban, Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the top of the well. And he gave water to the flock of his mother's brother Laban.
Translation for Translators	When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, who was his mother's brother, <i>Jacob was so excited that</i> he went over and <i>by himself</i> rolled away the stone that covered the top of the well, and he got water for his uncle's sheep. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel on the cheek, and he cried loudly because he was so happy.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And when Jacob saw Rachel (the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother) and the sheep of his mother's brother, Laban; Jacob went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered Laban's sheep.
International Standard V	When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, accompanied by Laban's sheep, Jacob approached the well, rolled the stone from the opening of the well, and then watered his mother's brother Laban's flock.
Names of God Bible	Jacob saw Rachel, daughter of his uncle Laban, with his uncle Laban's sheep. He came forward and rolled the stone off the opening of the well and watered his uncle Laban's sheep.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Jacob watched her as she came; this was his cousin, these were his uncle Laban's sheep; so he moved away the stone by which the well was shut in.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob had seen Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. Jacob approached and rolled the stone from over the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.
Conservapedia	So it happened that when Jacob saw Rachel, daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep belonging to Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went close, and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and gave drinking water to the sheep belonging to Laban his mother's brother.
Urim-Thummim Version	When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, then Jacob went over there and rolled the stone from the well's opening, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother; and Jacob approached and rolled the rock from the head of the well, and he watered the sheep belonging to Laban, his mother's brother.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	As soon as Jacob saw Rachel he went forward and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and then watered Laban's flock.
The Heritage Bible	And it was, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the flock 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.
New Jerusalem Bible	As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, his uncle Laban's daughter, with his uncle Laban's flock, he went up and, rolling the stone off the mouth of the well, watered his uncle Laban's sheep.
Revised English Bible	Immediately Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, with Laban's flock, he went forward, rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered Laban's sheep.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

The Complete Tanach	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 drew near and rolled the rock off the mouth of the well, and he watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.
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that Jacob drew near and rolled: As one who removes the stopper from a bottle, to let you know that he possessed great strength (Gen. Rabbah 70:12).

exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, when Yaaqov sees Rachel the daughter of Laban the brother of his mother and the flocks of Laban the brother of his mother, Yaaqov goes near and rolls the stone from the mouth of the well and moistens the flock of Laban the brother of his mother.
Hebraic Transliteration	And it came to pass, when Ya'akov (בִּקְעִי) saw Rachel (לֶחֶר) Bat Lavan his mother's brother, and the sheep of Lavan his mother's brother, that Ya'akov (בִּקְעִי) went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Lavan his mother's brother.
Kaplan Translation	Jacob looked at his cousin Rachel who was with his uncle Laban's sheep. He stepped forward, and rolled the stone from the top of the well, watering his uncle Laban's sheep.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass, when Ya'akov saw Rachel bat Lavan achi immo, and the tzon of Lavan achi immo, that Ya'akov went near, and rolled the even (stone) from the mouth of the be'er, and watered the tzon of Lavan achi immo.

The Scriptures 1998

And it came to be, when Ya'aqob saw Raḥēl the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Ya'aqob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his uncle, Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of his uncle Laban.

Kretzmann's Commentary

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. The joy which Jacob felt in reaching his destination in safety after his long, lonely, and dangerous journey through the desert and his delight in meeting his cousin so soon, gave him unusual, heroic strength.

Lexham English Bible

And it happened [that], when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, Jacob drew near and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother.

NET Bible®

When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban [Heb "Laban, the brother of his mother" (twice in this verse).], and the sheep of his uncle Laban, he [Heb "Jacob." The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun ("he") in the translation for stylistic reasons.] went over [Heb "drew near, approached."] and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban.

The Pulpit Commentary

And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother,—"the term mother's brother is not unintentionally repeated three times in this verse to describe with the greatest possible stress that Jacob had met with his own relations, with "his bone and his flesh" (Kalisch)—and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother (Jacob from the first takes particular notice of Laban's flock, perhaps regarding them as a sign of Laban's wealth. If Laban's daughter had her attractions for the son of Isaac, so also had Laban's sheep), that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth (probably disregarding the shepherds' rule to wait for the gathering of all the flocks, unless, indeed, Rachel's was the last), and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. The threefold repetition of this phrase does not prove that Jacob acted in all this purely as a cousin (Lange). The phrase is the historian's, and Jacob had not yet informed Rachel of his name.

The Voice

Now when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, along with Laban's sheep, he went up to the well, rolled the stone from the well's mouth by himself, and watered Laban's flock.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.

...and it came to pass just as Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] saw Raḥel ^[Ewe] the daughter of Lavan ^[White] the brother of his mother and the flocks of Lavan ^[White] the brother of his mother and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] drew near and he rolled the stone from upon the mouth of the well and he made the flocks of Lavan ^[White], the brother of his mother, drink,...

Concordant Literal Version

And coming is it, as Jacob sees Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the flock of Laban, his mother's brother, then close is coming Jacob, and he is rolling the stone off the mouth of the well, and is giving a drink to the flock of Laban, his mother's brothe.

Darby Translation

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 mouth of the well, and watered the sheep of Laban his mother's brother.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	As soon as Jacob saw Rahel, the daughter of Laban his mothers brother, and the sheep of Laban his mothers brother, he went and rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the sheep of Laban his mothers brother.
Webster's Bible Translation	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.
World English Bible	It happened, 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.
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass when Jacob has seen Rachel, daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the flock of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob comes near and rolls the stone from off the mouth of the well, and waters the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

The gist of this verse: When Jacob sees Rachel, he rolls the stone from the mouth of the well and waters Laban's flock (which she is leading).

Genesis 29:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'âsher (כְּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, as just; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Sam. 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH ^B V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Genesis 29:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe</i> and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i>]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

Translation: [And it was as Jacob saw Rachel \(the daughter of Laban his uncle\)...](#) Jacob is able to fix his eyes on Rachel.

Instead of *a brother of his mother*, I translated that phrase *uncle*. This phrase occurs 3 times. Some believe that this emphasizes that Jacob has found his family. However, Jacob just left Canaan and his family because he agreed to the scheming and manipulation that his mother wanted to do (on his behalf, of course). So, I think the emphasis involves shared family characteristics as much as anything else. We will find that Laban is also good at manipulating, and, when necessary, deceiving people, just as Jacob's mother was.

*Whedon: The thrice repeated Laban his mother's brother deepens and intensifies the thought that he felt himself among his own.*¹⁵⁷

I believe that we can understand this thrice repeated phrase from two points of view. From Jacob's point of view, as the human author, he is excited and happy to meet those of his own family; and he repeats this expression. However, from God's point of view, this emphasizes the characteristics which are common to both Rebekah and Laban—their penchant for deception and manipulation (something which does not occur to author Jacob).

A great area to explore in Scripture is the contrast of the human and divine authorships. The Bible was written by men, all of whom had specific personalities, vocabularies, points of view, and experiences. So, there will be actual differences in the writings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph (the final 4 authors of the lion's share

¹⁵⁷ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:10.

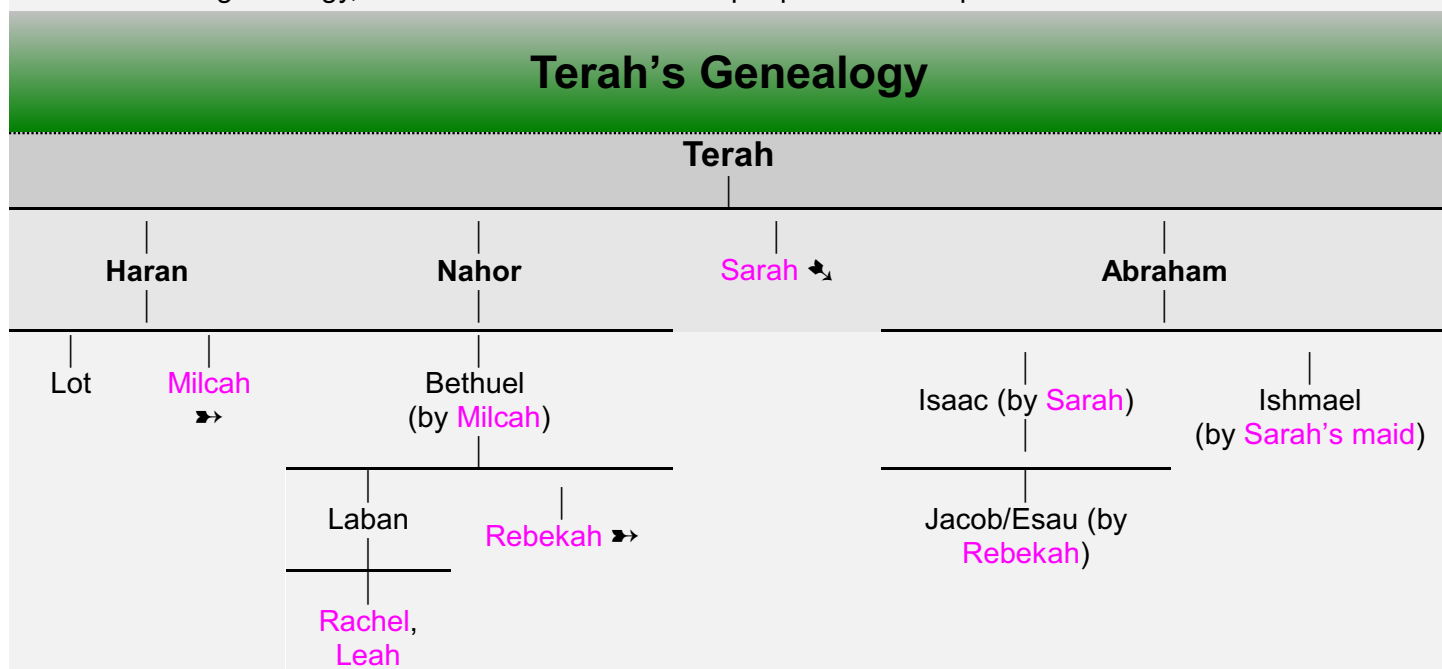
of the book of Genesis¹⁵⁸). Although these men *wrote*¹⁵⁹ under the power of the Holy Spirit, their thinking may not have aligned with the thinking of God the Holy Spirit. That is, God the Holy Spirit may have different reasons for including this or that text in the Word of God than Jacob does. This doctrine is known as **the Dual Authorship of Scripture** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The impression here is that Jacob rolls the stone back by himself, which is possible. This is a law-abiding group of men who possibly could have waited until the time was proper. Jacob is behaving like a gentleman and is watering Rachel's flock first. This allows him some time to visit with her and to get to know the portion of the family that he has never met. Recall that, Jacob is there to find a wife of proper breeding (meaning, with similar spiritual sensibilities).

Genesis 29:10a And it happened when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother,...

Let me reword this for more clarity: *And Jacob saw his cousin Rachel, his Uncle Laban's daughter.* We better understand the relationship between Jacob and Rachel.

This is a short genealogy, so that we can see how the people in this chapter are related to one another.



As you can see, Laban is Jacob's uncle through Rebekah.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

A Review of Genesis 29:1–10a: Jacob has found the way to the land of his Uncle Laban. It is possible that Deborah, his mother's nurse, helped him to identify the route and the actual place.

Genesis 29:1–10a Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well. Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran."

¹⁵⁸ Judah and Esau may have also contributed to the final three-fourths of Genesis.

¹⁵⁹ I do not think that they necessarily formally wrote down the words of Genesis; I believe that the book of Genesis was transmitted by word of mouth; memorized in each generation. So they would be speaking these words.

He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep." While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother,.. (ESV)

As previously observed, there are a great many details here, and this is because this is the first day that Jacob meets the love-of-his-life. Therefore, these details are important to him.

Furthermore, throughout the book of Genesis, there are person-specific details, which suggest that a variety of men (primarily the patriarchs) recorded this information. Although I have suggested in the past that Moses may have been the editor of this material, there is really no need for even that (apart, possibly, from an occasional gloss¹⁶⁰). We follow one patriarch's life after another, almost seamlessly. The writing styles and sorts of information recorded by each patriarch is unique and related directly to that patriarch. There seems little reason for an editor to come along 400 years later and decide, *I will keep this section, but I will cull out that section*. By what authority and for what reason would someone do this?

The first chapter of Exodus will tie this history of the patriarchs found in Genesis to Moses and his time, where a summation of the Jews in the land of Egypt is given, but without a clear reference to an existing book. Knowledge of previous events and to the Revealed God are found in Exodus (such as, in Ex. 1:1–8, 17, 21 2:23–25 3:6, 14–15); but no reference is ever made in those early chapters of Exodus to an existing book (at least, I have not found one yet). They were aware of some of the general history of Genesis—but they could have been aware of that without the complete book of Genesis.

Genesis 29:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; construct form	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26

¹⁶⁰ That is, he might update the name of a place, here or there.

Genesis 29:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ēm (אֵם) [pronounced aim]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

Translation: ...and the sheep of his Uncle Laban,... Secondly, Jacob notices the sheep.

Up until this point, Jacob has been conversing with the other shepherds; but there are no words being spoken, it appears. Jacob goes the way of action instead.

Genesis 29:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nāgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced naw-GASH]	<i>to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ġuh-KOH ^{BV}]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: ...he [lit., Jacob] approaches [her; the well?].... Jacob moves closer to Rachel and to her sheep or perhaps he moves closer to the well? This is unclear to me. However, given what he does next suggests that he moved towards the well.

Benson seems to credit the people of this chapter with more foreknowledge than I believe them to have: *When Jacob understood that this was his kinswoman Rachel (for he had probably heard of her name before), knowing what his errand was into that country, we may suppose it occurred to his mind immediately, that this must be his wife. As one already smitten with an honest, comely face (though it is likely sun-burnt, and she in the homely dress of a shepherdess), he is wonderfully officious, and ready to serve her, (Gen. 29:10) and addresses himself to her with tears of joy and kisses of love (Gen. 29:11). She runs with all haste to tell her father, for she will by no means entertain her kinsman's address without her father's knowledge and approbation (Gen. 29:12).*¹⁶¹ Jacob may be thinking of her in terms of being his future wife, as he has come to Haran for that specified purpose. On the other hand, Rachel's response to run and tell her father is a normal one, whether she thinks Jacob is putting the moves on her or not.

¹⁶¹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9 (slightly edited). Seems like I saw nearly the exact same quote from Matthew Henry and either Poole, Whedon or Wesley.

Genesis 29:10d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
gâlal (גָּלַל) [pronounced <i>gaw-L AHL</i>]	<i>to roll, to roll away [down]; to cause to roll [away]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, imperfect	Strong's #1556 BDB #164
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'eben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH^B-ven</i>]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from</i> . Some translators rendered this <i>away from</i> .			
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
b ^o êr (בְּעַר) [pronounced <i>b^e-AIR</i>]	<i>well, pit; spring</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #875 BDB #91

Translation: ...and rolled the stone from over the well opening... In order to get to the well, the stone has to be moved aside. So Jacob moves the stone aside. Now, because of the Hiphil stem of the verb, it is possible that Jacob directs the action. The Hiphil is the causative stem. And, even though BDB does not list a causative sense with this verb, that does not mean that one does not exist.

Whatever the case, the stone is rolled aside and Jacob is the one who does it or causes that. Now, since Jacob is a stranger, it seems unlikely that he can direct such an action. However, as an outsider, it seems reasonable that he can up and move it, since he is not really subject to protocol as the shepherds are. It is reasonable to suggest that Jacob has broken the sheep watering protocol here, by stepping up and removing the stone himself (something that certainly Rachel could not do; and something which probably requires a fairly powerful man—or group of men—to do). Furthermore, he is related to Laban and my guess is, all that was necessary to do was fulfilled (that is, Rachel had arrived).

Jacob Moves the Stone from the Well Opening (a graphic); from [Free Bible Images](#); accessed August 12, 2017.



Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. makes a brilliant observation at this point: *[Jacob] takes initiative. There is foreshadowing here. That is, over the next three chapters it is going to be Jacob who is the source of blessing for Laban and for his flocks and increase over the next 20 years. So this foreshadows the fact that it is Jacob who is the source of prosperity for the flocks. He is so thrilled with meeting Rachel that he kisses her, and he rejoices and weeps.*¹⁶²

I understood why all of this detail is presented from Jacob's standpoint—this is the day that he meets the love of his life and he is remembering every aspect of it. It was not until I read this from Dean where I realized God's reason for including this particular act. It is good to keep in mind that both the human and divine authors of Scripture use common (and uncommon) figures of speech in the Word of God. Here, I do not believe that Jacob records this event, thinking, "It will turn out that Laban was blessed by me!" However, no doubt, God the Holy Spirit, by this act of Jacob removing the stone from over the well, is telling us, "God, through Jacob, will bless Laban and his family." (When we study the Word of God, it is often informative to consider the purpose of the human author and the Divine Author of any given passage.)

Some have supposed that Jacob revealed great strength in moving the rock aside. That is certainly a theory. Some even suggested that seeing Rachel gave Jacob additional strength. Again, we do not know why the stone had been left there until Rachel showed up, but one possible guess is still that this is Laban's well, and everyone had to be gathered at the same time to use the well. Perhaps that allowed him to take a head count or meet and speak to anyone that he needed to talk to. Or perhaps this was a community well; with similar requirements. This is all speculative, except that the rock was not moved until Rachel showed up (which may have been earlier than it was normally moved, based upon the fact that it is Jacob who moves the rock).

Genesis 29:10a-d [And it was as Jacob saw Rachel \(the daughter of Laban his uncle\) and the sheep of his Uncle Laban, he \[lit., Jacob\] approaches \[her; the well?\] and rolled the stone from over the well opening...](#)

If he comes near to Rachel, does he simply say, "I will water your sheep"? Or does he come near to the well opening? In most cases, if he approaches Rachel, then he is moving away from the well, and vice versa. In one phrase, Jacob is *moving near*; and in the next, he is *moving the stone*—this suggests that he moves near to the well.

¹⁶² From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

Jacob Rolls the Stone off the Well (Various Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *Rachel, who had previously been spotted some distance away (Gen. 29:6), now arrives. So Jacob gets his men to help him to move the stone so that the flocks can feed. He is not used to having to wait and ignores any custom. He does not want to have to linger. Or it may be that a brief discussion has revealed that the well is Nahor's so that Rachel has the right to secure its opening.*¹⁶³

Clarke: *Probably the flock of Laban was the last of those which had a right to the well; that flock being now come, Jacob assisted the shepherds to roll off the stone, (for it is not likely he did it by himself), and so assisted his cousin, to whom he was as yet unknown, to water her flock.*¹⁶⁴

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob disregards the rule of the well; and at the risk of incurring the wrath of the local herdsmen and shepherds, by a feat of great personal strength, removes unaided the stone covering, and renders Rachel the service of watering Laban's flock.*¹⁶⁵

Gill: *Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, either with the help of the shepherds, or of himself by his own strength; which the Jewish writers^(h) say amazed the shepherds, that he should do that himself, which required their united strength.*¹⁶⁶

L. M. Grant seemed to take a similar position: *When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother, and the sheep of his mother's brother, he was moved with amazing strength, rolling the stone away by himself (v. 10). How striking a lesson is this that the energy of faith and love is able to remove great obstacles and bring blessing before the time of "the restitution of all things."*¹⁶⁷

Jacob certainly may have been a very strong man; however, there is no need to assigned some sort of miraculous strength to him. Nor do I see this as typical or representative of future events.

There is always a danger of become too obsessive of some details, which do not really matter.

James Burton Coffman: *It is preposterous the way some interpreters refer to this as a "superhuman" task, inspired by "love at first sight," etc. Nothing here even suggests that this feat was anything that was very difficult for Jacob. Of course, some critics would like to make this event some kind of a "miraculous event" imagined in the folklore of the Hebrews.*

Coffman continues: *Certainly, there is no problem here that is not solved completely by the fact that Jacob was indeed a very strong man. But there have been strong men in all ages and all countries. In New England, there is the story of Ethan Allen Crawford, seven-foot giant son of old Abel Crawford, for whom Crawford Notch, New Hampshire, is named, his family having received the Notch as a grant from the state because he fulfilled the conditions for its acquisitions by being the first one to ride a horse to the area. This he did by hoisting a horse over a 12-foot ledge, saddle and all! He also carried a 400-pound kettle over a mile, crossing the Ammonoosuc River on a log. He also carried a 300-pound bear two miles to place it in his private zoo! He carried an injured woman down Mount Washington, and rode a horse up that peak when he was 75 years old! (He was a veteran of The War of 1812).*

Coffman concludes: *Besides, the text makes nothing special about this act. Peake's allegation that, "Jacob, single-handed, removes the immense stone," is nothing but an "addition to the word of God." Nothing in the Bible forbids the conclusion, that, if Jacob needed help, he would have procured it from the lads he had just addressed.*¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:9–10.

¹⁶⁴ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:10.

¹⁶⁵ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:10.

¹⁶⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:10. He cites ^(h) Pirke Eliezer, c. 36.

¹⁶⁷ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

¹⁶⁸ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Jacob Rolls the Stone off the Well (Various Commentators)

Coffman's comments are far more extensive than are really needed for this text.

There are more things to be discussed than this, which will be gone over in v. 12.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

More than one commentator suggested¹⁶⁹ that Jacob, moving the stone by himself, was done to impress Rachel. Knowing guys as well as I do (and being one), this is not a farfetched theory.

Mathews: *When Abraham's servant had discovered Rebekah's identity, he worshiped the Lord (Gen. 24:24; Gen. 24:26), but here Jacob flexed his muscle, proving his capacity to serve Laban's house.*"¹⁷⁰

Genesis 29:10e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâqâh (שָׁקַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAW</i>]	<i>to give drink to, to furnish drink, to cause to drink, to make drink; to water [cattle, land]; to irrigate [land]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #8248 BDB #1052
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; construct form	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Lâbân (לָבַן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i>]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

¹⁶⁹ For instance Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:5–14.

¹⁷⁰ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–12. He cites Mathews, Genesis 11:27–50:26, p. 463.

Translation: ...and watered the sheep of his Uncle Laban. Again, we have a Hiphil (causative) stem again; and the masculine singular verb again suggests that Jacob either did the watering or he oversaw the watering of the sheep.

As an outsider, it makes more sense for Jacob to do the actual watering as opposed to ordering people around (causing others to do the watering). Jacob doing the watering makes sense for a traveler to do, sort of in payment for use of the well.

Stephen Armstrong: *[T]he Lord directs him to exactly the right well at exactly the right time to meet exactly the right woman and then to make sure the family respects and welcomes Jacob. God has prepared a need perfectly suited to Jacob's strengths.*¹⁷¹

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Watering them, which is done twice a day, is a work of time and labor, and Jacob rendered no small service in volunteering his aid to the young shepherdess.*¹⁷²

Jacob is not going to give water to these sheep one by one. There would be troughs nearby and Jacob would either fill the troughs himself or he would be first in line of those filling the trough. He would dip the water out of the well. Others would take the water hand-by-hand and put it into the troughs. All of this would be consistent with the Hiphil stem.

These troughs are not mentioned in this passage, and one commentator at least makes a big deal out of this. But for Jacob to water Rachel's sheep here, as it says he does, it makes far more sense that he is filling the troughs rather than leading Rachel's sheep by the well to drink (which strikes me as being unsanitary and time consuming).

Again, instead of *a brother of his mother*, I translated this *his uncle*.

God's interaction with Jacob; despite Jacob not acknowledging God's Providence.

Stephen Armstrong on the Will of God

When the Lord appeared to Jacob and declared He would "keep" Jacob wherever he goes

- The word keep in Hebrew is shamar, which means preserve, defend, guard, take care of
 - God is going to ensure Jacob's success in this time, because God is faithful to His promises
- The Lord has made similar promises to believer today
 - To meet our needs, to never leave us nor forsakes us, to be with us always, even to the end of the
- Just because the Lord promises to meet our needs doesn't mean His provision will drop miraculously from Heaven in the form of manna
 - He might do that, of course, but more often He works in natural ways to meet our needs, like He is doing here with Jacob
 - Jacob couldn't have asked for a better opportunity as he arrives in Haran
 - He finds the family with no struggle and they are prepared to receive him warmly, especially when they learn his talents
- God is clearly at work to keep Jacob...but has Jacob taken note of God's work? Not yet

From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017.

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¹⁷¹ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017 (slightly edited).

¹⁷² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:9.

Genesis 29:10 And it happened when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, then Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flocks of Laban his mother's brother.

This is an odd thing, that Jacob rolls the stone away. Obviously, he does not personally have the authority here. Did he get the nod from someone? Did Rachel, as the boss's daughter, give the nod to these men, and then they gave the nod to Jacob. Perhaps he looked at Rachel, and then moved the stone out of his own initiative.

Nothing is said about there being several men involved to move this stone (although that could have occurred). Even though it says the Jacob moved the stone out of the way, this does not mean that he does this without help. Again, we can only speculate as to why these other shepherds had not gotten access to the well themselves—logically, this appears to be an authority issue.

Ownership of wells in the ancient world was absolutely important and often a matter of serious dispute (recall that we have studied this with both Abraham and Isaac). If I were to venture a guess, Laban is the owner of this well, and he would allow access, but only under the supervision of himself or a member of his family. He would allow the well to be opened up at a specific time, and if you were early, you had to wait; and if you were late, then too bad.

With Rachel there, Jacob could certainly move the stone from the well. If he received assistance in this, the text does not reveal this to us.

The verb *watered* is a 3rd person masculine singular, which would suggest that Jacob did the watering. So he may have lowered the container into the well to dip out the water. There would have been troughs further away from the water source, and the water would be carried to those troughs. Jacob and several people probably did this.

Thompson describes what he saw with his own eyes (many centuries later): *There is a rude etiquette (in the Eastern country) which requires the chiefs to be foremost in all hardships which they and their followers encounter. So also the fact that Laban's daughters were keeping the flocks, and Jacob's mother carrying water from the well, and other similar examples, do not contradict the customs of wealthy Eastern shepherds. And who that has traveled much in this country has not often arrived at a well in the heat of the day which was surrounded by numerous flocks of sheep waiting to be watered. I once saw such a scene in the burning plains of northern Syria. Half-naked, fierce-looking men were drawing up water in leather buckets; flock after flock was brought up, watered, and went away; and after all the men had ended their work, then several women and girls brought up their flocks and drew water for them. Thus it was with Jethro's daughters when Moses stood up and aided them; and thus, no doubt, it would have been with Rachel, if Jacob had not rolled away the stone and watered her sheep. I have frequently seen wells closed up with large stones, though in this part of the country it is not commonly done, because water is not so scarce and precious. It is otherwise, however, in the dreary deserts. Cisterns are very generally covered over with a large slab, having a round hole in it large enough to let down the leather bucket or earthen jar. Into this hole a heavy stone is thrust, often such as to require the united strength of two or three shepherds to remove. The same is seen occasionally over wells of 'living water'; but where they are large and the supply abundant no such precaution is needed. It was either at one of these cisterns, or less abundant and more precious wells, that Jacob met Rachel; and being a stout man, nearly seventy years of age, he was able to remove the stone and water the flock.*¹⁷³

And so kisses Jacob Rachel and so he lifts up his voice and so he weeps.

Genesis
29:11

Jacob then kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and cried.

¹⁷³ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12. They cite Thomson, LB, 589.

Jacob then kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and cried.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so kisses Jacob Rachel and so he lifts up his voice and so he weeps.
Targum of Onkelos	And Jakob kissed Rahel, and lifted up his voice and wept.
Latin Vulgate	<u>And having watered the flock</u> , he kissed her: and lifting up his voice wept.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob kissed Rachel, and cried with a loud voice and wept.

Significant differences: The Latin moves a phrase from v. 10 to hook up with v. 11.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And weeping for joy, Jacob gave Rachel a kiss.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then he kissed her and began to cry for joy.
NIRV	Jacob kissed Rachel. Then he began to sob loudly.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	He then kissed Rachel and started crying because he was so happy.
New Berkeley Version	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept audibly.
New Century Version	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and cried.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Jacob kissed RachEl and shouted loudly, as he [started to] cry for he explained to RachEl that he was a close relative of her father, and that he was the son of RebekKa. A portion of v. 12 is included for context.
International Standard V	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to cry out loud.
Names of God Bible	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and sobbed loudly.
Today's NIV	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.
Translation for Translators	Then Jacob kissed Rachel on the cheek, and he cried loudly because he was so happy.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Companion Bible	And Jacob kissed [The Eastern greeting] Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.
Conservapedia	Jacob kissed Rachel, and raised his voice, and wept.
NIV, ©2011	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.
Urim-Thummim Version	And Jacob kissed Rachel, and raised his voice and shed tears.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and burst into tears [Burst into tears: literally "raised his voice and wept," i.e., for joy].
New Jerusalem Bible	Jacob then kissed Rachel and burst into tears.
Revised English Bible	He kissed Rachel, and was moved to tears.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

The Complete Tanach	And Jacob kissed Rachel, and he raised his voice and wept.
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and wept: Since he foresaw with the holy spirit that she (Rachel) would not enter the grave with him. Another explanation: Since he came empty-handed, he said, "Eliezer, my grandfather's servant, had nose rings, and bracelets and sweet fruits in his possession, and I am coming with nothing in my hands. [He had nothing] because Eliphaz the son of Esau had pursued him to kill him at his father's orders; he (Eliphaz) overtook him, but since he had grown up in Isaac's lap, he held back his hand. He said to him (Jacob), "What shall I do about my father's orders?" Jacob replied, "Take what I have, for a poor man is counted as dead." - [from Bereishit Rabbathi by Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov kisses Rachel and lifts his voice and weeps:...
Hebrew Names Version	And Ya'akov (בְּקָעִי) kissed Rachel (לְרַחֵל), and lifted up his voice, and wept.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and [^l ifted his voice and] cried.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. His age and relationship made such an intimate greeting altogether proper, and even now bridal affection may have arisen in his heart, for that was one of the purposes of his journey, to take one of the daughters of Laban for his wife.
NET Bible®	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep loudly [Heb "and he lifted up his voice and wept." The idiom calls deliberate attention to the fact that Jacob wept out loud.].
The Pulpit Commentary	And Jacob kissed Rachel,—in demonstration of his cousinly affection. If Jacob had not yet discovered who he was to the fair shepherdess, his behavior must have filled her with surprise, even allowing for the unaffected simplicity of the times; but the fact that she does not resent his conduct as an undue liberty perhaps suggests that he had first informed her of his relationship to the inmates of Laban's house (Calvin). On kissing vide Gen. 27:26—and lifted up his voice, and wept—partly for joy in finding his relatives (cf. Gen. 43:30; Gen. 45:2, Gen. 45:14, Gen. 45:15); partly in grateful acknowledgment of God's kindness in conducting him to his mother's brother's house.
The Voice	Then Jacob greeted Rachel with a kiss and cried <i>for joy</i> .

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov [^{He restrains}] kissed Rahhel [^{Ewe}] and he lifted up his voice and he wept,...
Concordant Literal Version	And Jacob is kissing Rachel, and is lifting up his voice and lamenting.
English Standard Version	Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Jacob kissed Rahel, and lifted up his voice and wept: and told her also that he was her fathers brother and Rebecca's son. V. 12 is included for context.
Young's Updated LT	And Jacob kisses Rachel, and lifts up his voice, and weeps.

The gist of this verse: Jacob kisses Rachel (a greeting) and cries in happiness.

Genesis 29:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâshaq (קָשַׁק) [pronounced <i>naw-SHAHK</i>]	<i>to kiss, to touch, to have close contact with</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5401 BDB #676
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOHPV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Râchêl (לְרַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932

Translation: *Jacob kissed Rachel,...* I would assume that this is a kiss between relatives and not a passionate kiss. Did Jacob at this time have designs on Rachel? My guess is that he possibly did. It is certainly possible that this is love at first sight; we really do not know. After all, Jacob is not there to meet the local ladies; he is there to meet a woman from his family to marry; and he has met Rachel and this may have been quite the fortuitous meeting. A month down the road, Jacob will want to marry this woman. If I were to speculate, it would be that Rachel sees this as the kiss from a relative (I do believe she



is taken aback at first, not knowing who Jacob is); and Jacob sees it as a kiss which will lead to many more kisses. However, this could have been understood, even by Jacob, to be nothing more than an eastern greeting (see the doctrine which follows).

Jacob Kisses Rachel (a graphic); from [Presbydestrian](#); accessed August 11, 2017.

Jacob Encountering Rachel by Fuhrich (a graphic); from [straightgatenarrowway](#); accessed August 11, 2017.

Genesis 29:11 Jacob then kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and cried.

Jacob Kisses Rachel (Various Commentators)

Although Gill suggested¹⁷⁴ that Jacob kissed Rachel after tell her who he was, that is not how the narrative reads. The narrative reads that Jacob kissed Rachel (v. 11) and then he told her who he was (v. 12).

Dr. Thomas Constable: *This is one of the few places in Scripture that we read of a man kissing a woman. Jacob apparently acted solely on the basis of Rachel's physical attractiveness.*¹⁷⁵

Kalisch: *Delight and sorrow mingled in his heart, and, overwhelmed by his feelings, he paid his tribute to nature by a spontaneous flood of tears.*¹⁷⁶

Wenstrom: *A kiss was a customary greeting among relatives since in Genesis 29:13, Laban kisses Jacob upon meeting him. In the Middle East, men are less reserved than men in the West so it was not unusual for a man to publicly display his emotions as Jacob does here.*

Wenstrom continues: *The fact that Jacob kisses Rachel without first identifying himself and weeps audibly expresses the fact that Jacob is overcome with emotion as a result of seeing the providence of God at work in his life.*¹⁷⁷

Keil and Delitzsch: *[A]s Rachel came up in the meantime, he was so carried away by the feelings of relationship, possibly by a certain love at first sight, that he rolled the stone away from the well, watered her flock, and after kissing her, introduced himself with tears of joyous emotion as her cousin (אָבִי הָאָבִי, brother, i.e., relation of her father) and Rebekah's son.*¹⁷⁸

We have to be somewhat careful about applying today's standards to the people of the ancient east. Family members kissed each other a lot upon greeting one another. Gen. 27:26 29:13 33:4 are all examples of male family members kissing other male family members.

Henry Morris: *This was not intended as a kiss of personal love, of course, but rather simply a kiss of greeting; but even this was practiced only by relatives or close friends, so that it must surely have startled Rachel.*¹⁷⁹

Stephen Armstrong points out¹⁸⁰ that, there are only two mentions of a man kissing a woman in the Bible; and here, it is not necessarily a romantic kiss (we find romantic kissing in the Song of Solomon).

James Burton Coffman: *This was the customary greeting among Hebrew families in those days and even down until the present time. It is a mistake to view Jacob's kiss of Rachel as the type of osculation seen in romantic movies. The early church itself manifested the same type of greeting seen here.*¹⁸¹ Jacob and Laban will greet one another in the same way in v. 13.

We are given the various things which occurred, but we are left to our own devices to figure out what these things all meant to the participants.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

¹⁷⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:11.

¹⁷⁵ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–12.

¹⁷⁶ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:11.

¹⁷⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 448) accessed August 9, 2017.

¹⁷⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:5–14.

¹⁷⁹ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; p. 457.

¹⁸⁰ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29a.pdf accessed August 6, 2017.

¹⁸¹ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 BDB #669
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

Translation: ...and then he lifted up his voice... One must realize that Jacob has left his family for the first time and his brother wants to kill him; his father has mixed feelings about him because he deceived his father. So, Jacob, after this very long trip, is probably feeling a great many emotions.

However, all that taken with the fact that he has met this beautiful woman—he was probably quite happy about this situation.

Genesis 29:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	<i>to weep [for] (in grief, humiliation, or joy), to weep [bitterly], to weep upon [i.e., to embrace and weep], to cry [for], to bewail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113

Translation: ...and cried. So, certainly, there are great emotions occurring in Jacob at this time. He does not know when or even if he will see his homeland and his parents again. Finding relatives like this would have been quite emotional for him (compare Gen. 43:30 45:2, 14–15). Jacob was probably overwhelmed with emotion for many reasons: (1) his long trip, which must have been far more arduous than the sparse text indicates; (2) he has come upon his own people; (3) Jacob is no doubt experiencing some relief, as his supplies would have been limited; (4) Jacob, no doubt, had been giving some thought to his spiritual condition and the things which he has done (being on the trail for a month or two certainly would have that effect); and (5) he is particularly enthusiastic about this Rachel gal. The fact that she was tending to her father sheep indicates clearly, by the traditions of that time, that she was unmarried.

He has no idea what kind of a person that his Uncle Laban is.

"The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel" William Dyce 1853 (a graphic); from [Bible-Library](#); accessed August 12, 2015. I like her obvious reticence in this painting.

This is an emotional moment for Jacob, who has been running in fear from his brother, to finally meet up with those of his own family. This kiss is one that is given to a family member here. This is not probably not a romantic kiss.



Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:11 Jacob then kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and cried.

Jacob Crying (Various Commentators)

Gill: *[Jacob] lifted up his voice, and wept; for joy at the providence of God that had brought him so opportunely to the place, and at the sight of a person so nearly related to him; and who he hoped would be his wife, and was the person designed of God for him.*¹⁸²

Uteley: *The fact that Jacob weeps shows the cultural propensity of Oriental men to show their emotions much more than their western counterparts (cf. Gen. 29:13).*¹⁸³

Arthur W. Pink: *These verses shed an interesting light on Jacob's natural character. Rachel's appearance awakened within him all the warmth of natural feeling. He courteously rolled away the stone, watered the sheep, kissed Rachel and burst into tears. The remembrance of home and the relationship of his mother to Rachel overpowered him- note the threefold reference to his mother in verse 10: "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." Jacob, then, was no cold, calculating stoic, but was of a warm disposition, and everything that revived the memory of his mother went to his heart. What a lovely human touch this gives to the picture! Nothing is trivial with God.*¹⁸⁴

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *They were tears started by the remembrance of his faithless misgivings, but they were also tears of joy at the thought that his difficulties were at an end, and that the great object of his mission had been gained.*¹⁸⁵

Barnes: *[Jacob] rolls away the stone, waters the sheep, kisses Rachel, and bursts into tears. The remembrance of home and of the relationship of his mother to Rachel overpowers him.*¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:11.

¹⁸³ Dr. Bob Uteley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:4–8.

¹⁸⁴ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

¹⁸⁵ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–14 (main homiletics).

¹⁸⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9–14.

Jacob Crying (Various Commentators)

L. M. Grant: *The warmth of family affection then predominates the scene as Jacob kissed Rachel, weeping for joy, telling her that he is the son of Rebekah, her father's sister. Of course they had never met, but family ties can be remarkably strong in spite of this.*¹⁸⁷

Guzik: *Initially, Rachel must have been quite surprised when a man she never saw appears before weeping and greeting her with a kiss. Yet she heard of her relatives (Rebekah is her aunt) who lived in the Promised Land, and she understood Jacob is from this family.*¹⁸⁸

The narrative makes it appear that first, Jacob kissed Rachel; and then he explained who he was.

Dr. Thomas Constable makes a very good point here: *Jacob wept for joy (Gen. 29:11), but he did not praise God. He had ended his journey, was now in the right place, and had met the right person, he thought.*¹⁸⁹ Things could not have worked out more perfectly for Jacob, and he is moved emotionally—but, at what point does he acknowledge God? This is so different from Abraham's servant in Gen. 24.

Despite Jacob's clear lack of appreciation of God's role in getting him to the right place, God remains faithful to Jacob throughout. You may ask, *how can this be? Did not God just appear to him at the beginning of his journey?* And, quite obviously, God did appear to Jacob. But seeing a sign, a vision, a miracle, or even some manifestation of God does not automatically change us into mature believers. It is Bible doctrine in the soul which does that. What happened gave Jacob some doctrine; but he experienced limited spiritual growth from it.

If you saw a sign or a miracle or a manifestation of God, there would possibly be some spiritual advance; but you would not go from 0 to 100 (or from 10 to 100).

The weeping no doubt represents some relief and happiness that he has come to the right place. However, Jacob still has not acknowledged God in this trip; and yet, God has led him right to the right place.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

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

Jacob is aware that Rachel is his cousin, the daughter of his uncle, and he kisses her (not romantically, but as a relative); and weeps that he has found this place. He has traveled over 400 miles in territory that he was unfamiliar with, and no doubt, from time to time, he wondered whether or not he would actually be able to find his relatives. Jacob is far, far away from his home. Therefore, finding people he is related to, so far from the Land of Promise, is quite an emotional situation for Jacob.

In vv. 10–12, we have a series of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs. Usually, this means a series of actions done in that order (some of which may be coterminous). Interestingly enough, it appears that Jacob first kisses Rachel, then weeps and then tells her who he is.

And so makes known Jacob to Rachel that a brother of her father he [was] and that a son of Rebekah he [was]. And so she runs and so she makes known to his father.

Genesis
29:12

Jacob made it known to Rachel that he [was] her father's relative and that he [is] a son of Rebekah. Therefore, she ran to tell her father.

¹⁸⁷ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 29:11–14.

¹⁸⁹ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–12.

Jacob made it known to Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he is a son of Rebekah. Therefore, she ran to tell this to her father.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so makes known Jacob to Rachel that a brother of her father he [was] and that a son of Rebekah he [was]. And so she runs and so she makes known to his father.
Targum of Onkelos	And Jakob told unto Rahel, <u>that he was come to be with her father to take one of his daughters. And Rahel answered him Thou canst not dwell with him, for he is a man of cunning. And Jakob said to her, I am more cunning and wiser than he; nor can he do me evil, because the Word of the Lord is my Helper. And when she knew that</u> he was the son of Rivekah, she ran and made it known to her father.
Latin Vulgate	And <u>he</u> told her that <u>he</u> was her father's brother, and the son of Rebecca: but she went in haste and told her father.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob told Rachel that he was her fathers <u>kinsman</u> and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he told Rachel that he was the <u>near relative</u> of her father, and the son of Rebecca; and she ran and reported to her father <u>according to these words</u> .
Significant differences:	As is often the case, the targum is barely similar to the Hebrew text. There is a lot of additional text; and some missing text.

Jacob and Rachel are both named in the Hebrew text, but not in the Latin and Jacob is not named in the Greek. The word *brother* in the Hebrew can refer to a *relative*. The Greek adds *according to these words*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Rachel, hearing from Jacob that he was her father's relation and that he was the son of Rebekah, went running to give her father news of it.
Easy English	Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's nephew. Jacob told her that he was Rebekah's son. Rachel ran and she told her father about it.
Good News Bible (TEV)	He told her, "I am your father's relative, the son of Rebecca." She ran to tell her father;...
<i>The Message</i>	He told Rachel that he was related to her father, that he was Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	He told her that he was the son of her aunt Rebekah, and she ran and told her father about him.
New Life Bible	Jacob told Rachel that he was of her father's family, the son of Rebekah. And she ran and told her father.
New Living Translation	He explained to Rachel that he was her cousin on her father's side-the son of her aunt Rebekah. So Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Jacob told Rachel he was her father's nephew, Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.
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International Standard V	Jacob told Rachel that he was related to her father, since he was Rebekah's son, so she ran and told her father.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then, when she had watered her flock, he went up and kissed her, weeping aloud; and he told her that he was her father's kinsman, Rebecca's son; whereupon she went quickly home to tell her father the news. V. 11 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	Jacob told Rachel that he was one of her father's relatives, the son of her aunt Rebekah. So she ran and told that to her father.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Companion Bible	And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's nephew , and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.
Conservapedia	Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother [The Hebrew word for "brother" can mean "cousin" or any other lateral relationship, including "nephew."], and Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and Jacob said to Rachel, " I do it because I am a relative of your father, and because I am the son of Rebekka." So she ran and reported it to her father.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And Jacob told Rachel that he was of her father's brethren, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.
NIV, ©2011	He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Jacob made known to Rachel he was her dad's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran away and told her dad.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Jacob caused it to stand out boldly to Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran, and caused it to stand out boldly to her father.
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Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

The Complete Tanach	And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman and that he was Rebecca's son, and she ran and told her father.
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that he was her father's kinsman: Heb. אָחִיָּבָא יִחָא lit., her father's brother. Related to her father, as (above 13:8): "we are kinsmen (אָחִיָּם)" (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 36). Its midrashic interpretation is: If he (Laban) comes to deceive me, I, too, am his brother in deception, and if he is an honest man, I, too, am the son of his honest sister Rebecca. [from Gen. Rabbah 70:13]

and told her father: Since her mother was dead, she had no one to tell but him. [from Gen. Rabbah 70:13]

exeGesés companion Bible	...and Yaaqov tells Rachel that he is the brother of her father and that he is the son of Ribqah - and she runs and tells her father....
Hebraic Transliteration	And Ya'akov (בִּקְעִי) told Rachel (לֶחָר) that he [was] her avi's brother, and that he [was] Rivkah (רִיבְקָה)'s son: and she ran and told her avi.
Kaplan Translation	He told her that he was Rebecca's son, and thus related to her father. She ran to tell her father.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov told Rachel that he was the relative of her av, and that he was ben Rivkah; and she ran and told her av.
The Scriptures 1998	And when Ya'aqov told Raḥēl that he was her father's relative and that he was Ribqah's son, she ran and told her father.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, in the wider sense, that of a close relative, and that he was Rebekah's son; and she ran and told her father. Rachel was now, in turn, overjoyed, a fact which caused her to seek her father with all haste.
Lexham English Bible	And Jacob told Rachel that he [was] the relative of her father, and that he [was] the son of Rebekah. And she ran and told her father.
NET Bible®	When Jacob explained [Heb "declared."] to Rachel that he was a relative of her father [Heb "that he [was] the brother of her father."] and the son of Rebekah, she ran and told her father.
The Pulpit Commentary	And Jacob told (or, had told, ut supra) Rachel that he was her father's brother,—as Lot is called Abraham's brother, though in reality his nephew (Gen. 13:8; Gen. 14:14, Gen. 14:16)—and that he was Rebekah's son (this clause would explain the meaning of the term "brother in the former): and she ran and told her father. Like Rebekah, believing the stranger's words and running to report them, though, unlike Rebekah, first relating them to her father (cf. Gen. 14:1–24:28).
The Voice	Jacob told Rachel he was her father's relative-Rebekah's son-and she ran and told her father.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] told Rahhel ^[Ewe] that he was the brother of her father and that he was the son of Rivqah ^[Ensnarer] and she ran and she told her father,...
Concordant Literal Version	And telling is Jacob to Rachel that he is her father's brother, and that the son of Rebecca is he. And running is she and telling her father these things.
English Standard Version	And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.
New King James Version	And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.
World English Bible	Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father.
Young's Updated LT	And Jacob declares to Rachel that he is her father's brother, and that he is Rebekah's son, and she runs and declares to her father.

The gist of this verse: Jacob explains to her how they are related, so she runs home to tell her father.

Genesis 29:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH ^{BV}]	supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Genesis 29:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'âb (אָב) [pronounced <i>aw^bv</i>]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Translation: [Jacob made it known to Rachel that he \[was\] her father's relative...](#) The wâw consecutive along with the imperfect verbs suggest that we have a series of actions in this order. So Jacob kisses Rachel and then *afterward* says "I am related to you." No doubt, Rachel is thinking, "Okay, that explains the kiss from this stranger."

The word *brother* can also mean *relative*.

Genesis 29:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Rib ^e qâh (רִיבְקָה) [pronounced <i>rihb-KAW</i>]	<i>ensnarer; a noose; fat, fattened; a quarrel appeased; which is transliterated Rebekah, Rebekkah, Rebecca</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #7259 BDB #918

Genesis 29:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Translation: ...and that he [is] a son of Rebekah. Here, Jacob explains exactly how he is related to them. She would know about Rebekah, who is Laban's sister and Rachel's her aunt. Rachel would know about Rebekah, but they have never met. There may have been some correspondence between the two families which Rachel would have been able to read.

Interestingly enough, Jacob identifies himself as the son of Rebekah and *not* as the son of Isaac and Rebekah. When she left Haran, it was with the intention of marrying Isaac and a substantial dowry had been paid—so Isaac's name was not unknown to his relatives in Haran. Perhaps from Jacob's point of view, this was a better way to represent himself to Laban (a man whose name he would have known). From God's point of view, Jacob is still behaving like Rebekah's son rather than Isaac's son (the son of promise).

There is an order of events which could stand some attention. Most of this passage is made up of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, which usually indicates a series of consecutive (or coterminous) actions. This does present us with some minor problems.

Gen 29:9–10 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Gen 29:11–12 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father. (ESV)

If read carefully, this passage presents a very odd order of events

Jacob Watering Rachel's Sheep; Kissing Her; Then Saying Who He Is

It is easy to read these verses without giving them a great deal of thought; but there is some problem with their order, if we understand them to be chronological.

Mostly what we have in vv. 9–12 are a series of wâw consecutive with imperfect verbs. In a narrative, this generally refers to a series of actions in the order that they are given, where some of the action could be coterminous.

Pett has elaborately worked this meeting out, in an attempt to explain the passage we are studying.

Dr. Peter Pett: *The meeting is emotional. In days when families were often out of touch for years such scenes were a regular feature of life when they came together. It must be considered certain that Jacob had said something introductory before he kissed Rachel, something like "I am your cousin". He has after all gone to great trouble to water her sheep and this would hardly be done without saying anything. But after his rapturous welcome he then explains his relationship in more detail. Then, quite excited for she will have heard of her wider family, Rachel runs to tell her father.*¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:11–12.

Jacob Watering Rachel's Sheep; Kissing Her; Then Saying Who He Is

Much of what Pett has to say fits together well; however we do not know any of this for certain. Some things are assumed like, while he is watering her sheep, there must be some conversation between them. If Jacob is hauling water from the well to the nearby troughs, and Rachel is with her sheep at the troughs, then there is hardly anything said between them. That understanding of Jacob's service here explains how he waters Rachel's sheep (v. 10) without revealing who he is until v. 12. (he walks back and forth between the well and the trough carrying water) while she is at the trough leading her sheep to drink).

We do have some coterminous actions. Jacob is speaking to the shepherds of the 3 flocks, asking them about Laban ben Nahor, and while he is speaking, Rachel is seen coming across the land towards them. Jacob, perhaps due to his conversation, perhaps due to his observation, recognizes that these are Laban's sheep, so he single-handedly rolls the stone away from the mouth of the well.

The watering of the sheep could take place with little or no conversation between Rachel and Jacob, if he is carrying water from the well to the trough (is there a container there; does he take a container from Rachel, saying, "I will water your sheep"?)

After watering her sheep, Jacob might then be overcome with emotion, having come to his destination (he may have doubted that he would actually arrive). At that point, he kisses Rachel and cries, even though Rachel may not really know who he is (she and the other shepherds would be careful to keep their sheep from intermingling during this time, so she would not necessarily be talking with them—her focus would have been upon her own sheep).

After the kiss and the crying, Jacob—perhaps after looking at Rachel's shocked face—explains who he is. At that point, certainly Rachel is going to run to tell her father what is going on and who just arrived.

There is no doubt the possibility that I am putting too much time and thought into a few minor details. This is simply how my mind works. Sometimes, the result of such close examination can be fruitful; at other time, not so much.

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Genesis 29:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
rûts (רוץ) [pronounced roots]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616

Genesis 29:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âb (אב) [pronounced aw ^b v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

Interestingly enough, Rebekah ran and told her mother's house about the servant who showed up. Gen. 24:28 [Then the young woman \[Rebekah\] ran and told her mother's household about these things.](#)

Translation: [Therefore, she ran to tell her father.](#) This was exciting news, so Rachel runs to tell her father about this.

Jacob does not presume anything. He still remains behind while she goes to her family.

There is one more interesting detail. What of the sheep? Do her sheep follow her and run with her? Having not been a shepherd, I know that if you have a dog or dogs and start running, they will run with you because your running is the best idea ever, in their dog minds. Do sheep respond in the same way? Do they all run after her? Or does she leave her sheep with Jacob saying, "Stay here with my sheep, and I will run and get my father"? It is a minor detail, and I sometimes tend to get bogged down in details, which really have little or no effect upon the narrative.

[Genesis 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.](#)

Jacob says that he is the *brother of her father*. *Brother* is the word 'âch (אח) [pronounced aw^hhk], and it means, *brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles*. Strong's #251 BDB #26. So, he is simply saying that he is closely related to her father Laban (who would be Jacob's uncle through Rebekah).

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[T]he term "brother" is extended to remote degrees of relationship, as uncle, cousin, or nephew.*¹⁹¹

This family knew about Abraham and about Isaac; and probably about Jacob. It is unclear if they had kept in touch or not. I would assume that they had, simply because Rebekah suggested Jacob go east to marry a cousin (I am assuming that Rebekah knew that Jacob had some cousins).

About 100 years have transpired since Rebekah lived there. She was brought to Isaac by Abraham's servant; and then there was a long period of time during which they did not have any children (20 years). And now, Jacob is at least 40 years old (most think around 77¹⁹²). See the [Age of Jacob](#).

The order in which these events take place are quite remarkable (assuming that these events are recorded in chronological order, which is reasonable). [Now as soon as Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob came near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's kinsman, and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.](#)

¹⁹¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:12.

¹⁹² Similar to a man aged 40 today.

(Gen. 29:10–12; ESV) Jacob, who knows who Rachel is, comes up to her and kisses her, at a point at which she does not really know who he is. Then he tells her (which sends her running back home to tell her father).

EG (from College Press Bible Study): *Allowing for the fact that in those days, among a different people, a kiss of cousins was a proper greeting, there is little doubt that Rachel was taken quite unawares; and may well have been astonished, for as yet she knew nothing of this strong shepherd's identity. The more natural procedure would have been to explain first who he was, then to give the kiss of greeting. The reverse of the procedure indicates how his glad emotions ran away with him. No man will determine how much of this emotion was plain joy at seeing a cousin and how much incipient love for pretty Rachel, and Jacob himself, perhaps, at the moment would have been least able to make an accurate analysis of what his heart actually felt at the occasion. We can hardly go wrong in claiming to detect a trace of love at first sight.*¹⁹³

It has taken us 12 verses to get to the point where Jacob meets Rachel; and Rachel runs to tell her father that a relative from the west is there. The idea is, these details make up the first meeting between Jacob and Rachel—and Jacob remembers all of the details of that day, and so he records it. No one else would have bothered to record all of these details, as they are not important to anyone else.

Remember, Jacob has just traveled over 400 miles to get where he is. We do not have a single word about that journey (except for his dream). But now, suddenly, we have a whole host of details.

We do not know how Jacob *recorded* this information. It is possible that Jacob wrote this down—but it is also possible that this was committed to memory and that these words were passed down, along with the previous chapters of Genesis, verbally, to his sons. Jacob will work for his Uncle Laban 7 years, and during this time, he must have thought back on many occasions to his first meeting with Rachel. So this scene was probably replayed in his mind hundreds of times. He may have told his son Joseph about this day—and Joseph will be the next patriarch whose life we will follow (obviously, Joseph has not yet been born).

By the time we reach the era of Moses, writing exists, it is common, and Moses can both read and write. So, the 4 books of Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) were clearly written down by his hand (there is internal evidence for this). However, regarding this book of Genesis—we do not even know at what point it was committed to writing. If I was to venture a guess, then perhaps under the auspices of Joseph (a son of Jacob and Rachel) when he was prime minister of Egypt. All of these words would be preserved in some way or another throughout their 400 years of slavery. However, this is speculation on my part. I cannot find any confirmation of this. The History of God and Man may have been preserved simply through memorization. It ought to be clear that, if someone today put their mind to it, they could memorize and recite the book of Genesis—and it is filled with chiasmi which allow it to be more easily organized in the mind. In the ancient world, let me suggest to you that the thinking of the people of God and their memorization skills were greater than they are today (the greater lifespan suggests to me that men of this era were superior in many ways to men of today). Men today not only have problems with being masculine; but many of them question whether or not they are *men* to begin with. In any case, whereas we can with certitude point to the writing of the 4 books of Moses; that is not at all the case with the book of Genesis.

Genesis 29:10–12 When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept. 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.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:10–12: Jacob Greets Rachel

1. Once Rachel is in easy viewing distance Jacob proceeds to remove the heavy stone from the well and

¹⁹³ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:1–12. They cite EG, 788.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:10–12: Jacob Greets Rachel

- then he takes it upon himself to water Laban's sheep (v. 10).
2. This macho display was designed impress the young lady.
 3. Some time passed while Jacob was busy watering her flock of sheep.
 4. She was no doubt mystified (and impressed) by this display coming from a complete stranger.
 5. In any case he had her attention by removing a stone that it took a group of shepherds to remove.
 6. And then, out of the clear blue he kisses Rachel and begins to loudly weep (v. 11).
 7. Following a strange sequence of actions Jacob finally explains to the bewildered shepherdess who he is (v. 12).
 8. It is not immediately apparent why this strong man was suddenly brought to tears.
 9. His tears were joyful tears as he was probably genuinely relieved that he had found success in his travels to find the home of his uncle.
 10. Did Jacob think that she was the one for him?
 11. After all she was Laban's daughter and it was from this family that his parents had directed him to take a bride.
 12. Was Jacob already smitten by her beauty?
 13. Or was Jacob calculating how he could impress Laban?
 14. Remember Jacob was always looking ahead to further his own interests.
 15. Jacob thinks he has to impress to gain the advantage.
 16. She was sufficiently taken aback by all this that she left her flock and raced back to tell her father the news regarding this totally unexpected visitor.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen29.htm> accessed August 7, 2017.

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Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 29:7–12 And he said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered, water the sheep, and go, pasture them." But they said, "We are not able until all the flocks are gathered, and they will roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we will water the sheep." While he was still speaking with them Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came about, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of laban his mother's brother that Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept. And 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.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:7–12

1. Jacob maneuvers to get the shepherds out of the area, so he can talk to Rachel without onlookers.
2. He points out that it is still early and that there is plenty of daylight left to pasture the sheep.
3. He commands the shepherds to water their flocks and move out.
4. This certainly demonstrates his self will and arrogance.
5. While it is not mentioned, most recognize that these shepherds were not much more than boys.
6. They reply that they are not able to move the stone, which would be true if they were but three relatively young boys.
7. They further point out that it is not them who moves the stone, but someone else.
8. About that time, Rachel arrives with her fathers flock.
9. Upon her arrival Jacob leaps into action.
10. He obviously was a somewhat strong man, and attempts to use his physical ability to impress Rachel.
11. He single-handedly moves the large rock, allowing her to water the sheep with her.
12. Jacob's life is marked by his confidence and reliance upon his own abilities, and lack of trust in God's ability.
13. He kisses Rachel, demonstrating his impetuous character.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:7–12

14. He is a believer who acts upon his impulses of the moment and does not stop and consider his actions or their consequences.
15. It must be noted that he does not kiss Rachel out of love or physical attraction.
16. He has not even introduced himself to anyone there.
17. This kiss is designed to snow Rachel and further impress her.
18. He then bursts into tears, which was not considered unmanly or dishonorable in that culture.
19. This also is designed to have an effect on Rachel, and gain her sympathy.
20. Jacob uses his wits to take advantage of the situation and present himself to his relatives in very dramatic fashion.
21. Compare this meeting at the well with that of the adjusted believer, in Gen. 24.
22. Jacob finally introduces himself, and Rachel moves to inform her father of his arrival, which was certainly not expected.
23. Throughout the story of Jacob we will observe a believer, who is under the care of God, attempting to live his life by his own wits and devices.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

When I spoke of the narrative carried along by a series of wâw consecutive and imperfect verbs, v. 13 is an excellent illustration of that. There are 6 wâw consecutives followed by 6 imperfect verbs in v. 13 (clearly represented in the ultra-literal translation), which describe a very logical succession of events.

And so he is as heard Laban a report of Jacob, a son of his sister. And so he runs to meet him and so he embraces to him and so he kisses to him and so he brings him unto his house. And so he recalls to Laban all the words the these.

Genesis
29:13

And it was as soon as Laban heard the report of Jacob (his sister's son), he ran to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and then brought him to his house. [All the time], Jacob [lit., he] told Laban all those things [that had happened].

As soon as Laban heard the news about the arrival of His nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him. Laban embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. All the while, Jacob told Laban about what had been happening with his family.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he is as heard Laban a report of Jacob, a son of his sister. And so he runs to meet him and so he embraces to him and so he kisses to him and so he brings him unto his house. And so he recalls to Laban all the words the these.

Targum of Onkelos

And it was when Laban heard the account of the strength and piety of Jakob the son of his sister; how he had taken the birthright and the order of blessing from the hand of his brother, and how the Lord had revealed Himself to him at Bethel; how the stone had been removed, and how the well had upflowed and risen to the brink; he ran to meet him and embrace him, and kissed him and led him into his house; and he related to Laban all these things.

Latin Vulgate

Who, when he heard that Jacob his sister's son was come, ran forth to meet him: and embracing him, and heartily kissing him, brought him into his house. And when he had heard the causes of his journey,...

Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sisters son, he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. And Jacob related to Laban all these things.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it came to pass when Laban heard the name of Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced and kissed him, and brought him into his house; and he told Laban all these sayings.
Significant differences:	The targum inserts all kinds of extra text. The Latin appears to begin with <i>who</i> rather than <i>and it came to pass</i> . The Latin also adds in the word <i>heartily</i> to describe how Laban kisses Jacob.

The final phrase indicates that Jacob repeats to Laban much of what he said to Rachel. I have given the ultra-literal approach; the other ancient translations were less than ultra-literal.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban, hearing news of Jacob, his sister's son, came running, and took Jacob in his arms, and kissing him, made him come into his house. And Jacob gave him news of everything.
Easy English	So Laban heard that Jacob, his sister's son, had come. And so then Laban ran to meet Jacob. Laban hugged Jacob and he kissed Jacob. And he took Jacob to Laban's home. Jacob told Laban what had happened.
Easy-to-Read Version	Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob. So Laban ran to meet him. Laban hugged him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban everything that had happened.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...and when he heard the news about his nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him, hugged him and kissed him, and brought him into the house. When Jacob told Laban everything that had happened,...
<i>The Message</i>	When Laban heard the news--Jacob, his sister's son!--he ran out to meet him, embraced and kissed him and brought him home. Jacob told Laban the story of everything that had happened.
NIRV	As soon as Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he hurried to meet him. Laban hugged Jacob and kissed him. Then he brought him to his home. There Jacob told him everything.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	When Laban heard about Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him. Laban embraced him, kissed him, and invited him into his house, where Jacob recounted to Laban everything that had happened.
New Berkeley Version	When Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's nephew, son of Rebekah, she ran and told her rather, and Laban, on hearing the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, ran to meet him, embraced and fervently kissed him and brought him home. Then he told Laban all the particulars, to which Laban responded, "You certainly are my own bone and flesh ["My own flesh and blood," we would say]." Vv. 12 & 14 are added for context.
New Living Translation	As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He embraced and kissed him and brought him home. When Jacob had told him his story, Laban exclaimed, "You really are my own flesh and blood!" A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And when Laban heard the name of Jacob (his sister's son), he ran to meet him. he hugged and kissed him, then led him to his house. There, [Jacob] told Laban everything [that had happened].
Beck's American Translation	When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him. He hugged and kissed him and took him into his home, where Jacob told Laban his whole story.
International Standard V	When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran out to meet him. He embraced him, kissed him, and brought him back to his house. Then Jacob told Laban about everything that had happened.
Names of God Bible	As soon as Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him. He hugged and kissed him and brought him into his home. Then Jacob told Laban all that had happened.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	No sooner did Laban hear of his nephew Jacob's arrival, than he ran out to meet him, embraced him, covered him with kisses, and brought him back home. He listened to the reasons that had brought him there,...
Today's NIV	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.
Translation for Translators	As soon as Laban heard that Jacob, his sister's son, was there, he ran to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him on the cheek. Then he brought him to his home, and then Jacob told him all that had happened to him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	When Laban had heard the report of Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to greet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him into his house. He told Laban all these words.
Conservapedia	And so it fell out, that when Laban heard the report of Jacob the son of his sister, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he related to Laban everything that had taken place.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	When Laban had heard the report about Jacob, the son of his sister, he ran to invite him and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his home, where he related to Laban all these events.
Urim-Thummim Version	When Laban heard the news about Jacob his sister's son, he ran out to meet him, embracing and hugging him and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was when Laban heard of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran towards him, and hugged him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house; and to Laban he told the all of his story.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob being his sister's son, he ran to meet him; and after embracing and kissing him he brought him into his house. Jacob told Laban all that had happened and Laban said to him, "Truly you are my bone and flesh!" And Jacob stayed there a month with him. V. 14 is included for context.
The Heritage Bible	And it was, when Laban heard attentively the report 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 tallied up to Laban all these words.
New American Bible (2002)	When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he hurried out to meet him. After embracing and kissing him, he brought him to his house. Jacob then recounted to Laban all that had happened, and Laban said to him, "You are indeed

my flesh and blood [Flesh and blood: literally "bone and flesh," i.e., a close relative; on the Hebrew idiom, see ⇒ Genesis 2:23.]” V. 14 is included for context.

New Jerusalem Bible

As soon as he heard her speak of his sister's son Jacob, Laban ran to greet him, embraced him, kissed him and took him to his house. Jacob told Laban everything that had happened.

Revised English Bible

No sooner had Laban heard the news of his sister's son Jacob, than he hurried to meet him, embraced and kissed him, and welcomed him to his home. Jacob told Laban all that had happened, and Laban said, `Yes, you are my own flesh and blood.' V. 14 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

When Lavan heard the news of Ya'akov his sister's son, he ran to meet him, hugged him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Ya'akov told Lavan all that had happened.

The Complete Tanach

Now it came to pass when Laban heard the report of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran towards him, and he embraced him, and he kissed him, and he brought him into his house. He told Laban all these happenings.

that he ran towards him: He thought that he (Jacob) was laden with money, for the servant of the household (Eliezer) had come here with ten laden camels.[from Gen. Rabbah 70:13]

and he embraced: When he (Laban) did not see anything with him (Jacob), he said, “Perhaps he has brought golden coins, and they are in his bosom.” [from Gen. Rabbah 70:13]

and he kissed him: He said, “Perhaps he has brought pearls, and they are in his mouth.” [from Gen. Rabbah 70:13]

He told Laban: that he had come only because he was compelled to do so because of his brother (Esau), and that they had taken his money from him. — [from Gen. Rabbah 70:13]

exeGesés companion Bible

And so be it,
when Laban hears the report
of Yaaqov the son of his sister,
he runs to meet him and embraces him
and kisses him and brings him to his house:
and he describes all these words to Laban.

Kaplan Translation

When Laban heard the news that Jacob had arrived, he ran to greet him. He embraced and kissed him, and brought him home. [Jacob] told Laban all that had happened.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And it came to pass, when Lavan heard the news of Ya'akov ben achoto, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his bais. And he told Lavan all these things.

The Scriptures 1998

And it came to be, when Laban heard the report about Ya'aqob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then he told Laban all these matters.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary

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, thus offering him a hearty welcome. And he told Laban all these things, all that was necessary to explain his journey.

NET Bible®	When Laban heard this news about Jacob, his sister's son, he rushed out to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob [Heb "he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] told Laban how he was related to him [Heb "and he told to Laban all these things." This might mean Jacob told Laban how he happened to be there, but Laban's response (see v. 14) suggests "all these things" refers to what Jacob had previously told Rachel (see v. 12).].
The Pulpit Commentary	And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings (literally, heard the hearing, or thing heard, i.e. the report of the arrival) of Jacob his sister's son,—he acted very much as he did ninety—seven years before, when Abraham's servant came to woo his sister (Gen. 14:20, 30)—that (literally, and) he ran to meet him, and embraced him,—so afterwards Esau did Jacob (Gen. 33:4), and Jacob the two sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:10)—and kissed him, and brought him to his house—thus evincing the same kindness and hospitality that had characterized him on the previous occasion. And he (Jacob) told Laban all these things—what his mother had instructed him to say to attest his kinship (Calvin); the things related in the immediate context (Keil); more likely the entire story of his life, and in particular of his exile from home, with its cause and object (Rosenmüller, Kalisch, Lange).
The Voice	When Laban heard the news <i>about the arrival</i> of his sister's son, Jacob, he ran to meet him. He hugged him and kissed him, and he brought Jacob to his house. Jacob told Laban everything.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and it came to pass as Lavan ^[White] heard the report of Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] the son of his sister and he ran to meet him and he embraced him and he kissed him and he brought him to his house and he recounted to Lavan ^[White] all these words,...
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it, as Laban hears the report of Jacob, his sister's son, running is he also to meet him. And embracing him is he and kissing him, and bringing him to his house. And relating is he to Laban all these things.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And it came to pass when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sisters son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fondly kissed him, and brought him into his house,—when he recounted to Laban all these things.
English Standard Version	As soon as 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. Jacob told Laban all these things,...
The Geneva Bible	And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sisters 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. That is, the reason why he departed from his fathers house, and what he saw during his journey.
Green's Literal Translation	And it happened when Laban heard the report of Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him. And he took him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then Rahel ran and told her father. When Laban heard tell of Jacob his sisters son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him into his house. And then Jacob told Laban all the matter.
New European Version	Jacob Marries Rachel and Leah It happened, when Laban heard the news of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet Jacob, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things.
Webster's Bible Translation	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.

Young's Updated LT

And it comes to pass, when Laban hears the report of Jacob his sister's son, that he runs to meet him, and embraces him, and kisses him, and brings him in unto his house; and he recounts to Laban all these things.

The gist of this verse:

Laban hears the report of Jacob being there, and he runs to the watering hole to meet Jacob. Laban embraces and kisses him, and brings him back home.

Genesis 29:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָא) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
shâma ^ʿ (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
The infinitive construct with the kaph preposition is very similar to its use with the bêyth preposition. Generally, this is seen as a temporal clause, where the preposition is translated <i>when, as, just as, as soon as</i> . ¹⁹⁴			
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêma ^ʿ (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced <i>SHAY-mahg</i>]	<i>a report; a hearing; speech; fame; singing, music; a sound; news, tidings</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8088 BDB #1034

This word is derived from shâma^ʿ (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced *shaw-MAHG*], which means *to listen, to hear; to listen and obey; to give heed to; to pay attention to*. Strong's #8085 BDB #1033. Gesenius lists this as one word, but with several meanings; BDB separates this into two words.

¹⁹⁴ *Biblical Hebrew*; by Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, p. 182.

Genesis 29:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH ^B V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'ăchôwth (אָחוּת) [pronounced aw-KHOWTH]	<i>sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #269 BDB #27

Translation: And it was as soon as Laban heard the report of Jacob (his sister's son),... So, Rachel ran home and told her father Laban. Laban becomes noticeably excited about all of this, to finally meet his nephew. When Rebekah left, she and Laban were both relatively young (it had been at least 60 years previous).

Rachel tells her father Laban everything that Jacob said to her, and all that he had done for her. Gill: *That there was such a man at the well, thus related to him, and what he had done there, had rolled away the stone, and watered his flock.*¹⁹⁵

I don't think that Laban expects to see Jacob show up, poor as a church mouse. Recall that when Abraham's servant arrived so many decades previous, he came with all kinds of presents and riches, sent by Abraham. However, Jacob just shows up with...Jacob. Perhaps Deborah, his mother's maid, is with him. At most, they might be traveling with a supply animal which bore their basic supplies for this trip.

Genesis 29:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
rûts (רוץ) [pronounced roots]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896

¹⁹⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:13.

Translation: ...he ran to meet him. As soon as Laban hears about Jacob, he runs out to the well to meet him.

Laban does not send Rachel back; he runs himself. It is a marvelous moment for him. However, Laban has become a user and a manipulator over the years. He will exude a great deal of emotion concerning Jacob, but he will be mentally working on a whole another agenda as he greets his nephew.

It is interesting that Laban is around 100 years older and he is still running, just as he did back in Gen. 24:29. Recall that when Laban was much younger, he moved pretty quickly as well—but mostly because he knew about the jewelry that Rebekah, his sister, had been given. His family had been showered with great gifts previously; and I suspect this is what he expected.

NEV Commentary: *Circumstances do indeed repeat in human lives, so that we might discern the principles and lessons...the similarities with the marriage of Rebekah are so clear. But the spiritual aspect wasn't paralleled at all.*¹⁹⁶

Genesis 29:13c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
châbaq (חַבַּק) [pronounced khaw-BAHK]	<i>to embrace; to embrace the rock or the dunghill means to lie (or make one's bed) upon them</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #2263 BDB #287
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâshaq (נָשַׁק) [pronounced naw-SHAHK]	<i>to kiss, to passionately kiss, to kiss with great emotion; to touch, to have close contact with</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #5401 BDB #676
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: He embraced him and kissed him... Laban is quite emotional about this. He embraces Jacob and he kisses him. Now, so far, everything should seem like a very normal family reunion story.

The kiss, as in the previous passage, is a family greeting. We find it in many places in Scripture, males kissing males to whom they are related (Gen. 27:27 33:4 45:15 48:10 etc.). Makes me glad to live in a culture where that rarely occurs.

¹⁹⁶ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017.

Gill: *Jarchi and other interpreters represent this as done with avaricious views, and that he expected Jacob had brought presents with him, as pieces of gold, pearls and jewels, and such like precious things Abraham's servant brought and gave him when he came for Rebekah (Gen. 24:53); but I see not why we may not take all this to be hearty, sincere, and affectionate, arising from nearness of relation, and a sense of it.*¹⁹⁷

Gill takes a measured view of Laban, not being so quick to impugn his every word or act. I think that this is the best approach.

Genesis 29:13d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (לָא) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
bayith (תֵּיב) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: ...and then brought him to his house. Laban brings Jacob to his home. We began this verse with Laban as the subject of the verb; so this carries forward to the verbs which follow.

Is Laban disappointed at Jacob showing up with very little? We do not know. We now that there is a great contrast between the arrival of Abraham's servant and the arrive of Jacob. Let me suggest to you that Laban is not evil incarnate—he is a manipulator and he will try to engineer circumstances into his own favor—but that does not mean that he sees Jacob and decides, *this broke relative needs to keep on moving*. Laban is going to receive and honor a guest which is his own flesh and blood, regardless. However, if there is a way to make this pay off, then Laban will work that angle as well.

As an aside, Laban will speak with Jacob long enough to insure that Jacob is really who he claims to be.

Genesis 29:13e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

¹⁹⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:13.

Genesis 29:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çâphar (סָפַר) [pronounced saw-FAHR]	<i>to recount, to enumerate, to tell with praise, to celebrate, to recall, to declare, to narrate, to tell or declare something from memory, to declare the facts or particulars of, to tell in a specific order</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #5608 BDB #707
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
d ^e bârîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -vawr-EEM]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, affairs; reports</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
'êlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41

The phrase *the words the these* can either refer to what will immediately follow this phrase (see Gen. 2:4 6:9 11:10), or it refers back to what has come before (see Gen. 9:19 10:20, 29, 31). Obviously, since a quotation does not follow, then this refers back to what precedes this. Given the addition of the kaph preposition, Goliath is making the same announcement as he has made before (from 1Sam. 17:23).

Translation: [All the time], Jacob [lit., he] told Laban all those things [that had happened]. All the time that this is taking place, Jacob is going to tell Laban of all the news of his life and what has taken place. He would have first repeated whatever information he told Rachel; and then he would have gone into more detail about his family in Canaan.

Jacob would be relaying news about the family, who was who, what had happened—who was married, who had children, etc. All of this would be family stuff, which was quite important to the eastern group.

Even though most of Jacob's life is narrative, there are spiritual lessons which we can derive from it. I read through perhaps 50 or more commentaries as I work through a chapter, and some of them, either through their accuracy or inaccuracy, bring out some important points to discuss.

Genesis 29:13 As soon as 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. Jacob told Laban all these things,... (ESV)

Jacob's Spiritual Growth (or Lack Thereof)

First, consider this:

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary has this to say: *Jacob makes bold to announce himself and his message, for he was confident of the mercy of God and of the strength of His Holy Covenant. (Gen. 29:12–13.) He is altogether a changed man now, and gives proof that he had passed through a great spiritual crisis by acknowledging God in all His ways.*¹⁹⁸

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary gives Jacob far too much credit in the spiritual growth department. It (along with many other commentators) takes the position that God made Himself known to Jacob and now Jacob is suddenly spiritually mature. This is quite silly. Jacob did not grow spiritually by leaps and bounds because God appeared to him. God gave Jacob some information—promises—which Jacob should have already known. Then God promises to be with Jacob, meaning, Jacob, by going to Paddan-aram, was not outside of the geographic will of God. But it is up to Jacob to believe this information and to compare it with other spiritual information which he has already written on his heart—and, quite frankly, Jacob has not much of that imprinted on his soul.

Jacob will exhibit some characteristics about himself that we were not aware of before. He will be hard-working, honest, and concerned for the well-being of his family. This does not indicate some big change in his life; these are just characteristics that we were not aware of before—it does not mean that these are *new* character traits. Up to this point, we have not studied any set of circumstances which would have revealed these traits in Jacob.

Whatever growth Jacob exhibited could not have been very much; although, there was, no doubt, some spiritual growth as a result of hearing the words of God from God. Jacob learned nothing that was new or revolutionary from God, apart from God being with him where he goes. Only *that* was new; and it was an important consideration. Jacob has to know that he is in the geographical will of God.

Spiritual growth is the result of truth (Bible doctrine) being heard, believed, and then written onto the hard drive of our human spirit. This information might come directly from the mouth of God, from the teaching of a pastor-teacher, or out of the Word of God. Jacob probably heard some of these teaching from his mother (and possibly from his father), but given his actions, it does not appear as if much of it took root.

Coming into direct contact with God does not make a person grow spiritually. What that takes is exposure to truth which is believed and integrated into a person's soul. Jacob was exposed to some truth when God appeared to him; and he no doubt believed some or all of that truth. So, there has been some spiritual growth which has occurred, but not to the degree ascribed to Jacob by the Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary.

It ought to be fascinating to you that, in God's plan, in the Church Age, you may experience more spiritual growth after a session in church than you would have, if you were Jacob witnessing and hearing God, as he did in Bethel. It is important to put spiritual growth into perspective, because many Christians today seem to think that, they have never heard Jesus teach them directly, that they have never had a vision of God and heard the words of God, that somehow, they got the short shrift.

That is what is so amazing about the Church Age is, you have all of that! In a good, doctrinal church, you will be taught from the actual words of our Lord; and they will be more beneficial to you than they were to the people who were actually there. We have studied God appearing to Jacob and all that God said and what His words meant—and we get more out of this than Jacob did! There could be no greater time to be alive for the believer than the Church Age. We have it all!

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

¹⁹⁸ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:1–14 (main homiletics).

Quite frankly, I was disappointed by some of the commentary on this final phrase:

Genesis 29:13 As soon as Laban heard the news about the arrival of His nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him. Laban embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. All the while, Jacob told Laban about what had been happening with his family.

Jacob Tells Laban *all these things* (Many Commentators)

Benson: *He told Laban all these things* — About his journey, and the cause of it, and what he saw in the way.¹⁹⁹

The Cambridge Bible: *Perhaps he [Laban] recollects the gifts of Rebekah's dowry (Gen. 24:30), and also perceives in Jacob a strong and capable worker.*²⁰⁰

The Geneva Bible: *[All these things would include] the reason why he departed from his father's house, and what he saw during his journey.*²⁰¹

Whedon: *[Jacob] [t]old Laban all* — All about his journey and its object, the commands of Isaac and Rebekah, and the desire of his own heart.²⁰²

Gill: *and he [Jacob] told Laban all these things; how he was sent here by his parents on account of the hatred of his brother Esau, because he had got the birthright and blessing from him; how God had appeared to him at Luz, and the promises he had made him; how providentially he had met with Rachel at the well, and perhaps might him at, if he did not openly declare, the end of his coming there for a wife.*²⁰³

Keil and Delitzsch present somewhat of a muddled approach: *When Jacob had told Laban "all these things," – i.e., hardly "the cause of his journey, and the things which had happened to him in relation to the birthright" (Rosenmüller), but simply the things mentioned in Gen. 29:2–12 – Laban acknowledged him as his relative: "Yes, you are my bone and my flesh" (cf. Gen. 2:23 and Judges 9:2); and thereby eo ipso ensured him an abode in his house.*²⁰⁴

Here is the problem with Keil and Delitzsch's approach: Gen. 29:2–12 would simply be Jacob recounting the things which had just happened. "I arrived here to this well, saw the shepherds, went over and chatted them up, and found out that they knew you, Laban..." etc. *That does not lead Laban to the conclusion, "You are my flesh and blood."* That requires much more information than simply at recollection of the things which happened over the past hour or so.

Now, did Jacob go into great detail about the cause of his journey, the strife between himself and Esau, the birthright? Certainly not. He would have stuck to some basic *facts*, that his parents sent him east to meet a decent woman to marry, just as Abraham had done on Isaac's behalf so many years ago.

Much of what Jacob says indicate that he is actually related to Laban. He has to tell enough personal information so that Laban realizes that this is Jacob, his nephew. This is not easy, as Rebekah has been in Canaan for nearly 100 years now. If I were to guess, Jacob may have summarized the trip to Paddan-aram that his grandfather's slave made on behalf of his father. Jacob would have done this, if it appeared that Laban was not convinced of who he was.

¹⁹⁹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:13.

²⁰⁰ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:13.

²⁰¹ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:13.

²⁰² *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:13.

²⁰³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:13 (slightly edited).

²⁰⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:5–14 (slightly edited).

Jacob Tells Laban *all these things* (Many Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob tells him 'all these things', presumably the general circumstances of his journey and his purpose in coming. Laban's stressing of the family connection indicates general agreement with the ideas.*²⁰⁵

James Burton Coffman: *"He told Laban all these things ..." probably refers to the meeting between Rachel and Jacob at the well. It is not necessary to suppose that Jacob rehearsed the events regarding his deception of Isaac and Esau and the facts of his being, at the time, a fugitive from the murderous wrath of Esau.*²⁰⁶

I think that we should add to *all things* a bit of historical narrative, so that it is clear that Jacob is really who he says he is. This is a part of Laban's subtle evaluation process. *Is this man really who he says he is?* Laban wonders quietly to himself, as Jacob speaks. In v. 14, Laban will conclude that Jacob is who he says he is.

The *all things* probably include family information, his purpose for the trip (marriage to a relative there); his trip to Haran, and his meeting with Rachel (remember that Abraham's slave even went into great detail about his coming upon the right place).

What was probably left out of the conversation was Jacob's feud with Esau, the threats which Esau had made against him; and perhaps Jacob even left out his dream wherein he saw and heard the Living God. Spiritual issues do not seem to be addressed until we come to Leah naming their children. Leah apparently gives a great deal of thought to Who and What God is.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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

Laban last met the servant of Abraham, and was quite impressed by his wealth. Still, meeting a member of this family is a very big deal to Laban. All of this is quite normal and what we ought to expect.

Laban's true colors will not be visible for another 7 years (at least, in the text of Genesis).

The things that Jacob tells Laban is about his family and his trip from Canaan to Padan-aram. Laban listens carefully, and comes to a conclusion.

And so says to him Laban, "Surely my bone and my flesh you [are]!" And so he stays with him a month of days.

Genesis
29:14

Laban therefore said to him, "Surely you [are] my flesh and bone!" Therefore, Jacob [lit., he] stayed with him for a month of days.

Laban therefore exclaimed, "Surely you are my flesh and bone!" Therefore, Jacob remained there with them for a month.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says to him Laban, "Surely my bone and my flesh you [are]!" And so he stays with him a month of days.

Targum of Onkelos

And Laban said to him, Truly thou art my near one and my blood; and he dwelt with him a month of days.

²⁰⁵ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:13–14.

²⁰⁶ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Latin Vulgate	He answered: Thou art my bone and my flesh. And after the days of one month were expired,...
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. And t he stayed with him for a month.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban said to him, You are of my bones and of my flesh; and he was with him a full month.
Significant differences:	The Latin has <i>he answered</i> rather than <i>and Laban said to him</i> . The targum has <i>near one and my blood</i> rather than <i>my bone and my flesh</i> .

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban said to him, Truly, you are my bone and my flesh. And he kept Jacob with him for the space of a month.
Easy English	Laban said to Jacob, `Truly you are my relative.' Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Laban said, "This is wonderful! You are from my own family." So Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Laban said, "Yes, indeed, you are my own flesh and blood." Jacob stayed there a whole month.
<i>The Message</i>	Laban said, "You're family! My flesh and blood!" When Jacob had been with him for a month,...

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Laban said, "You are my nephew, and you are like one of my own family." After Jacob had been there for a month,...
New Century Version	Then Laban said, "You are my own flesh and blood." Jacob Is Tricked Jacob stayed there a month.
Translation for Translators	Then Laban said to him, "Truly, you are part of my family!" Jacob married Leah and Rachel After Jacob had stayed there and worked for Laban for a month,...

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Laban said: 'Why, you are my own flesh and bones!' And thereafter, [Jacob] stayed with [Laban] for a full month.
International Standard V	Laban responded, "You certainly are my flesh and blood [Lit. bones]!" So Jacob [Lit. he] stayed with him for about a month [Lit. for days of a new month].
Names of God Bible	Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood." Jacob Obtains Wives Jacob stayed with him for a whole month.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	He listened to the reasons that had brought him there, and said, Thou art my own flesh and blood. And he waited till a month had passed; then he said, Because thou art my kinsman, that is no reason why thou shouldst work for me free of charge; tell me what reward thou wouldst have. A portion of v. 13 and all of v. 15 are included for context.
Today's NIV	Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood." After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, Laban 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." V. 15 is included for context.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	Laban told him, "Indeed you are my bone and my flesh." And he lived with him for a month of days. A span of time equal to 29 days, give or take a day, is in view here--not necessarily from new moon to new moon.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Laban said, "You are my bone and my flesh"; so he stayed five days with him, when Laban said to Jacob, " Since you are my relative, now serve me, and also inform me what wages I shall pay you ? " A portion of v. 15 is included for context.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Laban said to him, certainly you are my flesh and bone kinsman. And he stayed with him for the period of a month.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Laban told him, "You are a brother of my flesh and blood", and he stayed by him a full month.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. And he sat down with him a new moon of days.
New American Bible (2011)	When Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him. After embracing and kissing him, he brought him to his house. Jacob then repeated to Laban all these things, and Laban said to him, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh [Bone and flesh: the Hebrew idiom for English "flesh and blood" (cf. 2:23; Judges 9:2; 2 Sm 5:1 = 1 Chr 11:1).]" V. 13 is included for context.
New RSV	When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him; he embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob [Heb., <i>he</i>] told Laban all these things, and Laban said to him, `Surely you are my bone and my flesh! And he stayed with him for a month. V. 13 is include for context.
Revised English Bible	Jacob told Laban all that had happened, and Laban said, `Yes, you are my own flesh and blood.' After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, Laban said to him, `Why should you work for me for nothing simply because you are my kinsman? Tell me what wage you would settle for.' A portion of v. 13 and all of v. 15 are included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

The Complete Tanach	And Laban said to him, "Indeed, you are my bone and my flesh." And so he stayed with him a full month.
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Indeed, you are my bone and my flesh: "In view of this, I have no reason to take you into the house, because you have nothing. Because of kinship, however, I will put up with you for a month's time." And so he did, but this too was not gratis, for he (Jacob) pastured his sheep. — [from Gen. Rabbah 70:14]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Laban says to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. - and he settles with him a month of days.
Kaplan Translation	'Yes indeed, you are my own flesh and blood [Literally, 'bone and flesh;'] see Genesis 2:23.],' said Laban. Jacob remained with him for a month.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Lavan said to him, Surely thou art my etzem (bone) and my basar. And he abode with him the space of a chodesh (month).

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Then Laban said, "You are my own ·flesh and blood [Lbone and flesh]." Jacob Is Tricked
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Kretzmann's Commentary	Jacob stayed there a month. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. He was satisfied with the account as given by Jacob, for it proved conclusively that the latter was his nephew. And he abode with him the space of a month, thus becoming acquainted both with the family and with the circumstances of the family. Thus the Lord had guided the steps of Jacob, just as He watches over the steps of all His children on earth. In spite of many hardships and privations they usually manage to find a home and friends, the Lord thus giving evidence of His fatherly care.
NET Bible®	Then Laban said to him, "You are indeed my own flesh and blood [Heb "indeed, my bone and my flesh are you." The expression sounds warm enough, but the presence of "indeed" may suggest that Laban had to be convinced of Jacob's identity before permitting him to stay. To be one's "bone and flesh" is to be someone's blood relative. For example, the phrase describes the relationship between Abimelech and the Shechemites (Judg 9:2; his mother was a Shechemite); David and the Israelites (2 Sam 5:1); David and the elders of Judah (2 Sam 19:12,); and David and his nephew Amasa (2 Sam 19:13, see 2 Sam 17:2; 1 Chr 2:16-17).]" So Jacob [Heb "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] stayed with him for a month [Heb "a month of days."].
The Pulpit Commentary	And Laban said unto him (giving utterance to the impression Jacob's recital had produced upon his mind), Surely thou art my bone and my flesh—i.e. my blood relation (cf. Judges 9:2; 2Sam. 5:1). Laban meant that Jacob had satisfactorily proved himself Rebekah's son. And he abode with him the space of a month—literally, a month of days (cf. Gen. 41:1; Num. 11:20), or a month as regards time, "the second substantive describing the general notion of which the first is a specification" (Kalisch).
The Voice	Laban: You are surely my flesh and bone! And Jacob stayed with Laban for a month and helped out with all his livestock.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Lavan ^[White] said to him surely you are my bone and my flesh and he settled with him a new moon of days,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying to him is Laban, "Yea, my bone and my flesh are you. And dwelling with him is he the days of a month.
Darby Translation	And Laban said to him, Thou art indeed my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him a month's time.
The Geneva Bible	And Laban said to him, Surely thou [art] my bone and my flesh [That is, of my blood and kindred.]. And he abode with him the space of a month.
Green's Literal Translation	And Laban said to him, Truly you are my bone and my flesh. And he lived with him a month of days.
NASB	Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And Laban said to him, Surely you are my bone and my flesh. And he remained with him the space of a month.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Laban said to him, Surely thou [art] my bone and my flesh: and he abode with him the space of a month.
Young's Updated LT	And Laban says to him, "Only my bone and my flesh are you;" and he dwells with him a month of days.

The gist of this verse: Laban is convinced the Jacob is his nephew and Jacob lives with him for a month.

Genesis 29:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
Lâbân (לבן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'ak ^e (אך) [pronounced ahk ^e]	<i>surely, truly, certainly, no doubt, only, but; only now, just now, only this once; nothing but</i>	adverb of restriction, contrast, time, limitation, and exception. Also used as an affirmative particle	Strong's #389 BDB #36
'etsem (עצם) [pronounced geh-TSEM]	<i>bone, substance, self; self-same, (very) same; corporeality, duration, existence, and therefore identity</i>	feminine singular substantive; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6106 BDB #782
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâsâr (בשר) [pronounced baw-SAWR]	<i>flesh; body; animal meat</i>	masculine singular noun with a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1320 BDB #142
'attâh (אתה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61

Translation: Laban therefore said to him, "Surely you [are] my flesh and bone!" This reminds me of what Adam said when he first saw Eve—"Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!" This indicates to me that Laban knew something of the Scriptures, whether they were by word of mouth or he had seen them written down. Why what Adam said is slightly different is that Eve was taken from him; Laban and Jacob are not that closely related. As relatives, the proper observation was the one that Laban made.

Theologian Henricus Renckens concludes: *In Israel, in order to say that someone was a blood relation, one said: "He is my flesh and my bones" (Gen. 29:14; Jud. 9:2; cp. Gen. 37:27; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:13 ff.; Is. 58:7).*²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017. They cite H. Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning: The Theology of Genesis 1-3* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964) p. 228.

This may seem, at first, like a very weird thing to say. “Surely we are related” is the gist of what Laban is saying. However, this guy shows up out of the blue—Jacob is perhaps 77 years old²⁰⁸—and he says, “I am your nephew.” There are Hollywood movies based on a premise like this. But is he really? So Laban listens to Jacob carefully; and even though he gives no sign of carefully evaluating what Jacob is saying, Laban is paying attention.

There is a very subtle difference based upon a very big difference between the welcoming of Abraham’s servant so many decades ago as compared to the welcoming of Jacob at this time. Even though Abraham’s servant tended to be detailed and repetitive when speaking to Bethuel’s family, he was not viewed with much suspicion, given all of the wealth and riches that he brought with him. Jacob, on the other hand, has shown up with virtually nothing of value, so Laban more carefully listens to what Jacob says, first and foremost evaluating him to determine if he is really family.

What this is telling us is, Laban recognizes that this could be a scam. Maybe this fellow really is his nephew Jacob and maybe he is not. Laban is a fairly successful man; and how does he know whether this Jacob fellow is really related to him or not? How does he know that this is not some kind of a scam? So, for Laban to suddenly exclaim, “You are certainly my flesh and bone” indicates that this crossed Laban’s mind (that is, Laban considered the idea that maybe he was not his flesh and blood).

A little psychology: most people are quite trusting and accept what they hear from others as honest. You do not meet a stranger and immediately think, “This guy is pulling some kind of a scam on me.” However, if you yourself are a scam artist, then this is the direction that your mind goes in. You view others with suspicion because you know what you have done in similar circumstances; or you know what you are capable of.

Many years ago, I had two guys who attempted to scam me; and all the time, I had not the slightest clue. I never bit, when it came to the temptation part, which was required for this scam to work. Later, I heard on the [news about this scam](#) and that it was occurring in Houston. I quickly realized what had happened to me (this was before the internet).

So as a rich and successful businessman, Laban was no doubt suspicious (or, at the very least, cautious) when dealing with this stranger. Perhaps Deborah, Rebekah’s maid, spoke as well (she would not be recognizable, of course).

To Jacob, what Laban just said was not all that meaningful. He remembered it and he may have thought to himself, “That’s sort of odd that he said that.”

Now, I want you to consider a couple of things. Who helped Jacob to get into the mess that he was in by scheming? His mother Rebekah. And who is Rebekah’s brother? Laban. So, we already know that Rebekah is not above pulling a con. We know that Jacob has been brought into this and he has manipulated others himself. So now, Jacob finds himself face to face with Laban, and Laban himself is both a con-man and a master manipulator. In their being raised, both Laban and Rebekah—despite how beautiful she is—are both capable of conning others in order to get what they want. Rebekah manipulated both Jacob and her husband for the end-of-life blessing to go to Jacob; and Laban will pull a fast one on Jacob at the end of this chapter.

Right now, Jacob’s radar ought to be up. “So, Laban has doubted my story up until now?” But Jacob recounted enough personal details to where Laban is convinced. Now Jacob ought to be concerned. Only a con thinks that he might be being conned; and it on the lookout for such a thing.

²⁰⁸ This is the common age ascribed to Jacob; Clarke supposes that he is 57. Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:20.

Genesis 29:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{AV}]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit, to reside; to sit</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
chôdesh (חֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced KHOH-desh]	<i>new moon, month; monthly; first day of the month</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2320 BDB #294
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

That the plural of *days* often refers to a year can be seen in Lev. 25:29 1Sam. 1:3, 20 2:19. That the plural of *days* can mean *years* seems to be borne out by 1Kings 1:1.

This may have a specific meaning. Gen. 29:14

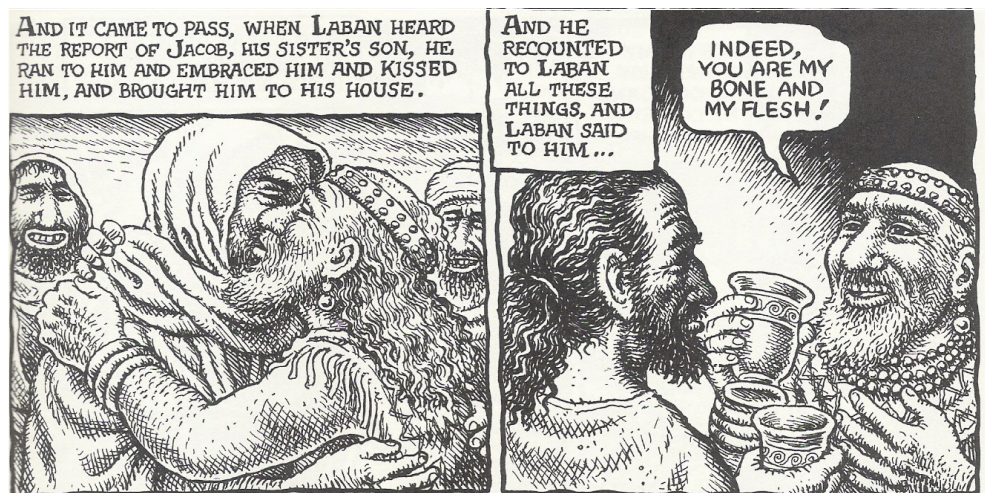
Translation: *Therefore, Jacob [lit., he] stayed with him for a month of days.* Most of the more literal translations understand that Jacob continued to stay with Laban for about a month.

Okay, so what will appear to be the case is, Jacob is immediately put to work. For a month (or most of a month), he works for his Uncle Laban. However, no money exchanges hand; there is no profit-sharing; Laban does not say, "This is the wage that you will be paid."

Genesis 29:13–14 (an R. Crumb cartoon); from SavageMinds.org; accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

In that era, they says, "You are my bone and my flesh;" today we say, "You are my flesh and blood" when referring to a relative. Laban heard enough information to conclude that Jacob is really his nephew. Laban is confirming that he recognizes that Jacob is not just some guy off the street who is pretended to be related to him,



but that Jacob is exactly who he claims to be.

Barnes: *Laban hastens to welcome his relative to his house. "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." This is a description of kinsmanship probably derived from the formation of the woman out of the man Gen. 2:23.*²⁰⁹

This first month was just them getting to know one another. There would have been feasting; relatives from elsewhere would be called in. There would be a great deal of visiting. Also, during this month, Jacob would begin to plan out just exactly what he was going to do. How much interaction occurs between Jacob and Rachel is not made clear. Based upon the culture of that time, this time at the well was probably the only time they are more or less alone together.

Although Jacob wants a wife, he cannot take a wife and then suddenly return to the Land of Promise. It would be too soon. Esau was still seething with hatred. So, even if Jacob takes a wife, he must remain there for a period of time. So, all of this must be worked out. God's timing is perfect, so it will be worked out.

Furthermore, the original plan was for his mother to send word to him and tell him to return home. That will not happen. Insofar as we know, Jacob never sees or hears from his mother, Rebekah, again.

Genesis 29:13–14 So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things. Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:13–14: Jacob Meets Laban

1. Jacob's actions at the well toward his future bride are matched by Laban's enthusiastic greeting of his nephew.
2. This of course is the same Laban that decades before had showered Laban's family with gifts sent by his long lost uncle when the servant came seeking a wife for Isaac (chap. 24).
3. On a human level Laban was thrilled at the prospect of meeting a relative from that other branch of the family, especially a son of his long lost sister.
4. He greets his nephew with a kiss and a hug.
5. He invites him into his house where Jacob relates to him the circumstances of his life.
6. How much Jacob told him is not told us.
7. He told him enough that Laban was convinced that the young man who had suddenly appeared in his life was indeed who he said he was (v. 13b).
8. In v. 14 we have an admission on Laban's part that Jacob is who he says he is.
9. The words "you truly are my bone and my flesh" is Laban's response to Jacob's story of life in Canaan.
10. Laban may have discovered much about Jacob's past but the text here is vague.
11. Did he tell Laban why he had traveled so far?
12. Did he tell Laban the circumstances of his coming to Haran?
13. Laban probably learned plenty about his nephew and his life during that initial meeting.
14. Laban came to realize that Jacob had no monetary assets and was without any means of visible support.
15. Unlike the impressive visitor back in chap. 24, Jacob was a man without means, a man who in his present state of affairs could not provide a dowry.
16. Laban the double-dealer chalks all this up to how he might exploit his nephew.
17. Remember, Laban is a believer who was not interested in God's plan beyond his own stagnant spiritual awareness.
18. Jacob remained with his uncle for one full month (contrast Rebekah's "a few days") during which time Laban could make his calculations as how he could benefit monetarily and during this time Jacob became enthralled by the beauty of his cousin Rachel (he fell in love).
19. Both men have plans and both were contemplating their options.

²⁰⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:9–14 (slightly edited).

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen29.htm> accessed August 7, 2017.

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Laban's Two Daughters; Jacob Proposes Marriage to Rachel

And so says Laban to Jacob, “Because my brother you [are], will you serve me for nothing? Make known to me what your recompense [should be].”

Genesis
29:15

Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you [are] my brother, will you serve me for nothing? Tell me what your wages [should be].”

Then Laban said to Jacob, “Look, you are my nephew; you cannot work for nothing. Tell me what I should pay you.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Laban to Jacob, “Because my brother you [are], will you serve me for nothing? Make known to me what your recompense [should be].”
Targum of Onkelos	And Laban said to Jakob, Though thou art reputed my brother, shouldst thou serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall be thy wages?
Latin Vulgate	He said to him: Because you are my brother, will you serve me without wages? Tell me what wages you will have.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban said to Jacob, Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore work for me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban said to Jacob, Surely you shall not serve me for nothing, because you are my brother; tell me what your <u>reward</u> is to be.

Significant differences: The word *brother* can mean *relative*, *kinsman*. The Greek has the word *reward*, when the word *wages* is more applicable (this may be a case where the same word can mean both of those things).

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Laban said to Jacob, Because you are my brother are you to be my servant for nothing? say now, what is your payment to be
Easy English	After that time, Laban said this to Jacob. `You work for me. But you have no wages. That is not right, although you are my nephew. What shall I pay you?’
Easy-to-Read Version	One day Laban said to Jacob, “It is not right for you to continue working for me without pay. You are a relative, {not a slave}. What should I pay you?”
Good News Bible (TEV)	Laban said to Jacob, "You shouldn't work for me for nothing just because you are my relative. How much pay do you want?"
<i>The Message</i>	Laban said, "Just because you're my nephew, you shouldn't work for me for nothing. Tell me what you want to be paid. What's a fair wage?"
NIRV	Jacob Gets Married to Leah and Rachel Jacob stayed with Laban for a whole month. Then Laban said to him, "You are one of my relatives. But is that any reason for you to work for me for nothing? Tell me what your pay should be." A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

New Simplified Bible Laban said to Jacob: »You should not work for me for nothing just because you are my relative. How much pay do you want?«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible **Jacob marries Leah and Rachel**
After Jacob had stayed with Laban for a month, Laban said to Jacob, "You shouldn't have to work for free just because you are my relative. Tell me what you would like to be paid." A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

Contemporary English V. Laban said to him, "You shouldn't have to work without pay, just because you are a relative of mine. What do you want me to give you?"

New Berkeley Version He had stayed with him for a full month when Laban said to Jacob, "Just because you are near kin to me, ought you to work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be." A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

New Century Version Then Laban said to Jacob, "You are my relative, but it is not right for you to work for me without pay. What would you like me to pay you?"

New Life Bible Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are one of my family, should you serve me for nothing? Tell me, what do you want to be paid?"

New Living Translation **Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel**
After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be." A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Then Laban said to Jacob: 'Surely you aren't going to serve me for nothing; why, you're my brother! Tell me how I can reward you!'

Beck's American Translation **Leah and Rachel**
After Jacob stayed with him a month, Laban asked him, "Should you work for me for nothing just because you're my nephew? Tell me what I should pay you." A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

International Standard V **Jacob Agrees to Work in Order to Marry Rachel**
Later, Laban asked Jacob, "Should you serve me for free, just because you're my nephew [Lit. *brother*]?" Let's talk about what your wages should be."

Translation for Translators Laban said to him "«You should not work for me for nothing just because you are a relative of mine!/Why should you work for me for nothing just because you are a relative of mine?» [RHQ] Tell me how much you want me to pay you."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Laban said to Jacob, "My brother, you serve me casually! Tell me what wages for you!"

Conservapedia Laban said to Jacob, "You're my relative. So you shouldn't serve me free of charge. Tell me: what wages will you have?"

Jubilee Bible 2000 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art of my brethren, should thou therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?

NIV, ©2011 **Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel**
After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, Laban 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." A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

Urim-Thummim Version Then Laban said to Jacob, because you are my brother you should not work for me for nothing? Tell me, what will your wages be?

Wikipedia Bible Project And Laban said to Jacob, "You are my kin, and I have worked you for no pay; tell me, what is your wage?"

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) **Jacob's two marriages**

Laban said to Jacob, "Even if you are my kinsman, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me, what wages do you want?"

The Heritage Bible

And Laban said to Jacob, Should you work for me for nothing because you *are* my brother? Cause it to stand out boldly to me. What *shall* your wages *be*?

New American Bible (2011)

Marriage to Leah and Rachel.

After Jacob had stayed with him a full month, Laban said to him: "Should you serve me for nothing just because you are a relative of mine? Tell me what your wages should be." [29:15-30] Laban's deception and Jacob's marriages. There are many ironies in the passage. Jacob's protest to Laban, "How could you do this to me?" echoes the question put to Abraham (20:9) and Isaac (26:10) when their deceptions about their wives were discovered. The major irony is that Jacob, the deceiver of his father and brother about the blessing (chap. 27), is deceived by his uncle (standing in for the father) about his wife.

New Jerusalem Bible

After Jacob had been staying with him for a month, Laban said to Jacob, 'Just because you are my kinsman, why should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what wages you want.' A portion of v. 14 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Lavan said to him, "You are indeed my own flesh and blood." After Ya'akov had stayed with him for a whole month, Lavan said to him, "Why should you work for me for nothing, just because you are my relative? Tell me how much I should pay you." V. 14 is included for context.

The Complete Tanach

And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you work for me gratis? Tell me what your wages shall be."

Because you are my kinsman: Heb. יְכָה, an interrogative expression: Because you are my kinsman, should you work for me gratis?- [from Targum Onkelos]

should you work for me: Heb. יִתְדַבְּעוּ like יִתְדַבְּעוּ, and likewise, any word that is in the past tense, [Scripture] prefixes to it a "vav," which converts the word to the future tense.

exeGesés companion Bible

And Laban says to Yaaqov,
Because you are my brother,
serve you me gratuitously?
Tell me, what is your hire?

Kaplan Translation

Laban then said to Jacob, 'Just because you are my close relative, does it mean that you must work for me for nothing? Tell me what you want to be paid.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Lavan said unto Ya'akov, Because thou art my relative, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall thy maskoret (wages) be?

The Scriptures 1998

Then Laban said to Ya'aqob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for naught? Let me know, what should your wages be?"

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible

Then Laban said to Jacob, "You are my relative, but ·it is not right for you to work for me without pay [^lshould you serve me for nothing?]. What ·would you like me to pay you [will your wages be]?"

Kretzmann's Commentary

Jacob Serves Laban for Rachel

And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for naught? Tell me, what shall thy wages be? Jacob had not been idle during the month after his arrival, but had shown himself so willing and so skilful that Laban was glad to take him into his employ, if they could agree upon terms.

Lexham English Bible

Jacob's Marriages

Then Laban said to Jacob, "[Just] because you [are] my brother should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wage [should be]."

NET Bible®

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Should you work [The verb is the perfect with the vav (י) consecutive; the nuance in the question is deliberative.] for me for nothing because you are my relative [Heb "my brother." The term "brother" is used in a loose sense; actually Jacob was Laban's nephew.]? Tell me what your wages should be."

The Voice

Then Laban spoke one day to Jacob.

Laban: Just because you are my relative, that doesn't mean you should be working for me for nothing! Tell me what I can pay you.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Lavan ^[White] said to Ya'aqov ^[He restrains], given that you are my brother, will you serve me freely, tell me what is your payment,...

Concordant Literal Version And saying is Laban to Jacob, "Seeing that my brother are you, then serve you me gratuitously? Tell me what is your hire.

Emphasized Bible Then said Laban to Jacob, Is it because my brother, thou art, that thou shouldst serve me for naught? Come tell me! What shall be thy wages?

God's Truth (Tyndale) And afterward Laban said unto Jacob: though you be my brother, should you therefore serve me for naught? tell me what shall your wages be?

Webster's Bible Translation And Laban said to Jacob, Because thou [art] my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for naught? tell me, what [shall] thy wages [be]?

World English Bible Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my brother, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what will your wages be?"

Young's Updated LT And Laban says to Jacob, "Is it because you are my brother that you have served me for nothing? Declare to me what is your hire."

The gist of this verse: Laban asks Jacob what he should be paid (after Jacob had been with him for a month).

Genesis 29:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lâbân (לבן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526

Genesis 29:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-KOH^bV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
I wonder if these both have a combined meaning?			
'ăch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
chinnâm (חִנָּם) [pronounced <i>khin-NAHM</i>]	<i>gratuitous, freely, for nothing; for no purpose, in vain, without cause, undeservedly</i>	substantive/adverb	Strong's #2600 BDB #336

Translation: Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you [are] my brother, will you serve me for nothing? This entire statement that Laban makes is a question. However, in the English, it makes more sense to break it up into two separate phrases, the second phrase containing the actual question. A more literal way of translating this portion of v. 15: “Question: because you [are] my brother, will you serve me for nothing?” That particular particle tells the listener at the very beginning that a question is going to be posed.

Bear in mind, all of this time, Laban is working Jacob, both literally and figuratively. He is determining how to best make use of Jacob so that he, Laban, comes out ahead. So, here it sounds as if Laban is being fair; but remember, a month has gone by, and Jacob has worked all of that time for Laban.

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Because you are my brother.] That is, my kinsman. This word, like “sister,” “son,” etc., is used with great latitude in the sacred writings.*²¹⁰

²¹⁰ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20 (slightly edited).

Note that Jacob has remained with Laban for a month first before Laban says anything. Jacob took off with some sheep and the clothes on his back (and possibly Deborah, his mother's personal maid²¹¹). He had very little with him because he had to quickly flee Esau. Laban took advantage of this and put him to work. It was done with great subtlety. Jacob almost without missing a beat, picked up with doing whatever it was the Laban needed done. He was a guest, but this was to be an extended visit; so Jacob immediately made himself useful. Laban carefully watched him. He remembered that his sister had been approached by a relative before and taken away. That was Isaac and Isaac had a great deal of wealth. Jacob has basically nothing. Laban cannot continue to have Jacob work for him for free, but he has noticed that Rachel has stolen Jacob's heart. So Laban has formulated somewhat of a plan to get the maximum use of Jacob.

Genesis 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Look, you are my nephew; you cannot work for nothing. Tell me what I should pay you."

Laban tells Jacob, "I should not let you serve me for free." (Various Commentators)

Clarke: *Though you are my nearest relative, yet I have no right to your services without giving you an adequate recompense. Jacob had passed a whole month in the family of Laban, in which he had undoubtedly rendered himself of considerable service.*²¹²

Gill: *[N]earness of kin was no reason why he should serve him freely, or for nothing, but rather why he should be more kind to him than to a stranger, and give him better wages.*²¹³

Matthew Henry: *It seems he was not idle, nor did he spend his time in sport and pastime; but like a man of business, though he had no stock of his own, he applied himself to serve his uncle, as he had begun (Gen. 29:10) when he watered his flock. Note, Wherever we are, it is good to be employing ourselves in some useful business, which will turn to a good account to ourselves or others. Laban, it seems, was so taken with Jacob's ingenuity and industry about his flocks that he was desirous he should continue with him.*²¹⁴

Whedon: *Jacob, the plain, domestic man, (Gen. 25:27,) doubtless made himself very useful in Laban's household. His service at the well was but a specimen of his agility and readiness to do whatever work might offer itself. Observing all this during the month of his sojourn, (Gen. 29:14,) Laban generously proposes that his kinsman shall not serve him for nothing.*²¹⁵

Wenstrom: *Laban's proposal is very clever. We read in Genesis 29:15: "Laban 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.'" In other words: "Since you are my relative, I am under no obligation to pay you for your work, which should be considered payment for room and board. But since I am generous, I am offering you a salary."*²¹⁶

I think by this point in time, Laban had observed Jacob long enough and knew exactly how he was going to play him.

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²¹¹ Deborah probably raised Jacob.

²¹² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15 (slightly edited).

²¹³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15.

²¹⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30.

²¹⁵ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:15–30.

²¹⁶ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 450–451) accessed August 10, 2017.

Genesis 29:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>tell, make conspicuous, make known, expound, explain, declare, inform, confess, make it pitifully obvious that</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
mas ^e kôreth (מַשְׂכֹּרֶת) [pronounced mahs-KOH-rehth]	<i>wages; reward</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4909 BDB #969

Translation: *Tell me what your wages [should be].* The best way to do a con is to let the other person think that they are calling the shots. The other person needs to think that everything is his idea. If what Jacob proposes is ridiculous, Laban can always say as much.

Quite obviously, nothing that Laban has done so far should seem untoward. The only thing which may come to mind is, when Laban met Abraham's slave 100 years ago and saw the expensive jewelry which he gave to Laban's sister, Rebekah, Laban had a sudden interest in what was going on. However, so far in the narrative, there is nothing to suggest the Laban is a crooked con-man. We know this because of what happens later.

On the one hand, in their conversations, I am certain that Jacob did not bring up any details of the mistakes that he had made; or about the animosity between himself and his twin brother; or even that his stay in Haran was somewhat open-ended. On the other hand, Laban may have figured out that there was more to the story than he was given.

At the same time, I have no doubts that Laban was thinking to himself, *now, how can I turn this situation to my advantage?* I don't mean that Laban studied Jacob day in and day out, thinking, *how do I turn this into my advantage?* Right at this point, Jacob has worked for Laban for a month, has shown honesty and the willingness to work hard. Laban probably realizes that he does not have the complete story from Jacob, but is not too worried about that.

Generally speaking, a farmer or a rancher did not pay his own sons (or daughters). They would have access to the sustenance necessary to live (a place to live and meals with the family), but they were not paid, as what they were working for was their inheritance. However, Jacob is not ever going to be treated as a son; he will be treated as a hired worker, and his work will be exchanged for whatever is agreed to.

At this point, this will appear to be an insignificant detail; but there will come a time where Jacob finds himself actually working for a wage, and Laban's sons²¹⁷ being angry with him, because whatever Jacob kept meant that they would inherit less (which is what they were working for). The daughters, whom Jacob will marry, will also notice that they really have no inheritance (as their brothers have); and it is this series of events which will lead them all to be willing to leave Laban and his ranch—at the same point that God calls for them to leave.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ At this point, these sons are either not born yet or not old enough to be working for Laban.

²¹⁸ Taken from https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29b.pdf accessed August 7, 2017.

Jacob Talks with Laban by the Illustrators of the 1897 Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us (a graphic); from [Wikimedia](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

Charles Foster: *Jacob Talks with Laban*; caption: "Jacob has come to Rachel's home. He is talking with her father. Her father's name is Laban. Jacob is asking Laban if Rachel may not be his wife. Laban says that if Jacob will stay and work for him a long time and take care of his flocks, then Rachel shall be his wife. So Jacob stayed and worked for Laban many years. He took care of Laban's sheep, and goats, and camels; and afterward Laban gave Rachel to him for his wife."²¹⁹



Bear in mind that Jacob is not the young man that he is portrayed to be in this picture. It is reasonable to suppose that this conversation did not take place before Rachel and Leah.

Genesis 29:15 And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my brother, should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me, what will be your wages?"

During this month, Jacob worked for Laban. He was not there on a holiday. Although there was no doubt feasting and celebration, Jacob would have begun almost immediately to help out with the flocks and herds. He may have even been given a herd to be in charge of. We do not know how much experience Jacob has in this; although we would assume some, inasmuch as his grandfather owned large herds and passed these along to Jacob's father, Isaac.

Laban is a smooth negotiator. He sounds fair and reasonable, which is essential in a negotiation. "Look, you tell me what you want, and I will see if I can make that happen." My guess is, he has observed Jacob over enough time to determine that Jacob will make a fair offer for his own services. And, even if Jacob quoted too high of a price, this gives Laban the ability to say, "I wish I could go that high, but I really can't."

It is my guess that, Laban probably had an idea as to how Jacob would answer this question. I don't think that Laban posed this question just out of the blue. I believe that Laban knew that Jacob had come there to take a wife; that he really did not come with a dowry; and that he really liked Rachel. So, when Laban poses this question to Jacob, he has an idea as to what Jacob will answer. Laban may not have known the exact terms that Jacob will suggest, but Laban probably had in mind what he would accept. Furthermore, there is even the possibility that Laban, knowing more or less what Jacob would suggest, was already planning a deception.²²⁰

Genesis 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Look, you are my nephew; you cannot work for nothing. Tell me what I should pay you."

²¹⁹ From [Wikimedia](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

²²⁰ This is purely speculation on my part.

Recompense for Jacob's Service to Laban (Various Commentators)

Wenstrom: *Laban sounds very concerned about the well-being of his nephew but his use of the terms "serve" and "wages" reveal his true intentions with Jacob, which was to exploit Jacob's love for his daughter Rachel for personal profit. Laban is smooth talking Jacob and has reduced him to a laborer under contract.*

Wenstrom continues: *Laban wanted to bind Jacob to him in some way and very craftily lets Jacob name the terms of the agreement, knowing full well that because of Jacob's love for his daughter Rachel, he would get a great bargain by approaching him this way.*²²¹

Gill: *[Laban signified that] he was willing to give him anything that was just and reasonable, which was very well spoken; and this gave Jacob a fair opportunity of opening his mind more freely to him.*²²²

Clarke: *As Laban, who was of a very saving if not covetous disposition, saw that he was to be of great use to him in his secular concerns, he wished to secure his services, and therefore asks him what wages he wished to have.*²²³

Dr. Peter Pett: *Once a decent time had passed Laban brings the matter up. He has now realised that Jacob has not come laden with expensive marriage gifts. These words are a delicate indication that Jacob is going to have to earn his wife by a period of service. (The question of wages would not normally arise between relatives of this standing. Those were for hired servants). He is asking how long he is prepared to serve as compensatory payment for a wife. When Abraham's servant came he brought rich gifts which were accepted as recompense for the loss of a daughter and sister. It appears that Jacob has not brought such valuable gifts. Compensation would thus be made by service (compare Joshua 15:16; 1Sam. 17:25), a practise well testified to elsewhere.*²²⁴

Stephen Armstrong: *[Laban] has spent a month studying Jacob, recognizing his gift for shepherding, and noticing his interest in one of Laban's daughters.*²²⁵

Bruce K. Waltke: *Laban is degrading the blood relationship between himself and Jacob into an economic arrangement. What Laban should have done as a loving relative is to help Jacob get a start on building his own home, as Jacob asks of Laban in 30:25-34 (esp. vv. 26, 30, 33). Instead, Laban keeps Jacob as nothing more than a laborer under contract, as Jacob bitterly complains in 31:38-42...Laban's smooth talk reduces Jacob to a lowly laborer under contract. Their relationship for the next twenty years is that of an oppressive lord over an indentured servant paying off a bride price, not of an uncle helping his blood relative...He would rather give any wage than give Jacob the dignity and help due a relative.*²²⁶

I think that it is likely that Laban, at this point, knew what he was going to do. Remember, Laban had a full month to observe Jacob and to figure him out. Laban knew what Jacob would offer (some amount of time worked for Rachel); and Laban would deceive Jacob in order to get double that number of years.

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Genesis 29:15 **Then Laban said to Jacob, "Look, you are my nephew; you cannot work for nothing. Tell me what I should pay you."** It is my contention that Laban had all of this worked out already; including Jacob's answer.

²²¹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 453) accessed August 10, 2017.

²²² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15.

²²³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15 (slightly edited).

²²⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15.

²²⁵ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29b.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

²²⁶ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 453) accessed August 10, 2017. Wenstrom cites Genesis, A Commentary, pages 404-405, Zondervan

A Preview of Laban's Plan to Manipulate Jacob

I would not be surprised if Laban even implanted the figure 7 years into Jacob's thinking. Someone might mention casually to Jacob, *you know that Charlie Brown, down the street, had no money, so he worked for 7 years in place of a dowry for his wife.* I am speculating here, of course; but there are ways to implant numbers into a person's brain. If Laban asks Jacob about such a thing, and does not say, "Hey, take a week to think about it;" but rather seems to be asking a direct question requiring a direct answer, it would be easier for that suggested number to come out. All of this is speculation; but Laban seems like a pretty clever man. One thing that we know for certain, Jacob never saw any of this coming.

Arthur W. Pink takes in the arc of Jacob's journey here: *The plan of Jacob's mother seemed to be working very well. Everything appeared to be running very smoothly. Esau had been left behind at a safe distance, the long journey from Beersheba to Padan-aram had been covered without harm, little or no difficulty had been experienced in locating his mother's brother. Rachel had shown no resentment at Jacob's affectionate greeting, and now Laban himself had accorded the fugitive a warm welcome, and for a whole month nothing seems to have broken their serenity. And what of God? What of His moral government! What of the law of retribution? Was Jacob to suffer nothing for his wrong doing? Was the deception he had practiced upon Isaac to escape unnoticed? Would it, in his case, fail to appear that "the way of the transgressor is hard"? (Prov. 13:15). Ah! be not deceived; God is not mocked. Sometimes the actions of God's government may appear to move slowly, but sooner or later they are sure. Often-times this is overlooked. Men take too short a view: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11)...the way of the transgressor is hard, and so Jacob found it in the sequel.²²⁷*

Gen. 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Look, you are my nephew; you cannot work for nothing. Tell me what I should pay you."

Arthur W. Pink further remarks: *Here was the first cloud on Jacob's horizon, and the first appearing of the Divine rod of chastisement. Here, too, was a most striking example of the law of righteous retribution. Jacob was about to begin reaping that which he had sown. Perhaps this is not apparent on the surface, so we tarry to explain. It will be remembered that the end before Jacob and his mother in their scheming and lying was that he should secure from Isaac the blessing which was the portion of the first born. What this blessing was we know from the words of the Lord to Rebekah before her sons were born, words which expressly declared that Jacob should receive the first-born's portion- "the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). That, then, upon which Jacob had set his heart, and that which he had sought to obtain from Isaac by a wicked device, was the position of dignity and honor. Instead of serving he wanted to be served. How striking, then, to note that the very first word spoken by Laban after Jacob had enjoyed the hospitality of his house for a month, concerned that of service! How significant that Jacob should have fallen into the hands of a crafty schemer! Laban was glad to receive Jacob into his household, but even though his nephew he did not intend that he should remain on indefinitely as a guest. No, he meant to profit by Jacob's presence, and so seeks to strike a bargain, lets Jacob know that if he remained with him it must be in the capacity of a servant, and so raises the question of "wages." This must have been a bitter portion for Jacob and a painful blow to his pride. He was beginning to learn that the way of the transgressor is hard.²²⁸*

²²⁷ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

²²⁸ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

A Preview of Laban's Plan to Manipulate Jacob

I think that we can gather from this text that: (1) Laban knows that Jacob came there to marry one of his daughters (this would have been a part of the all things that Jacob told him); (2) Jacob did not arrive with a dowry (and my guess is, Laban did not know what this was the case—he may have guessed that Abraham's family was suffering from hard times); and (3) Laban probably figured out that Jacob loved Rachel. Even if Jacob thought that he was being subtle about his interest in Rachel, it probably stood out as if he had a sign on his forehead. Even though #2 & 3 are guesses, I think that they are pretty accurate. Let me further add that (4) Laban had pretty much worked out a plan and a price. If Leah was not married by the time that Rachel was to marry Jacob, then Laban would pull a switcheroo on Jacob. I personally think that Laban had this figured out this far in advance. Laban has two daughters, and they would marry and separate from him (more than likely). So, his question to himself was, *how can I best benefit from these circumstances?* Nobody knows what is in the future, and standing right in front of Laban was a very interested suitor. Therefore, Laban, rather than hold out for someone else offering a dowry, decided to take advantage of Jacob's situation, but for Laban's own benefit.

Again, this is speculation, but, if you know something about card tricks, there are ways of forcing a person to take a particular card (which is the key to the trick). There is a great deal to be known about the power of suggestion; and I am sure that Laban had the means to find a way to suggest to Jacob, "If you want to marry Rachel, then you need to offer 7 years of service." The key is to find the maximum number of years, without discouraging the suitor (or causing him to just run away with Rachel). Now, if another suitor does not come along with a sizable dowry; then Laban can con Jacob, so that Jacob marries Leah. What I am suggesting here is, I believe that Laban had all of this worked out in advance; with the contingency plan if Leah was not married in the next 7 years. I believe even to the point of Jacob offering to work 7 years for Rachel—I think that number originated with Laban.

Remember just how elaborate and how well-thought out Rebekah's plan was to deceive Isaac? Certainly, Laban is capable of equal manipulation.

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Let me add that Jacob, at this point, does not suspect a thing. I think that Laban knew what Jacob would ask for and that Laban even set him up to make the offer that he did. But Jacob has no idea that he is being played here, and that he will answer just as Laban expects him to:

And to Laban two of daughters. A name of the greater [is] Leah; and a name of the lesser [is] Rachel. And eyes of Leah [are] tender; and Rachel was fair of figure and fair of appearance.

Genesis
29:16–17

Laban had two daughters: the name of the older [is] Leah and the name of the younger [is] Rachel. The eyes of Leah [are] weak [and timid]; but Rachel [had] a beautiful [eye-catching] figure and an attractive appearance.

Now, Laban had two daughters: Leah was the eldest and Rachel the youngest. Leah's eyes were weak and timid; but Rachel had a beautiful, eye-catching figure and she was very attractive.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And to Laban two of daughters. A name of the greater [is] Leah; and a name of the lesser [is] Rachel. And eyes of Leah [are] tender; and Rachel was fair of figure and fair of appearance.

Targum of Onkelos

And Laban had two daughters, the name of the elder Leah, and the name of the younger Rahel. And the eyes of Leah were moist, (or dropping, running), from

	<u>weeping and praying before the Lord that he would not destine her for Esau the wicked</u> ; and Rahel was beautiful in appearance, and of a fair countenance.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the eyes of Leah were tender, <u>for she had wept and prayed that she might not be brought up in the lot of Esau</u> ; and Rahel was beautiful in appearance, and of fair countenance.
Latin Vulgate	Now he <u>had</u> two daughters, the name of the elder was Lia; and the younger was called Rachel. But Lia was blear-eyed: Rachel was well favoured, and of a beautiful countenance.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban <u>had</u> two daughters: the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger Rachel. And Leah had attractive eyes; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored.
Septuagint (Greek)	Now Laban <u>had</u> two daughters, the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And the eyes of Leah were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in appearance, and exceedingly fair in countenance.
Significant differences:	There is not word for <i>had</i> in the Hebrew; although the first phrase <i>means</i> and Laban <u>had two daughters</u> . There is actually no verb in the Hebrew. There is a lot of additional text in the targums (as usual).

We do not know exactly what is said about the eyes of Leah; so the other ancient translations may have it right and they might be making a guess at it.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were clouded, but Rachel was fair in face and form.
Easy English	Laban had two daughters. The older one was called Leah, and the younger one was called Rachel. Leah had weak eyes. But Rachel was beautiful and she was lovely to look at.
Easy-to-Read Version	Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah and the younger was Rachel. Rachel was beautiful. And Leah's eyes were gentle [This might be a polite way of saying Leah was not very pretty].
<i>God's Word</i> TM	Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel. Leah had attractive eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and beautiful features.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Laban had two daughters; the older was named Leah, and the younger Rachel. Leah had lovely eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful.
<i>The Message</i>	Now Laban had two daughters; Leah was the older and Rachel the younger. Leah had nice eyes, but Rachel was stunningly beautiful.
NIRV	Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah. And the name of the younger one was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes. But Rachel was beautiful. She had a nice figure.
New Simplified Bible	Laban had two daughters. The older was named Leah and the younger Rachel. Leah had soft eyes and Rachel was shapely and very beautiful.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah and the younger Rachel. Leah had delicate eyes [Heb uncertain; perhaps Leah had poor eyesight], but Rachel had a beautiful figure and was good-looking.
Contemporary English V.	Laban had two daughters. Leah was older than Rachel, but her eyes didn't sparkle, while Rachel was beautiful and had a good figure.

New Berkeley Version	Now Laban had two daughters, the elder named Leah and the younger named Rachel. Leah's eyes had no sparkle, while Rachel was lovely of form and face.
New Century Version	Now Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah, and the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel was very beautiful.
New Living Translation	Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Now, Laban had two daughters. The name of the eldest was LeAh, and the younger was called RachEl. LeAh had weak eyes, but RachEl was beautiful and had a very pretty face.
Beck's American Translation	Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger one was Rachel. Leah had no sparkle in her eyes, but Rachel was beautiful in form and looks.
International Standard V	Now Laban happened to have two daughters. The older one was named Leah and the younger was named Rachel. Leah looked rather plain [Or Leah had weak eyes], but Rachel was lovely in form and appearance.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Laban had two daughters; Rachel was the younger and her elder sister was called Lia. But Lia was dull-eyed, whereas Rachel had beauty both of form and face, and on her Jacob's love had fallen. So he answered, I will work seven years for thee to win thy younger daughter Rachel. V. 18 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	Well, Laban had two daughters. The older one was named Leah, and the younger one was named Rachel. Leah had pretty eyes, but Rachel had a very attractive figure and was beautiful.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Laban had two daughters: the greater named Leah, and the smaller named Rachel. Leah had tender eyes; but Rachel was beautifully formed and beautiful in appearance.
Conservapedia	Laban had two daughters, the elder named Leah and the younger Rachel. The eyes of Leah were tender, but Rachel had a lovely body and face.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	<i>Jacob's Faithful Love</i> Now Laban had two daughters the name of the eldest Leah, and the name of the youngest Rachel. But the eyes of Leah were timid, and those of Rachel perfect in form and beautiful to see, and Jacob loved I will serve you seven years for your youngest daughter Rachel. Vv. 17–18 are included for context.
New Heart English Bible	Laban had two daughters. The name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and attractive.
Urim-Thummim Version	And Laban had two daughters, the name of the elder was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah had anemic looking eyes, but Rachel was the most beautiful with a well figured appearance.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Laban has two daughters, the name of the elder is Leah, and the name of the younger is Rachel. And Leah's eyes were gentle, but Rachel had a beautiful body and beautiful face.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	Now Laban had two daughters; the older was called Leah, the younger Rachel. Leah had lovely [Lovely eyes: the adjective modifying eyes is often translated as
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"weak," but "lovely" is the more probable word.] eyes, but Rachel was well formed and beautiful.

New American Bible (2011)	Now Laban had two daughters; the older was called Leah, the younger Rachel. Leah had dull eyes [Dull eyes: in the language of beauty used here, "dull" probably means lacking in the luster that was the sign of beautiful eyes, as in 1 Sm 16:12 and Sg 4:1.], but Rachel was shapely and beautiful.
New RSV	Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were lovely,* and Rachel was graceful and beautiful.
Revised English Bible	Now Laban had two daughters: the elder was called Leah, and the younger Rachel. Leah was dull-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful in both face and figure, and Jacob had fallen in love with her. A portion of v. 18 is include for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Now Lavan had two daughters; the name of the older was Le'ah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Le'ah's eyes were weak; but Rachel was good-looking, with beautiful features.
The Complete Tanach	Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were tender, but Rachel had beautiful features and a beautiful complexion.

tender: Because she expected to fall into Esau's lot, and she wept, because everyone was saying, "Rebecca has two sons, and Laban has two daughters. The older [daughter] for the older [son], and the younger [daughter] for the younger [son]" (B.B. 123a).

features: Heb. רֵאָת. That is the form of the countenance, an expression similar to (Isa. 44: 13) "he fixes it (וּהִרְאָתִי) with planes (דְּרָשֵׁב) ," compas in Old French, outline, shape.

complexion: That is the shine of the countenance.

exeGesés companion Bible	And Laban has two daughters: the name of the greater, Leah and the name of the younger, Rachel. Leah is tender eyed; but Rachel is beautiful in form and beautiful in visage:...
Judaica Press Complete T.	Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were tender, but Rachel had beautiful features and a beautiful complexion.
Kaplan Translation	Laban had two daughters. The older one's name was Leah, and the younger one's name was Rachel. Leah had lovely eyes [(Targum; Tur). Others have 'weak eyes,' or 'sensitive eyes.'], while Rachel was shapely and beautiful.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Lavan had two banot: the shem of the elder was Leah, and the shem of the younger was Rachel. Leah had weak eyes; but Rachel was yafeh and lovely in form.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Now Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah, and the younger was Rachel. Leah had ·weak eyes [frail/tender eyes; ^o likely means unattractive], but Rachel was very beautiful.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger wag Rachel. That Jacob would eventually press his suit for one of these Laban knew, and his offer served to pave the way. Leah was tender-eyed,

that is, her eyes were weak and dull, she was no beauty in the sense of the Orient; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored, she had beauty of form and beauty of face, her eyes especially showing a brightness and luster which is regarded so highly in the East.

NET Bible®

(Now Laban had two daughters; the older one was named Leah, and the younger one Rachel. Leah's eyes were tender [Heb "and the eyes of Leah were tender." The disjunctive clause (introduced here by a conjunction and a noun) continues the parenthesis begun in v. 16. It is not clear what is meant by "tender" (or "delicate") eyes. The expression may mean she had appealing eyes (cf. NAB, NRSV, NLT), though some suggest that they were plain, not having the brightness normally expected. Either way, she did not measure up to her gorgeous sister.], but Rachel had a lovely figure and beautiful appearance.) [Heb "and Rachel was beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance."].

Syndein/Thieme

And Laban had two daughters . . . the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was 'weak eyed'. But Rachel was beautiful and well favored. {Note: Leah was not attractive. Rachel on the other hand was extremely beautiful.}.

The Voice

Now Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah, and her younger sister was Rachel. There was no brightness to Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful shape and was lovely to look at.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and to Lavan ^[White] were two daughters, the title of the magnificent one was Le'ah ^[Weary] and the title of the small one was Rahhel ^[Ewe], and the eyes of Le'ah ^[Weary] were tender and Rahhel ^[Ewe] had existed beautiful of shape and beautiful of appearance,...

Concordant Literal Version

Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the elder is Leah and the name of the younger is Rachel. And the eyes of Leah are tender, yet Rachel is lovely in shapeliness, and lovely in appearance.

Emphasized Bible

Now, Laban, had two daughters,—the name of the elder, Leah, and the name of the younger, Rachel, But, the eyes of Leah were weak,—whereas, Rachel, was comely in form and comely in countenance.

Modern KJV

And Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah was weak of eyes, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favored.

NASB

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face.

New King James Version

Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

Webster's Bible Translation

And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder [was] Leah, and the name of the younger [was] Rachel. Leah [was] tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favored.

Young's Updated LT

And Laban hath two daughters, the name of the elder is Leah, and the name of the younger Rachel, and the eyes of Leah are tender, and Rachel hath been fair of form and fair of appearance..

The gist of this verse:

Parenthetically, we are told that Laban has two daughters—one is beautiful with a good figure and the other possibly has vision problems.

Genesis 29:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
sh ^e nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^en-Ā</i>]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
bath (בָּת) [pronounced <i>bathh</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #1323 BDB #123

The NET Bible: *Heb "and to Laban [there were] two daughters." The disjunctive clause (introduced here by a conjunction and a prepositional phrase) provides supplemental material that is important to the story. Since this material is parenthetical in nature, vv. 16-17 have been set in parentheses in the translation.*²²⁹

Translation: *Laban had two daughters:...* Jacob's answer will be related to Laban's daughters; so they will be briefly discussed in these two verses. We have already met one of his daughters in the narrative—Rachel.

The Hebrew phrase *to Laban* is sometimes equivalent to *Laban had*.

Genesis 29:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shêm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
gâdôwl (גְּדוֹלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud; elder, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; wild cow transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521

ISBE²³⁰ and two doctrinal teachers²³¹ suggest *cow, wild cow*.

²²⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen29.htm> (footnote) accessed November 14, 2014.

²³⁰ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Leah.

²³¹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 451) accessed August 10, 2017.

Translation: ...the name of the older [is] Leah... The older daughter has the name *Leah* and her name means *weary*.

I have an unsubstantiated theory that some people in the Bible became known by names that described them. Was Leah named *Leah* at birth? I don't know; but it is odd to name a child *w e a r y*. However, it could be that the two girls were quite different. Perhaps Leah slept a lot and Rachel (her name means *ewe*) bounced around like a baby goat or sheep.

Leah

She was the oldest daughter of Laban, and the granddaughter of Bethuel, great granddaughter of Nahor, who was brother to Abraham

Her name means "weary"


After Jacob served 7 years for the hand of her younger sister, Rachel, Laban veiled Leah on the wedding night and deceived Jacob into marrying her

Jacob agreed to serve Laban 7 more years for Rachel's hand in marriage

During this time Leah bore unto Jacob six sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and later Issachar, Zebulon

She also bore a daughter, Dianah

Leah was buried in the cave of Machpelah, the resting place of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Rebekah



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Leah (a graphic doctrine); from [Slide Player](#); accessed August 12, 2017.

Coffman looks at Leah more in terms of the future of Israel.

James Burton Coffman on Leah

1. She was the actual mother of six sons (Genesis 30:19), half of the twelve patriarchs, and one daughter (Dinah).
2. Her son Judah succeeded to the headship of the Chosen Nation, through whom the Messiah was born.
3. Her posterity became the principal element in the true Israel, following the defection and loss of the Northern Israel.
4. David the king who gave his name and title to Christ himself ("the son of David") was her descendant.
5. She was the first, and therefore the lawful, wife of Jacob.
6. Her son Judah gave his name and title to Christ, "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah."
7. She is here mentioned first and was at last buried by Jacob's side in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, "presumably before Jacob's descent to Egypt."

Burton adds: *Leah was defined by Beeching as meaning "wild cow." However, we prefer the meaning of "gazelle," as affirmed by Dummelow.*

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017. He cites Mrs. M. Beeching, *The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 75; and Dummelow's *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, p. 35.

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Genesis 29:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
qâṭṣôn (קָטָן) [pronounced <i>kaw-TOHN</i>]	<i>small, insignificant, unimportant; lesser; a word particularly used for youth, younger</i>	masculine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #6996 BDB #882
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932

Wenstrom: *Rachel means, "ewe" meaning the female of the sheep, especially of the mature.*²³²

Translation: ...and the name of the younger [is] Rachel. We have already met the younger daughter, Rachel; and she seems to be filled with pep and energy. She is shepherding Laban's sheep; and when she finds out who Jacob is, she *runs* back to tell her father.

Rachel (a graphic doctrine); from [Slide Player](#); accessed August 12, 2017.

We have no idea how old either sister is. Although Henry Morris suggests that they are older than most women are when they are married.^{2 3 3} However, I do not find any clues about their ages. Given that Leah is the oldest and has 6 healthy sons and 1 daughter, it is reasonable to assume that she is of a healthy, child-bearing age. Given that men and women lived longer then than they do today, they may have been older in years, but still quite young, healthy and attractive. The younger daughter Rachel, as we will find, cannot as easily bear children. She will die when her second son is born.

Rachel

She was the youngest daughter of Laban, and the granddaughter of Bethuel, great granddaughter of Nahor, who was brother to Abraham

She met Jacob when he brought her father's sheep to the well

Jacob loved her and agreed to serve her father, Laban, for 7 years in exchange for her hand in marriage

Her older sister, Leah, was eligible for marriage, and though Laban promised Rachel's hand to Jacob, Laban deceived Jacob by sending the veiled Leah to wed Jacob instead of Rachel


Jacob agreed to serve Laban another 7 years for Rachel's hand in marriage

After Jacob and Rachel wed, they seemed to have a difficult time in conceiving children

Eventually she was blessed with a son, Joseph, and later a son, Benjamin (Benoni)

She died after the birth of Benjamin and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem

It is through Joseph that the power and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant would be made to all the quarters of the earth in the latter days



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²³² From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p.) accessed August 10, 2017.

²³³ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; p. 460.

That these women have not yet married is not a reflection upon their attractiveness or suitability for marriage. It is even possible that Laban was saving his daughters to marry into the rich family members in the west. It is reasonable to suppose that there was some correspondence between the families, albeit quite limited. Rachel probably knew about Laban's daughters and Laban probably knew about her sons. There is no indication that any official agreement was ever reached or even discussed. However, Laban may have, remembering the marvelous dowry offered for his sister, think that holding out for another similar marriage might be profitable. All of this is based on conjecture, including assuming correspondence between the families.

Coffman also suggests that Rachel was in on the deception of Jacob (a conclusion that I will come to as well).

James Burton Coffman on Rachel

1. She was the second, not the first, wife of Jacob.
2. She was impatient and demanding (in the matter of her barrenness).
3. Through her posterity, homosexuality found its beginnings in Israel (See Hosea 9:9; Judges 19:10).
4. Her descendant, Ephraim, led the rebellion that divided Israel, usurped the very name of the Chosen Nation as his own, and led the majority of Jacob's descendants into apostasy and destruction.
5. Her body was not placed beside that of Jacob's in Machpelah.
6. Apparently, she sponsored and kept alive pagan idolatry among the Israelites (Genesis 31:32-35).
7. Although having full knowledge of Abraham's introduction of concubinage into his family and of the terrible consequences of it, Rachel, nevertheless, fell into the same error, re-introducing concubinage into the families of the covenant people.

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

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I don't know if you have ever seen baby sheep or goats at 6 or 7 in the morning, but they are quite energetic and playful. They will bounce about, butt into things, and are quite entertaining. Here is Rachel out with the sheep—almost as if she is one—and when Jacob shows up at the water hole, she *runs* to tell her father (her entire family was energetic; you may recall a lot of running occurred when Abraham's servant went there as well).

Genesis 29:16 (And Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.

In order to understand what Jacob proposes, we need to know the rest of the cast of characters. Laban has two daughters, and Jacob has clearly fallen in love with the younger daughter, Rachel. That Laban has two daughters is very much a part of this narrative.

Laban also has sons, but they are not relevant to this narrative. Furthermore, it is possible that Laban's sons have not been born yet or that they are quite young at this time.

Laban's Two Daughters, Rachel and Leah (a graphic); from [Free Bible Images](#); accessed August 12, 2017.



Genesis 29:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
rak ^e (רַךְ) [pronounced <i>rahkh</i>]	<i>tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7390 BDB #940

Translation: The eyes of Leah [are] weak [and timid];... Leah's name seems to be in line with her description here of having weak and timid eyes. She appears to be a shy woman who did not look people right in the eyes.

Wenstrom: *These names were not unusual or derogatory but rather appropriate in a family of shepherds. However, in the case of Laban, he actually does treat these two young women like animals.*²³⁴

This is an aside concerning Laban's daughters. The adjective describing Leah's eyes is rak (רַךְ) [pronounced *rahkh*] and it means *tender*, which possibly implies *weak*. This word is used in conjunction with youth in 1Chron. 22:5 29:1 and 2Chron. 13:7 and it is used with respect to *soft, tender* speech in Job 41:3 Prov. 15:1. It is used in a negative sense perhaps in Deut. 20:8 and 2Chron. 13:7, where it is used in conjunction with *heart* and together they mean *tender-hearted* or *faint-hearted*. Even here, this is not entirely a negative sense. I think that past translators wanted a contrast Rachel's beauty with Leah's lack of desirability so they often translate this word *weak*, as though Leah needed glasses or wandered about squinting at everything. It is possible that they took their cue from the LXX, which does translate this work with the Greek word for *weak*. However, the use of *rak* in Isa. 47:1 indicates that this word is not a negative when it comes to physical attractiveness. It is quite conceivable, if not probable, that both of Laban's daughters are very attractive, considering the gene pool that they are in. Nor is it necessary for Leah to be ugly in order for Jacob to chose Rachel over her. Leah's eyes are perhaps soft, tender and youthful. With some women, the first thing you notice are their eyes; so maybe this was Leah.

Another possibility is, Leah had weak vision. This is one of the most common interpretations.

The word in question is given many different translations, and is found several times in Scripture.

An examination of the word rak^e (רַךְ) [pronounced *rahkh*]

1. The word found here is rak^e (רַךְ) [pronounced *rahkh*] and it means *tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid*. Strong's #7390 BDB #940.
2. When Abraham was going to entertain Jesus Christ and the two angels, he had a *tender* calf slaughtered for them to eat. Gen. 18:7
3. David calls his son Solomon young and *inexperienced* (= *tender*) in 1Chron. 22:5 29:1.
4. Rak^e is used in apposition to *harsh, painful* in Prov. 15:1 *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* (ESV)
5. This word, when used of a man to go to war, means *faint [-hearted]*. Deut. 20:8
6. The adjective is Once when David did not feel that he was strong enough to oppose Joab for what he had done, he called himself *weak* (2Sam. 3:39).

²³⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p.) accessed August 10, 2017.

An examination of the word rak^e (רַךְ) [pronounced *rahkh*]

7. Unfortunately, none of the uses of this word clearly gives us a meaning or understanding for this verse. If we understand that Leah's eyes are *weak, soft, timid*; perhaps this is an indication of shyness and perhaps an indication of weak vision (this is what I would think). Several translators suggest that this is the opposite of a woman with bright and attractive eyes.
8. However, the references to the *tender* calf in Gen. 18:7 and to Solomon as being *tender*, could simply mean that Leah was *young, tender* eyes.

Essentially, translators are trying to give us a shorthand view of why Jacob likes Rachel more than Leah. However, since these are the words of Jacob—possibly recorded years later—this is not necessarily presented as an insult, but just the first thing that Jacob noticed about Leah. Perhaps she was often looking down or away because of her weak vision or because of her general shyness.

It is easy to make the assumption that Rachel is much more attractive than Leah; but that does not have to be the case (nothing about Leah is discussed except her eyes). The more that I study this chapter, the more it appears that the difference between the women is one of mental attitude. Rachel was very useful to her father, and probably received no little praise as a result. Her father may have seen Leah, with her weak vision, as more of a burden; and whatever he said, no doubt, ate away at her own confidence.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

I have long thought that some Bible names might be descriptive (perhaps a play on their given name); and where Rachel was energetic, Leah was more lethargic (Leah means *weary*).

Genesis 29:16–17a **Now, Laban had two daughters: Leah was the eldest and Rachel the youngest. Leah's eyes were weak and timid;...**

There seem to be two basic camps for most commentators: (1) Leah had weak vision or (2) the reference to Leah's eyes denoted something of her physical appearance (lighter eyes, attractive eyes, *bedroom* eyes).

Leah's Eyes (from Many Commentators)

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Leah's eyes were feeble, i.e., dull, without brilliancy and freshness. In the East the clear expressive lustrous eye is accounted the chief feature in female beauty. It was compared to the eyes of a gazelle (1Sam. 16:12).*²³⁵

Clarke: *I believe the word means just the reverse of the signification generally given to it. The design of the inspired writer is to compare both the sisters together, that the balance may appear to be greatly in favor of Rachel. The chief recommendation of Leah was her soft and beautiful eyes.*²³⁶

Gill: *Leah was tender eyed,.... Blear eyed, had a moisture in them, which made them red, and so she was not so agreeable to look at; though Onkelos renders the words, "the eyes of Leah were beautiful," as if her beauty lay in her eyes, and nowhere else.*²³⁷

Wenstrom: *The statement "Leah's eyes were weak" does "not" refer to the fact that she had poor eyesight but rather that her eyes were dull in color meaning they were probably light blue or gray and not deep dark brown, which was the preferable color for standard of beauty in the Middle East.*²³⁸

²³⁵ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20.

²³⁶ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:17.

²³⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:17.

²³⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 451) accessed August 10, 2017.

Leah's Eyes (from Many Commentators)

Wenstrom continues: *The statement "Leah's eyes were weak" does "not" mean that she was homely looking since her sister Rachel was beautiful but rather it means it was her only specific weakness in the eyes of men in Middle East in that day.*²³⁹

James Burton Coffman: *Scholars and translators have had no end of trouble with this word rendered here as "tender." A hundred and fifty years ago, Clarke was of the definite opinion that, "The word means just the reverse of the signification usually given to it"; and Speiser and Willis, along with many other modern scholars, agree with this. It is likely that what is meant is that her principal beauty lay in the luster and softness of her beautiful eyes. Therefore, the contrast with Rachel in which it is stated that she "was beautiful and well-favored" should be applied as a description of her excellent figure and exquisite delicacy of her features. Her appearance was more sensational than that of Leah.*²⁴⁰

Those who thought that her vision is weak:

Whedon: *Her eyes were weak (Sept. ἀσθενεῖς) and perhaps inflamed, (Vulg. lippi,) a great blemish, "since bright eyes, with fire in them, are regarded as the height of beauty in Oriental women."* — Keil.²⁴¹

Stephen Armstrong: *[We are] told her eyesight is weak, meaning Leah had poor eyesight. In that day, poor eyesight was a real problem, because corrective lens didn't exist.*²⁴²

Dr. Peter Pett is on the fence on this one: *The word for 'tender' can mean soft, weak, delicate. This may indicate some weakness in the eye or it may simply mean timid or gentle-eyed (compare Deut. 28:56). The point was that while Leah was not unattractive she paled in comparison with Rachel.*²⁴³

I was born with terrible eyesight and have wondered about what would have happened to me had I been born 400 years (or more) earlier. I do not know when corrective lenses came into existence (Benjamin Franklin wore them); but I am certain that there corrective lenses of the sort that I required were probably not in existence until relatively recently. If Leah's eyes were half as bad as mine (assuming that is the problem), her ability to contribute to the family would have been severely limited.

When being led through a series of offices for an eye appointment, many years ago, the female technician, knowing my eyesight and the fact that I was following her without wearing glasses, told me, "I am the pink blob in front of you. Follow the pink blob." She was pretty smart, because that was all I could see without my glasses.

Rachel, who would have been somewhat of an athletic tomboy, was in charge of a large flock of her father's sheep. However, Leah, with her weak eyes, would not be able to take care of a flock of sheep. She would have been virtually worthless to Laban—and I would not be surprised if Laban did not see her as a burden and perhaps even told her this from time to time.

Given this information, Leah was probably more in her own world much of the time, with some feelings of inferiority instilled in her by her own father. Based upon this approach (which is partially speculative, mind you), Leah is probably not unattractive (she is never presented as such); but she cannot see very well and she probably has a poor self-image as well. Rachel, on the other hand, because they is physically active as a shepherdess, as a more athletic figure (which will be alluded to in the rest of v. 17).

²³⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 451–452) accessed August 10, 2017.

²⁴⁰ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017. Burton cites Adam Clarke.

²⁴¹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:17.

²⁴² From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29b.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

²⁴³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:17.

It could be that Leah's eyes were simply a much lighter color.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Wenstrom: *Also, as we will see, Leah, though comparatively unloved by Jacob, produced more offspring than her sister and their servants combined. Her fertility was compensation for her unloved status (Gen. 29:31ff.). Little in the narratives sheds insight into Leah's personality, aside from her competition with her sister concerning producing offspring.*²⁴⁴

Genesis 29:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
ʿhâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
yâpneh (יָפֵה) [pronounced <i>yaw-FEH</i>]	<i>fair, beautiful, attractive; handsome</i>	feminine singular adjective, construct form	Strong's #3303 BDB #421
tô'ar (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>TOH-ahr</i>]	<i>a striking figure, an eye-catching form, a form which stands out, which catches your eye, which gets your attention; a form</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8389 BDB #1061
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâpneh (יָפֵה) [pronounced <i>yaw-FEH</i>]	<i>fair, beautiful, attractive; handsome</i>	feminine singular adjective, construct form	Strong's #3303 BDB #421
mar ^{eh} (מַרְאֵה) [pronounced <i>mahr-EH</i>]	<i>the act of seeing, sight, vision; appearance, that which is seen; fair of form, handsome, attractive</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4758 BDB #909

Translation: ...but Rachel [had] a beautiful [eye-catching] figure and an attractive appearance. Rachel really caught the eye of others. She had a wonderful figure—one that would get the attention of a man; and she was quite attractive.

A description of Rachel and the various translations which are found belies the prissiness of some translators. The KJV and Owen both translate the first descriptor as *beautiful*, which is fine, and not far from the Hebrew; however, such a rendering certainly sets off the buzzer on the *prissometer*. There are two words here. Yâpneh (יָפֵה) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*] unquestionably means *beautiful*, but it is used primarily of an attribute (not **as** an attribute) of a woman.

²⁴⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 451) accessed August 10, 2017.

The noun is the masculine, singular word *tō'ar* (רֹאֵר) [pronounced *TOH-ahr*], and it means *outline, figure, form*. Even *comely appearance* as found in *The Emphasized Bible* is euphemistic. Rachel had a beautiful body; she had a tremendously attractive figure. This word is in the masculine and, as often as not, refers to the figure of a female. You can figure that out. It should be noted that what is considered a beautiful figure in some societies, is not necessarily considered the same in other societies. Quite obviously, what individual men prefer is all over the map. Furthermore, we are seeing this through Jacob's eyes, so it is what pleased him at this time.

Rachel and Leah by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) (a graphic); from [Presbydestrian](#); accessed August 11, 2017.



Rachel is also beautiful (*yapheh*) with respect to *mar'eh* (הֶאָרַם) [pronounced *mahr-EH*], which means *sight, appearance, vision*. This is the outside, overall package. Jacob is writing this and the first thing that he says about Rachel is that she had a beautiful figure and that her overall appearance was beautiful. It is possible to have the former but not the latter (and, vice versa); however, I do not intend to draw any pictures or illustrate this with photos. Jacob is being diplomatic, yet accurate in his description. There is no verb used with Leah, yet he uses the Qal perfect of the absolute status quo verb in the Hebrew *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] with Rachel. This is completed action which stands. The first day Jacob saw Rachel she was beautiful of figure and appearance, and even as he wrote this, decades later, she was still beautiful of figure and appearance. Often the lack of a verb will bring out great emphasis, but Jacob mentions an attractive trait of Leah's and spends a little more time on Rachel (whose name is in the emphatic position). The bias, not seen in the English, is unmistakable in the Hebrew. **And Leah's eyes, tender; but Rachel was [and is] beautiful in figure and beautiful in general appearance.** Hopefully, this gives you a better concept of what this verse says. Leah, who was never Jacob's favorite, will also likely read this at sometime. She is not unattractive, although she might be less attractive than Rachel. Jacob writes this with both tact and accuracy.

As we have seen, Rachel is an active and probably happy woman (activity lends itself to a better attitude).

Genesis 29:16–17 Laban had two daughters: the name of the older [is] Leah and the name of the younger [is] Rachel. The eyes of Leah [are] weak [and timid]; but Rachel [had] a beautiful [eye-catching] figure and an attractive appearance.

A Description of Rachel (Many Commentators)

Clarke on Rachel's appearance: *Rachel was ראת תפי yephath toar, beautiful in her shape, person, mien, and gait, and הארמ תפי yephath mareh, beautiful in her countenance. The words plainly signify a fine shape and fine features, all that can be considered as essential to personal beauty.*²⁴⁵

Gill: *Rachel was beautiful and well favoured; in all parts, in the form of her countenance, in her shape and stature, and in her complexion, her hair black, her flesh white and ruddy, as Ben Melech observes.*²⁴⁶

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *[Rachel] a fine shape and fine features—beautiful both in form and in appearance.*²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:17.

²⁴⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:17.

²⁴⁷ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20.

Trapp: *Plato calls beauty the principality of nature.*²⁴⁸

Given the information that we have, Rachel was probably more athletic, self-sufficient, and self-confident than Leah. These things can very much affect the way that others perceive her. She would be likely outgoing and friendly, while Leah may have been more withdrawn and in her own world.

Rachel's mental attitude was probably the greatest difference from her sister; making her seem more attractive. For these reasons, I think the difference between the daughters was less a degree of beauty and more one of personality and perceived attractiveness.²⁴⁹

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

You will note that nothing is said about Leah's general appearance or about her figure. I think it is reasonable to assume that Leah was more lethargic with a less-than athletic figure. However, she has to have a form similar enough to Rachel's in order for her to fool Jacob later on in this narrative (who will be deceived by Leah being in his bed on his wedding night).²⁵⁰ Given that, the figures of the women could not be that dissimilar.

Rachel is a woman that Jacob would like to spend time with. Leah was not. This does not mean that Leah was an awful person or considerably less attractive; Jacob is simply enchanted by Rachel.

Genesis 29:17 And Leah was weak of eyes, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favored.)

This is an odd description to apply to anyone, calling them *weak of eyes*. Scripture tells us that the eyes of Leah are *rak*^e (רַק) [pronounced *rahkh*], which means *tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid*. Strong's #7390 BDB #940. This seems to indicate that her eyes are weak and timid. It is possible that her vision is simply weak. When there is a short description of anyone, this is the thing which Jacob saw first and remembered. Leah's *weak eyes*. Perhaps she was timid and shy and looked away; perhaps it was clear that her vision was limited. It is how Jacob perceived her, as this is his description of her.

This description could simply mean that Jacob did have a first impression of her, but he did not study her; he did not look her over carefully. His first impression was that she had weak eyes; but her younger sister Rachel really caught Jacob's attention. Jacob saw Rachel, his cousin, come from afar, and no doubt he watched her as she came closer.

Leah is not called ugly; but the description of Rachel is much more favorable, calling her beautiful and well-favored.

In fact, it is more accurate to say of Rachel: **Rachel [had] a beautiful [eye-catching] figure and an attractive appearance.** This description clearly references her figure. First we have the feminine singular adjective in the construct form, *yâpneh* (יָפְנָה) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*], which means, *fair, beautiful, attractive; handsome*. Strong's #3303 BDB #421. This adjective is affixed to the masculine singular noun *tô'ar* (תֹּאֵר) [pronounced *TOH-ahr*], which means, *a striking figure, an eye-catching form, a form which stands out, which catches your eye, which gets your attention; a form*. Strong's #8389 BDB #1061. We have a number of phrases which are familiar to most of us (*built like a brick whatever*), but let's just stick with the idea that Rachel had a wonderful figure. Rachel was a runner (Gen. 29:12); and female runners tend to have marvelous figures. She seemed to be energetic and active; and this all contributed to her beautiful form.

Then *yâpneh* (יָפְנָה) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*] is repeated and affixed to the masculine singular noun *mar'eh* (מַרְאֵה) [pronounced *mahr-EH*], which means *the act of seeing, sight, vision; appearance, that which is seen; fair of form, handsome, attractive*. Strong's #4758 BDB #909. We might render this *beautiful to look at*. People looked at

²⁴⁸ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:17.

²⁴⁹ Over the years I have studied this chapter, I have moved from the opinion that they differed in beauty to believing that they primarily differ in mental attitude.

²⁵⁰ Bear in mind that, Jacob perhaps never held or embraced Rachel prior to their marriage.

Rachel and they wanted to look again and again. She was a sight to see. This is why Jacob gives a somewhat more detailed description of Rachel right here; he looked at her and then he looked at her again.

This helps to explain a previous passage. These cattlemen (or shepherds) that spoke with Jacob, saw Rachel coming from afar, and they said, “Oh, look, here comes Rachel.” Even from a distance, she would catch the eye of a normal male.

The description here suggests that Jacob’s love is based upon Rachel’s perceived beauty. He is very attracted to her; and it is likely that there was no time when they spent any time together alone. Although they have clearly conversed when they met; it is unclear how many times they have spoken since then. Given the culture, it is highly unlikely that they spent any time alone together—in fact, what we are reading today might represent the only time that they are together and away from other family members.

The description of Rachel and Leah in vv. 16–17 is parenthetical and may even properly include v. 18a ([Jacob loves Rachel](#)). V. 18 picks up where v. 15 ([And Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my brother, should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me, what will be your wages?”](#)) left off.

Jacob has left Canaan and has come to Syria, where his Uncle Laban lives. He has been there a month, and he makes this proposal to Laban:

And so loves Jacob Rachel and so he says, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your daughter the younger.”

Genesis
29:18

Jacob loves Rachel, so he answered, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.”

Since Jacob loves Rachel, he answered, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so loves Jacob Rachel and so he says, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your daughter the younger.”
Targum of Onkelos	And Jakob loved Rahel; and he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rahel thy Younger daughter.
Latin Vulgate	And Jacob being in love with her, said: I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob loved Rachel, and said, I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.

Significant differences: None.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jacob was in love with Rachel; and he said, I will be your servant seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.
Easy English	Jacob loved Rachel. He said this to Laban. ‘I will work for you for 7 years. So then I can marry Rachel, your younger daughter.’
Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob loved Rachel. Jacob said to Laban, “I will work seven years for you if you will allow me to marry your daughter Rachel.”

God's Word™	Jacob loved Rachel. So he offered, "I'll work seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."
NIRV	Jacob was in love with Rachel. He said to Laban, "I'll work for you for seven years to get your younger daughter Rachel."
New Simplified Bible	Jacob was in love with Rachel, so he said: »I will work seven years for you, if you will let me marry Rachel.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he answered, "If you will let me marry Rachel, I'll work seven years for you."
New Century Version	Jacob loved Rachel, so he said to Laban, "Let me marry your younger daughter Rachel. If you will, I will work seven years for you."
New Living Translation	Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And because Jacob loved Rachel, he replied: 'I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter, Rachel.'
International Standard V	Jacob loved Rachel, so he made this offer to Laban: "I'll serve you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."
Names of God Bible	Jacob loved Rachel. So he offered, "I'll work seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."
Translation for Translators	Jacob «was in love with/wanted very much to be married to» Rachel, and he said, "I will work for you for seven years. That will be my payment for your letting me marry your younger daughter, Rachel."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Jacob loved Rachel and said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your smaller daughter."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But the eyes of Leah were timid, and those of Rachel perfect in form and beautiful to see, and Jacob loved Rachel, so he replied, " I will serve you seven years for your youngest daughter Rachel. " v. 17 is included for context.
NIV, ©2011	Jacob was in love with Rachel [Genesis 24:67 (Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his.)] and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel [ver 20, 27, 30; Ge 30:26; Hos 12:12]."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	Since Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel, he answered Laban, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." Jacob offers to render service (⇒ Joshua 15:16, ⇒ 17; ⇒ 1 Sam 17:25; 18:17) in lieu of the customary bridal price (⇒ Exodus 22:16, ⇒ 17; ⇒ Deut 22:29).
New American Bible (2011)	Because Jacob loved Rachel, he answered, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." Jacob offers to render service (Jos 15:16-17 1Sam. 17:25 18:17) to pay off the customary bridal price (Ex 22:15-16 Deut. 22:29).
New Jerusalem Bible	Leah had lovely eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful, and Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel. So his answer was, 'I shall work for you for seven years in exchange for your younger daughter Rachel.' V. 17 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov had fallen in love with Rachel and said, "I will work for you seven years in exchange for Rachel your younger daughter."
The Complete Tanach	And Jacob loved Rachel, and he said, "I will work for you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."

I will work for you seven years: (Gen. Rabbah 67:10, 70:17) They are the few days of which his mother said, "And you shall dwell with him for a few days." (27:44 above) You should know that this is so, because it is written: "and they appeared to him like a few days." (verse 20)

for Rachel, your younger daughter: Why were all these signs necessary? Since he (Jacob) knew that he (Laban) was a deceiver, he said to him, "I will work for you for Rachel," and lest you say [that I meant] another Rachel from the street, Scripture states: "Your daughter." Now, lest you say, "I will change her name to Leah, and I will name her (Leah) Rachel," Scripture states: "[your] younger [daughter]." Nevertheless, it did not avail him, for he (Laban) deceived him. — [from Gen. Rabbah 70:17]

Hebraic Transliteration	And Ya'akov (בְּקָעִי) ahav Rachel (לְרַחֵל); and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel (לְרַחֵל) thy younger daughter.
Kaplan Translation	Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel. 'I will work for you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter,' he said.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee sheva shanim for Rachel thy bat haketannah (younger daughter).

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Jacob loved Rachel, so he said to Laban, "Let me marry your younger daughter Rachel. If you will, I will work seven years for you [I will work for seven years for your younger daughter Rachel]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob loved Rachel and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter, this service taking the place of the customary dowry and the presents given to the relatives.
NET Bible®	Since Jacob had fallen in love with [Heb "Jacob loved."] Rachel, he said, "I'll serve you seven years in exchange for your younger daughter Rachel."
The Voice	Jacob truly loved Rachel. Since Jacob has no money to pay a bride-price, he offers a creative solution to the problem. Jacob: <i>I'll make a deal with you. I'll serve you for seven years in exchange for the hand of your younger daughter Rachel in marriage.</i>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] loved Rahhel ^[Ewe] and he said, I will serve you seven years in Rahhel ^[Ewe] your small daughter,...
Context Group Version	And Jacob gave allegiance to Rachel. And he said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter.
English Standard Version	Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you [Gen. 30:26 31:41 [Hos. 12:12]] seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Jacob loved her well, and said: I will serve you seven years for Rahel your youngest daughter.
NASB	Now Jacob loved [Genesis 24:67 (Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his.)] Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you [Hosea 12:12 (Now Jacob fled to the land of Aram, And Israel worked for a

Young's Updated LT wife, And for a wife he kept sheep.]) **seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.**
And Jacob loves Rachel, and says, "I serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter:"

The gist of this verse: Jacob offers to work for Laban for 7 years to marry Laban's daughter Rachel.

Genesis 29:18a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'āhēb (אָהֵב) [pronounced <i>aw-HAYV^B</i>]	<i>to desire, to breathe after; to love; to delight in; human love [for another] [familial, sexual]; human love [desire, appetite] for [food, drink, sleep, wisdom]; human love [for, to God]; God's love [toward men, people of Israel, righteousness]; to like</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #157 BDB #12
Ya'āqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ǵuh-KOH^BV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
'ēth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Rāchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932

Translation: **Jacob loves Rachel,**... Jacob has been there for only a month, but he is quite taken by Rachel. As we have already noticed, he has remembered everything about the day that he first met Rachel. He loves her.

Rachel was very active (she was leading the sheep; when she went to tell Laban about Jacob, she ran). As a result, she would have had an athletic figure. Jacob rolled away the stone from the well, which suggests that he was quite strong as well. When someone is active, they often prefer an active partner. This was not Jacob's only reason for being in love, but this commonality would have factored in.

Genesis 29:18b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 29:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'abad (עָבַד) [pronounced gaw ^b -VAHD]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
sheba ^c (עֶבֶשׁ) [pronounced she ^b -VAHG]	seven	numeral masculine construct	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
shânîym (שָׁנִים) [pronounced shaw-NEEM]	years	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bath]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
qâṭôn (קָטָן) [pronounced kaw-TOHN]	<i>small, insignificant, unimportant; lesser; a word particularly used for youth, younger</i>	masculine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #6996 BDB #882

Translation: ...so he answered, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter." Jacob has thought for a long time about Rachel. He has not necessarily thought about, "What if Laban asks me what I want to be paid?" But Jacob was sent there in part to find a woman and he finds himself thinking about Rachel continually.

We do not know if Jacob had this idea in his mind for awhile or whether he just suddenly said it.

Gen 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Gen 29:18b Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

It has occurred to me that many readers many not have a clue as to what a dowry is. A man who wants to marry a particular woman generally would provide her family with a sizable gift in order to marry the woman. We studied this in **Genesis 24** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). For the most part, you could not find the woman of your dreams and run off together to marry.

Interestingly enough, there are several commentators who did not believe that this was really legitimate and that Laban was simply taking advantage of Jacob.

Explaining the Dowry (Many Commentators)

Barnes: *Daughters in those countries and times were also objects of value, for which their parents were accustomed to receive considerable presents Gen. 24:53. Jacob at present, however, is merely worth his labor. He has apparently nothing else to offer. As he loves Rachel, he offers to serve seven years for her, and is accepted.*²⁵¹

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *In ancient times, it was a custom among many nations to give dowries for their wives; but Jacob, being poor, offered for Rachel seven year's service. Gen. 31:41 34:12; Ex. 22:16–17; 2Sam. 3:14; Hosea 3:2 12:12.*²⁵²

The Cambridge Bible: *[Jacob] has no money to offer; he is ready to give seven years' service without wages, in order to win Rachel as his bride. He cannot as bridegroom, or suitor, offer the usual gifts, or mohar (see note on Gen. 24:53). So he offers the equivalent in work. See the reference to this incident in Hos. 12:12.*²⁵³

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *It is still the custom in the East to serve for a wife.*²⁵⁴

Jacobus: *Jacob could only pay by service. The daughter was not necessarily sold as a slave; but the parent received a price as a compensation for her rearing and training.*²⁵⁵

Clarke: *Jacob loved her [Rachel], and was willing to become a bond servant for seven years, that he might get her to wife; for in his destitute state he could produce no dowry, and it was the custom of those times for the father to receive a portion for his daughter, and not to give one with her. One of the Hindoo lawgivers says, "A person may become a slave on account of love, or to obtain a wife." The bad system of education by which women are spoiled and rendered in general good for nothing, makes it necessary for the husband to get a dowry with his wife to enable him to maintain her; whereas in former times they were well educated and extremely useful, hence he who got a wife almost invariably got a prize, or as Solomon says, got a good thing.*²⁵⁶

Gill: *[Gill] desired no other wages for his service than that, that he might have her for his wife, at the end of seven years' servitude, which he was very willing to oblige himself to, on that condition; for having no money to give as a dowry, as was customary in those times, he proposed servitude instead of it; though Schmidt thinks this was contrary to custom, and that Laban treated his daughters like bondmaids, and such as are taken captives or strangers, and sold them, of which they complain (Gen. 31:15).*²⁵⁷

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *A proposal of marriage is made [by Jacob] to the father without the daughter being consulted, and the match is effected by the suitor either bestowing costly presents on the family, or by giving cattle to the value the father sets upon his daughter, or else by giving personal services for a specified period. The last was the course necessity imposed on Jacob; and there for seven years he submitted to the drudgery of a hired shepherd, with the view of obtaining Rachel. The time went rapidly away; for even severe and difficult duties become light when love is the spring of action.*²⁵⁸

²⁵¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–20.

²⁵² *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:18.

²⁵³ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:18.

²⁵⁴ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20.

²⁵⁵ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20.

²⁵⁶ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:17.

²⁵⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:17.

²⁵⁸ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:18.

Explaining the Dowry (Many Commentators)

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob's proposal may be explained, partly on the ground that he was not then in a condition to give the customary dowry, or the usual presents to relations, and partly also from the fact that his situation with regard to Esau compelled him to remain some time with Laban. The assent on the part of Laban cannot be accounted for from the custom of selling daughters to husbands, for it cannot be shown that the purchase of wives was a general custom at that time; but is to be explained solely on the ground of Laban's selfishness and avarice, which came out still more plainly afterwards.*²⁵⁹

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob replies that he has made his choice as to which daughter he wants. He is prepared to offer seven years service in exchange for Rachel whom he loves. This may appear a long time but he knows that during the period he will be treated as a relative and equal ('you are my brother' - Gen. 29:15) and he has brought little with him. Offering service in exchange for a man's daughter was a regular feature of the times.*

Pett continues: *In fact a period of seven years service appears to have been an accepted one in 'Hebrew' circles. Consider the stipulations re a Hebrew slave in Exodus 21:2; Deut. 15:12, although the circumstances are not the same. (See article, "Hebrews").*²⁶⁰

Whedon: *I will serve you seven years* — A week of years. *Jacob had not, like his grandfather's servant, rich presents to offer as a dowry for his bride, (Gen. 24:53,) but he offers what he can, the cheerful labour of willing and active hands.*²⁶¹

Whedon gives an excellent explanation for the dowry: *Laban gladly accepts Jacob's offer. It was worth more to him than gold. This custom of preferring marriage with one's own kindred, and also the practice of receiving dowry for a daughter, illustrate the manners of the ancient East, which prevail largely even at the present day. While the daughter is not sold as a slave, the practice shows the comparatively low position of women in the East, and how little a wife had to say in the choice of a husband. But the dowry may be looked upon as a reward paid to parents for the care of a daughter's training and bringing up to womanhood, and also a suitable expression of gratitude on the part of the husband towards the parents of his wife.*²⁶²

Along with this training included assurances of the young woman's virginity. Many times, the blood-stained sheets from the wedding night were preserved and delivered to the parents as proof of their training and insurance against any false claims made by the husband. This tradition is even preserved in the Law of Moses in Deut. 22:13-21.

Wenstrom: *The "bride-price" refers to the compensation paid to the family of the bride for the loss of the bride's presence and services and her potential offspring and would demonstrate proof to Laban's family that Rachel would be well cared for by Jacob. The "bride-price" must not be confused with a "dowry," since the latter was provided by the bride's family whereas the former was provided by the groom.*²⁶³

Leupold: *All they who attempt to reduce the transaction here described to the level of a purchase are injecting foreign elements into the text. At no time in Israel's history were wives purchased. The customary móhar, or dowry-money, was regarded as proof of financial competence on the bridegroom's part.*²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:15–20.

²⁶⁰ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:18.

²⁶¹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:18.

²⁶² *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 20:19.

²⁶³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 450) accessed August 10, 2017.

²⁶⁴ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

My opinion is, Laban had Jacob figured out early on, and, since he obviously did not travel to Haran with presents, Laban would have to get a dowry from Jacob's work. Given that his daughters were now of a marriageable age, and that certainly had an expiration date; Laban needed to strike while the iron was hot, and marry them off to Jacob.

Application: We have entered into a dangerous phrase of American history. When parents ought to be teaching their children what it means to be a man or what it means to be a woman, some parents are actually proposing to their children that they ought to think about *what* gender they really are. Other parents watch for various *signs* and remain open to the idea that maybe their little boy is a little girl or vice versa. It is as if our nation has collectively lost its mind. As a result of so-called feminism, some men have taken up looking overseas for a woman who is more normal and traditional.

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[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Gen 29:15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Gen 29:18b Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

Adam Clarke on the Custom of Dowries

In ancient times it appears to have been a custom among all nations that men should give dowries for their wives; and in many countries this custom still prevails. When Shechem asked Dinah for wife, he said, Ask me never so much - dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me. When Eliezer went to get Rebekah for Isaac, he took a profusion of riches with him, in silver, gold, jewels, and raiment, with other costly things, which, when the contract was made, he gave to Rebekah, her mother, and her brothers. David, in order to be Saul's son-in-law, must, instead of a dowry, kill Goliath; and when this was done, he was not permitted to espouse Michal till he had killed one hundred Philistines. The Prophet Hosea bought his wife for fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer and a half of barley. The same custom prevailed among the ancient Greeks, Indians, and Germans. The Romans also had a sort of marriage entitled per coemptionem, "by purchase." The Tartars and Turks still buy their wives; but among the latter they are bought as a sort of slaves.

Herodotus mentions a very singular custom among the Babylonians, which may serve to throw light on Laban's conduct towards Jacob. "In every district they annually assemble all the marriageable virgins on a certain day; and when the men are come together and stand round the place, the crier rising up sells one after another, always bringing forward the most beautiful first; and having sold her for a great sum of gold, he puts up her who is esteemed second in beauty. On this occasion the richest of the Babylonians used to contend for the fairest wife, and to outbid one another. But the vulgar are content to take the ugly and lame with money; for when all the beautiful virgins are sold, the crier orders the most deformed to stand up; and after he has openly demanded who will marry her with a small sum, she is at length given to the man that is contented to marry her with the least. And in this manner the money arising from the sale of the handsome served for a portion to those whose look was disagreeable, or who had any bodily imperfection. A father was not permitted to indulge his own fancy in the choice of a husband for his daughter; neither might the purchaser carry off the woman which he had bought without giving sufficient security that he would live with her as his own wife. Those also who received a sum of money with such as could bring no price in this market, were obliged also to give sufficient security that they would live with them, and if they did not they were obliged to refund the money." Thus Laban made use of the beauty of Rachel to dispose of his daughter Leah, in the spirit of the Babylonian custom, though not in the letter.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:20.

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Some commentators think that Laban is way out of line here, and taking a dowry when he ought not.

Was Laban acting according to the dowry traditions of his day?

1. I believe that Laban, even before Jacob made this offer, had placed in Jacob's mind the idea of paying this dowry with 7 years of work, even though I have no proof of that. Furthermore, I believe, based upon Gen. 24, that a dowry was a legitimate custom of that era and not something that Laban just decided to do.
2. Those people who claim that Laban was out of line for requiring a dowry from Jacob will automatically go to Leah and Rachel's remarks when Jacob suggests that they leave this area and go to Canaan.
3. Jacob tells his wives that he is getting a raw deal from their father and it is time for them to move. This is how they respond: Gen. 31:14–16 *Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money. All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do."* (ESV)
4. This complaint that their father *has sold us, regarding them as foreigners*; is what they said, but that does not mean that this dowry tradition does not exist. That their father cared little for them and used them to build up his business is clear; and it is to his motivation to which they refer. This does not mean that gaining a dowry for his daughters is somehow illegitimate or not practiced by the Semites. There are plenty of evidences for this—it is clear that Laban and his young sons are jealous (in Gen. 31) of Jacob's prosperity; and Laban treats the husband of his daughters as some kind of competitor, trying to cheat him at every chance.
5. The problem is not the dowry, per se, but Laban's motivation throughout along with his exploitive use of his daughters. He has no concern for their well-being or their families; and will go out of his way to cheat Jacob out of a reasonable profit.

This will be gone into more detail when we come to Gen. 31.

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You've got to remember that Jacob has no real possessions; there is no promise that he will make Laban or Rachel rich. He is on the run from Esau, who, it would be thought, will receive the bulk of his father's inheritance (I don't believe that Laban would have known about this).

In any case, Jacob is family. Laban might be able to do better, and then again he might not. What Laban says is very diplomatic, but he intends to extract his pound of flesh from Jacob. Jacob's proposal is reasonable. As a man who has nothing, he needs to bring something to the marriage. He brings his sweat and labor to this marriage.

Seven years is an awful long time, but Jacob is willing to work for Rachel that long. How many of us could wait that long and work that long for a woman? This shows a great deal of true love and devotion. Jacob waited. He had a great many faults, but he waited for his right woman until that time and was willing to wait and work seven years for her.

James Burton Coffman comments: *By any consideration, it would appear that "seven years" was a long period of servitude.*²⁶⁵

How did Jacob come up with the 7 year figure? Although he certainly could have come up with this on his own, I would not be surprised if Laban used subliminal suggestions to guide Jacob to this particular number. Perhaps, someone commented on this very thing, during the month that Jacob was working, at Laban's direction. This is only speculation, mind you; but it is remarkable that Jacob, in an instant, comes up with an acceptable offer to Laban.

²⁶⁵ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Trapp gives Jacob far too much credit here: *[Jacob] had nothing to endow her with; he would therefore earn her with his hard labour: which, as it shows Laban's churlishness to suffer it, and his baseness to make a prize and a prey of his two daughters, so it sets forth Jacob's meekness, poverty, patience, and hard condition here, mentioned many years after by the prophet Hosea. {Hosea 12:12} He was a man of many sorrows; and from him therefore the Church hath her denomination: neither were the faithful ever since called Abrahamites but Israelites.*²⁶⁶

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary makes a very important statement about Israel and God's grace: *Israel was destined to rise to eminence and power amongst the family of nations. But it was necessary for that people to be reminded of the lowly estate of their forefather. When the Israelite presented his basket of first fruits before the Lord, he was instructed to confess, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father" (Deut. 26:5). The nation was thus taught that all its greatness and prosperity were not due to natural endowments and industry, but to the electing love of God. The strength of His grace was made perfect in weakness.*²⁶⁷

Spoiler alert! Laban is going to cheat Jacob in this matter. Let me suggest that, Laban has the kind of mind that, almost from the very beginning, he knew, at least in general, how he would cheat Jacob.

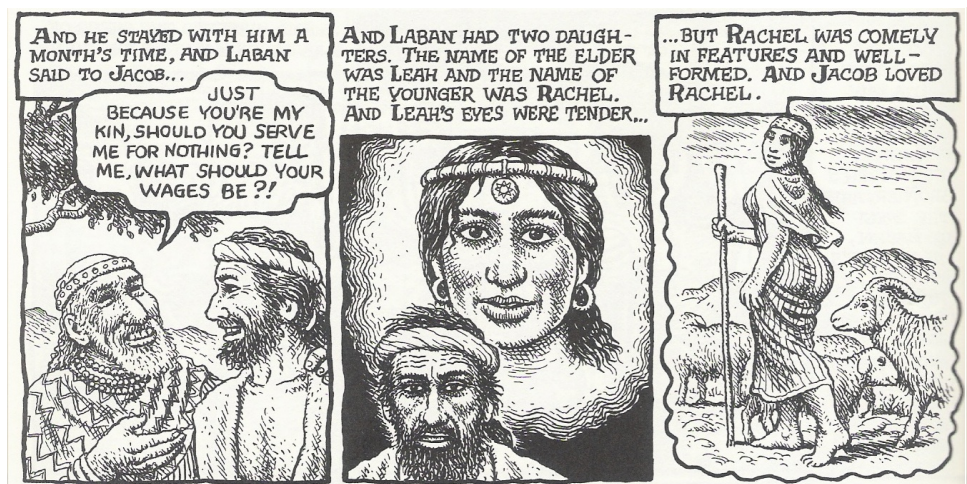
Some took this opportunity to discuss the degraded position of women in that era:

Robertson brings up another consideration: *We see here the degraded position in which women were regarded among the ancients. They were looked upon merely as slaves or servants; and therefore, as by marriage the father was deprived of his daughter's services, he always demanded some dowry or compensation; thus, Jacob served seven years to recompense Laban for the loss of his daughter's services.*²⁶⁸ Let me suggest that, although women had a lower position than men in the ancient world, how much lower would have been a function of the values of their father (and the society at large). Here, it appears as though Laban's thought of his daughter's is simply how he can parlay their existence into greater riches for himself. On the other hand, Simeon and Levi, sons of Jacob, will commit murder to defend the honor of their sister in Gen. 34. If women were nothing higher than slaves, then these brothers would have been uninterested in what happened to Diana.

Genesis 29:14b–18a (an R. Crumb cartoon); from SavageMinds.org; accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel, and said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

Jacob has two considerations—he needs to find a wife and he needs to stay out of the Land of Promise for awhile, or else his furious twin brother will kill him. However, Rachel is not simply a convenience, she is a happy blessing to him. In the text of Gen. 29, it will become clear that Jacob loves Rachel; and it is clear



²⁶⁶ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:18.

²⁶⁷ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20 (Jacob's Lowly Estate).

²⁶⁸ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20 (Suggestive Comments).

that she is an incredibly beautiful woman.

Jacob clearly states here which daughter it is that he wants. This will become an important point in the narrative of this chapter. There is nothing which could be misunderstood here. He names her by name and he calls her the younger daughter.

He also suggests that he work for Laban for 7 years for his younger daughter. This keeps Jacob there in Padan-aram, and far away from the anger of Esau.

There is a cultural consideration which should be addressed—when it came to marriage, the man seems to be holding nearly all of the cards in the ancient world. The deal for Rachel's hand in marriage is made primarily between Jacob and Laban. We do not know how much interaction has occurred between Jacob and Rachel (besides what is in the narrative); or how much will take place over the next 7 years.

Whether the daughter had any say in the matter was probably very much up to the father. Even if the daughter had virtually no choice in these matters, we can chalk that up to cultural considerations. Furthermore, little or no choice does not make a marriage bad. I talked to an Indian gal, many years ago, and we talked about arranged marriages. The natural response of an American to the idea of an arranged marriage is generally negative. Personally, I did not have that response. Furthermore, I told her that I could understand why an arranged marriage might actually end up being a stronger marriage than a marriage where the principals do all of the choosing themselves. Today, there is all sort of freedom associated with marriage in the United States, and yet our marriages do not seem to be as good or as long-lasting as they were 50 years ago. In India, parents want their children to be happy. Furthermore, they know their children, their likes and dislikes; and most parents try to find a good match, either for their son or daughter. In some cultures, a bride and groom may meet for the first time on the day that they marry. And yet, these marriages are often wonderful.

My guess is, if Rachel had any problems with this arrangement, she would have probably said something. The month of interaction between her and Jacob—however slight—would have led to Jacob wanting her as his wife. That is, there are signals given off between a man and a woman, even when the entire family is present and little is actually being said. Even if the only words Rachel and Jacob spoke were at the well, there is enough interaction between the two of them (be it only sideways glances at one another) where Jacob would have reason to ask for her hand (as opposed to Leah's).

My point here is, Jacob asking for Rachel in marriage is not something completely out of the blue; nor will Rachel react, "Where the heck did he get that idea from?" On the other hand, how much obedience on the part of Rachel toward her father is involved here is unclear. Both Rachel and Leah are quite obedient to their father Laban, as we will later discover.²⁶⁹

In any case, all of this is a cultural consideration. There is nothing that indicates that the Bible calls for a return to this precise culture. Although what we are observing here is clearly a part of this culture at this time—this narrative is descriptive; it is not prescriptive. And, as noted, it is not 100% clear exactly what say Rachel has in this matter. In my opinion, she would certainly have the ultimate veto here—but, there were probably marriages of this era where the women had no say whatsoever.

In any case, although the Bible certainly indicates some changes from generation to generation in these cultures (Abraham arranged for the marriage of Isaac; Jacob chooses his own bride), the Bible never clearly lays out all the details of this culture regarding marriage. In my opinion, Rachel could have said, "No, I have no interest in this man." However, at the same time, I would also suggest that there is far more obedience to the father than in today's culture (which will be brought out in this narrative).

This does not mean that the Bible is calling for a culture where men make all the decisions regarding women, and that women just go along with it; nor is that what we necessarily find here. The text is obscure enough to suggest

²⁶⁹ This is based upon my take of the deception, which I will discuss in detail.

that Laban is primarily in charge here; but it does not indicate that Rachel has absolutely no say. The text is simply not explicit enough for us to draw any sort of conclusion in that regard.

Cultures change and evolve; cultures of the same people change and evolve over the years. Sometimes they degenerate, sometime they improve, sometimes they improve in one area but degenerate in another. The Mosaic Law was appropriate to that culture at that time. That does not mean that the entire Mosaic Law can be scrapped, but it does mean that some laws were related to or based upon that culture and customs of that day (particularly the laws found in Deuteronomy).

It is clear in our country (the United States in 2015²⁷⁰) is far too promiscuous with too little regard for the institutions of marriage and family; and too few who adhere to the concept that the man in marriage is the one who is in authority (in the Bible, apart from the cultural norms, the man is clearly placed in charge of his marriage). There have been cultural changes in our culture, which include changes which are against Biblical principles.

In any culture, there are a variety of things which are sinful; and even many which are evil. This does not mean that we ought to return to the culture of Gen. 29; but we certainly could learn from it.²⁷¹

So, in this narrative, it appears as if Laban and Jacob are the ones making the ultimate decision regarding a marriage between Jacob and Rachel. Whatever input that Rachel has, has already been considered by Jacob during this first month of working for Laban. When Laban tells Rachel, I presume she could have said, *no*.

Could there be room for abuse in that culture or in ours? Of course! Just as there is great abuse regarding marriage and family in our culture today—where the children usually getting the short-end of the stick. Because man has a sin nature, marriage, even though it is a divine institution, can be distorted.

Unless otherwise noted, the translation used is the ESV; capitalized.

Critics of Scripture love to take situations like this (paying a dowry for a wife; marrying more than one woman) and citing this as evidence that the Bible is a bad book which encourages sin.

The Biblical Approach to Marriage

1. Marriage, in Scripture, as ideal, is always presented as the union of one man and one woman.
2. Although there are marriages between one man and several women in the Bible; or marriages which include mistresses in the picture, this is not God's ideal, nor is this sort of marriage ever sanctioned or condoned by God. This is despite that fact that many writers of Scripture had more than one wife (Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon).
3. When explaining the problems with the divorce customs of the pharisees, Jesus said this, which sets the precedent: "Have you not read that He Who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matt. 19:4b–6; ESV; capitalized) This, therefore, specifies the structure of marriage, as *designed by God*: one man + one woman functioning as one unit (called here, *one flesh*). People try to claim that Jesus never said anything about homosexuality; but here, He rules out homosexual marriages (a fairly recent cultural invention) and polygamy. God set up the standard for marriage from the very beginning.
4. Marriage is one of the 5 divine institutions: the function of the soul of man (which includes volition), work, marriage, family, and nationalism. These 5 divine institutions are found in all dispensations and the same essential rules apply to each of them, regardless of what dispensation they are found in. That is, marriage is between one man and one woman, whether this is in the Age of Israel or the Church Age. Biblically, the man has the authority in marriage, no matter what the culture. We should expect attacks

²⁷⁰ I began this study in 2014 and will complete it in 2017.

²⁷¹ The whole purpose of the study of Genesis is to learn from it.

The Biblical Approach to Marriage

upon marriage in every dispensation and in every culture. We live in a fallen world; therefore, God's approach to things will constantly be challenged, belittled and/or undermined.

5. The events of Scripture all take place within a specific culture at a given time and place. Therefore, we need to separate cultural norms and standards from Biblical mandates in the examination of marriage. We are to interpret the Bible in the time that it is written, but without applying local customs and culture as though they make up the norms of God's Word.
 - 1) In Gen. 29, the details of marriage agreement are being hammered out between Jacob, the suitor, and Laban, the father. This does not mean that the Bible is telling us that the proper Christian marriage today requires all marriage agreements to be hammered out between the suitor and the father of the bride. This has come down to us today of a man asking a woman's father for her hand in marriage—which is a cultural norm in some societies.
 - 2) Several men in Scripture are said to have multiple wives: this includes Jacob, King David and King Solomon. These are actual personal histories; they are not legitimate options in marriage, nor are they presented as such.
 - (1) One of King David's great sins was chasing after a married woman and taking her (and then having her husband killed). This was a result of David collecting wives and allowing his lust for beautiful women to continue, despite having about 20 wives and mistresses at the time. Part of the discipline and pressure which came to bear against King David came from his sons that he did not bother to raise properly. David's sons from several marriages became criminals, rapists and revolutionaries, causing great harm to David's day-to-day existence. They were a disaster to nation Israel.
 - (2) Solomon is said to have been led astray by his many wives and mistresses in 1Kings 11:3.
 - 3) When you understand marriage, then you better understand what is legitimate and what is not.
6. The roles in marriage: the husband is the one in charge and the wife is his first lieutenant (Eph. 5:23 1Cor. 11:7–9 Gen. 3:16). The husband has authority over the wife and they both have authority over their children.
 - 1) Being in charge does not mean that the husband subjects his wife to close-order drill; it does not mean that he is free to abuse his wife; and it does not mean that he can do whatever is necessary to gain her obedience. Being in charge means that the husband is responsible for his wife and for his children. It is his job to see that they all have food to eat, clothes to wear and a roof over their heads. Eph. 5:25, 28 1Tim. 5:8 1Peter 3:7
 - 2) The wife is under the authority of the husband in marriage. 1Peter 3:1–2 Col. 3:18
 - 3) The amount of input that she has in the marriage should have been sorted out before they are married. However, once the discussion has come to an end, the husband makes the final decision regarding all aspects of their lives. There are exceptions to this approach: even though Paul taught that we are subject to the authorities that be in our lives, the Apostles would continue to evangelize and to teach Bible doctrine, regardless of what the authorities had to say. Similarly, the husband cannot require the wife to do something that is sinful or illegal. Nor can he prevent her from believing in Jesus Christ nor should he keep her from Bible class.
 - 4) This is a tricky balance. The wife *chooses* to submit to her husband; and the husband is the authority. However, this does not give the husband the right to bully his wife for not obeying him.
 - 5) There is equality in the bedroom. 1Cor. 7:3–5
7. The approach to marriage. The different roles of the man and the woman in marriage are key to the man and the woman's approach to a marriage. If two people cannot keep their hands off one another, that is not a basis for marriage. If two people are terribly in love and cannot stop thinking about each other, that is not a basis for marriage.
 - 1) The man needs to look this woman over carefully and decide, "Am I willing to protect and provide for this woman, no matter what, no matter how bitchy she gets; no matter what difficulties come in marriage? Will I see this woman as more important to me than my own self? Am I willing to work two jobs washing dishes to make certain that she has a roof over her head and food on the table? Am I willing to take care of her in all circumstances, in sickness and in health?" The man's choice is all about responsibility.

The Biblical Approach to Marriage

- 2) The woman's response should not focus on her feelings, but on her willingness to place herself under the control and authority of that man. Can she look at him carefully and decide that she respects him so much and trusts him so much that, she is willing to do whatever he says? Outside of marriage, a woman is only subject to her father (and that if she lives in his home). She is not under the control of men in general nor is she under the control of the man she is currently dating. In marriage, the woman *chooses* to put herself under the authority of that one man. Does she trust him enough to do that?
- 3) Whatever negotiations need to be done, should be done prior to entering into marriage.
8. Recommended prerequisites for marriage:
 - 1) A person should have a certain amount of physical and emotional maturity before they ever consider marriage. Note that Adam and Eve were created both physically and mentally mature as they were brought together.
 - 2) Teenage marriages today are at the least questionable and should not be encouraged.
 - 3) Beyond maturity, a person should possess a certain measure of stability in their life, both physical and spiritual. People, who together are not consistent in Bible class, rooted and grounded in Bible doctrine are candidates for troublesome marriages.
 - 4) People need to have some control over their sin nature prior to marriage. A person given over to vices and addictions is no candidate for marriage.
 - 5) In the physical realm, consideration should be given to financial responsibility and management. Financial support for the family and the ability to provide for more than ones self is a responsibility for the head of the house. This is a part of the man taking responsibility for the woman.
9. God designed marriage for happiness and maximum personal fulfillment in life. Gen. 2:18 [Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."](#) Eccles. 9:9 [Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.](#)
10. God's timing is essential in marriage; so you should marry when it is God's time.
11. One of the reasons for marriage is to provide the correct environment for the raising of children. Obviously, when a man and a woman marry, there is always the possibility of having children. The authority structure of marriage is the proper environment for raising children. Now and again, children will be raised under other circumstances, but the ideal approach is one man, one woman, and one or more children.
 - 1) Understanding this proper structure of marriage helps us to understand the problems with having multiple wives. King David did not have time to raise the children of his many wives; as a result, many of them were out of control in their teens and early 20's. Essentially, these were welfare children. Their mother was given enough money by the state to live; but David did not act as a constant authority figure in their lives.
 - 2) Later in David's life, he concentrated upon Bathsheba. They had 4 children together and nothing is said in the Bible of David chasing after other women after this point in time (he did not add more wives or mistresses, insofar as we know). Much of the book of Proverbs is David teaching Solomon. They are Solomon's notes from these teaching sessions.
 - 3) Solomon fulfills the promise of Prov. 22:6 [Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.](#) (NKJV) Solomon made many mistakes in the middle of his life. However, he returned to the teaching of his father in his later years.
 - 4) Although we do not know much about the other sons of David by Bathsheba, they did not become revolutionaries; and one of them (Nathan—not the prophet) is in the direct line of Jesus Christ.
12. Warnings to believers:
 - 1) Do not marry an unbeliever. 2Cor. 6:14 1Cor. 7:39 9:5
 - 2) The unbeliever can corrupt the believer in marriage (or in other close relationships). 1Cor. 15:33 1Kings 11:3
13. In marriage, there is a separation which occurs from the parents. This means that all decisions ultimate rest upon the husband; and upon the husband and wife as a team. There will certainly be interaction between newlyweds and their parents, which may even include financial assistance and advice. However,

The Biblical Approach to Marriage

that should never reach the point of meddling. Gen. 2:24 Matt. 15:4

14. Marriages are designed by God to be permanent (Matt. 19:6, 8 1Cor. 7:10, 11, 39).

Some points are taken from:

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=278 accessed March 2, 2015.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

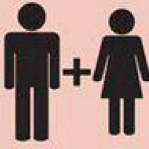
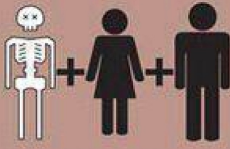
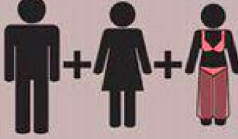

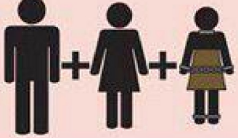
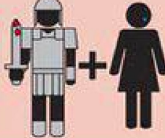
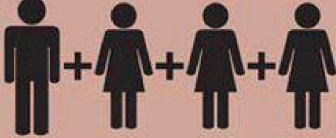
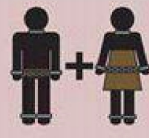
We have just studied marriage; and when understanding the correct view of marriage, it is also a good idea to understand what marriage is not; and the use of historical narrative in the Bible to attack both the institution of marriage and the Bible.

The Bible, being the Word of God, is attacked and belittled; and often used in order to score political points. One of the great debates of the past few years has been gay marriage. One approach to this topic was those from people who did not believe in the Bible, did not believe in Jesus Christ; but they knew something about the Bible. They knew that there were a variety of configurations of marriage found in the Bible; so their reason went like this: "This stupid kind of marriage is found in the Bible, and Christians believe the Bible; therefore, gay marriage ought to be legalized and accepted by Christians."

A graphic made its way around the internet to try to make this argument. I have posted it below to clear up some of the falsehoods found in the graphic. However, the key here is, just because something is found in the Bible, that does not mean God wants you to do that thing. Some things in the Bible are descriptive rather than prescriptive.

Don't worry about the graphic being too small to read. All of these marriage types will be discussed individually.

MARRIAGE =

<p>MAN + WOMAN (NUCLEAR FAMILY) Genesis 2:24</p> <p>-wives subordinate to their husbands -interfaith marriages forbidden -marriages generally arranged, not based on romantic love -bride who could not prove her virginity was stoned to death</p> 	<p>MAN + BROTHER'S WIDOW (LEVIRATE MARRIAGE) Genesis 38:6-10</p> <p>-widow who had not borne a son required to marry her brother in law -must submit sexually to her new husband</p> 
<p>MAN + WIVES + CONCUBINES</p> <p>Abraham (2 concubines), Gideon (1), Nahor (1), Jacob (1), Eliphaz (1), Gideon (2), Caleb (2), Manassah (1), Solomon (300), Belshazzar (> 1)</p> 	<p>RAPIST + HIS VICTIM Deuteronomy 22:28-29</p> <p>-virgin who is raped must marry her rapist -rapist must pay victim's father 50 shekels of silver for property loss</p> 
<p>MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN'S PROPERTY Genesis 16</p> <p>-man could acquire his wife's property including her slaves</p> 	<p>MALE SOLDIER + PRISONER OF WAR Numbers 31:1-16, Deuteronomy 21:11-14</p> <p>-under Moses' command, Israelites kill every Midianite man, woman and child; save for the virgin girls who are taken as spoils of war -wives must submit sexually to their new owners</p> 
<p>MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN + WOMAN... (POLYGAMY)</p> <p>Lamech (2 wives), Esau (3), Jacob (2), Ashur (2), Gideon (many), Elkanah (2), David (many), Solomon (700), Rehoboam (3), Abijah (14), Jehoram, Joash, Ahab, Jeholachin, Belshazzar</p> 	<p>MALE SLAVE + FEMALE SLAVE Exodus 21:4</p> <p>-slave owner could assign female slaves to his male slaves -female slaves must submit sexually to their new husbands</p> 

This is an anti-Biblical graphic which lists 8 *different* kinds of marriage found the Bible. These types of marriages are described; and, of course, the graphic indicates that the Bible is weird, sexist or whatever to approve of these kinds of marriages. This graphic confuses an historical record with the Biblical view of marriage; or it greatly distorts what is found in the Bible. In most cases, the distortion simply takes an historical incident and assumes that the God of the Bible must approve of it because it is found in the Bible.

The **Marriage Equality graphic** comes from this liberal marriage equality [website](#), accessed July 24, 2013. However, this particular graphic has been picked up and displayed upon hundreds of websites, if not thousands.

This doctrine is also posted online: **Marriage Alternatives Found in the Bible** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

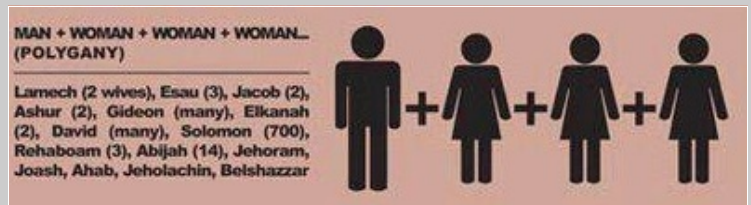
1. The Bible will *always* be under attack. As of late, the world does not like the idea of marriage between one man and one woman; they believe that it ought to include one man and one man; so graphics proliferate which attack the Biblical view of marriage. Graphics are often used to sway opinion on the internet, as they require little more than a slogan. They are the bumper stickers of the 21st century. The graphic above is much more detailed than most.
2. Attacks on marriage include easy divorce; the incorrect approach to marriage; an incorrect view of the roles of the man and the woman in marriage; a misrepresentation of what is found in the Bible; and the introduction into society of unbiblical approaches to marriage (such as gay marriage or polygamy).
3. Here, we will focus on a dishonest graphic which has proliferated on the internet about marriage and the Bible.
4. The overall concept is fairly easy to understand: just because something is found in the Bible, that does not mean that God condones that action. For example, Cain kills his brother Abel. Just because this is found in the Bible, does not mean that God condones this act of murder. So it is with the many

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alternatives to marriage found in the Bible. They represent historical occurrences; but they do not necessarily represent God's concept of marriage.

5. There is also a point which needs to be made about the book of Deuteronomy: these are the words of Moses spoken to his people at a specific time in history. He took what he knew to be the truth (the Law of God) and made some specific applications to his people in that era. Therefore, the book of Deuteronomy has laws which are valid for the Jews in the Jewish dispensation; but were strictly related to that culture at that time. Moses acts very much like a contemporary judge when interpreting the Bill of Rights in the light of today's technology. What Moses said then was valid and binding for that era; but these laws do not necessarily have a place in our society. However, that does not mean that these laws are without meaning or application.

6. The Bible clearly deals with the *problems* of alternatives to His prescribed plan for marriage. We have the problem of polygamy as well as the problem of a man having a mistress (concubine):



- 1) The graphic reads: **MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN + WOMAN... (POLYGAMY)** — [then several examples are then listed of those in the Bible who were polygamists]
- 2) It is certainly true that there were polygamists in the Bible; and that these included some great believers.
- 3) King David had around 10 wives and 10 mistresses or lesser wives (often called concubines).
- 4) Essentially, all of David's children became wards of the state—that is, the taxpayers of Israel paid for these children, much like welfare/section 8 housing/food stamps do today. Because their father David was distracted with being the king, with having too many wives and too many children, and with skirt-chasing, these children grew up to be criminals, committing several crimes, including rape and murder; and one led a full-scale revolution against King David. At no time was David's lifestyle condoned by God or held up as an example in Scripture as a legitimate alternative to marriage.
- 5) Rather than David's marriages being held up as a good thing, David was plagued for about 10 years with his lousy kids (as a part of his discipline for chasing after a military man's wife). This was a form of discipline that God placed on David; but much of it was simply the natural result of having many wives and children by those women.
- 6) King Solomon, David's son, had about 1000 wives and mistresses, and he still writes in the Song of Solomon of the frustration of not being able to score with just one more woman (the Shulamite woman).
- 7) Just because something occurs in the Bible, that does not mean that God approves of it. Kings David and Solomon's polygamous marriages were problems for both of these men. The Bible clearly tells us that Solomon was led astray by his wives and mistresses. 1Kings 11:1–4 reads: *And King Solomon loved many foreign women, even the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites; of the nations which Jehovah had said to the sons of Israel, You shall not go in to them, and they shall not go in to you; surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.* Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For it happened when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of David his father. (David never had his heart turned away from God, despite his many failures in life.)
- 8) David, Solomon, Abraham and Jacob all had more than one wife and they all wrote portions of the Bible. Not one of them ever held up polygamy as a valid form of marriage or as a type of marriage approved by God.

So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

7. This graphic may be dishonest, but it may also be simply a misunderstanding on the part of the *marriage equality proponents*. However, marriage equality proponents will not change their graphic or take it off their website, even if they find out that it is mistaken or dishonest. The dissemination of honest information is not their intention.



They have two goals: (1) to promote homosexuality as a valid lifestyle and cultural norm to the point where grammar school children in public schools need to be exposed to the notion of homosexual relationships; and (2) to disparage the Bible. As we get further into this graphic, you will see that alternative forms of marriage are only part of what they are trying to sell. They will also suggest that these alternative marriages completely subjugated women.

8. These people suggest that there is a third form of marriage in the Bible where a man simply takes a slave girl as his mistress (this refers back to Abraham in Gen. 16). This *third* form of marriage on their list is not really a marriage, although they list it as one.

- 1) The graphic reads:

MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN'S PROPERTY GENESIS 16

•man could acquire his wife's property including her slaves

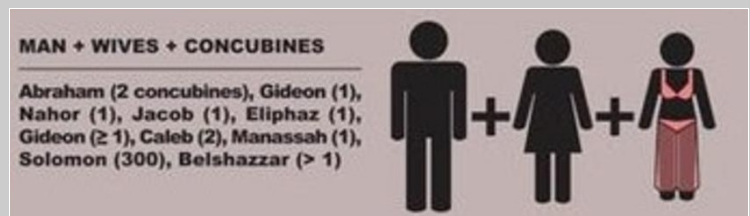
- 2) Sometimes a family owned slaves, sometimes a family business owned slaves, sometimes the husband owned personal slaves and sometimes the wife owned personal slaves. The only reason for this being listed above is, the person who made this chart simply does not understand that this is nowhere presented as a marriage in the Bible. Perhaps it was added to have an even 8 *forms* of marriage.
- 3) I think part of what the author of this graphic wanted to do was, show slavery as being okay in the Bible.
- 4) Maybe they were trying to draw parallels between Biblical marriage and slavery?
- 5) Maybe they were suggesting that the man could have sex with his wife's female slaves? Whatever the purpose, it is clear in the text of the Bible that Abraham having a son by Sarah's personal maid was a Sarah's idea and it was a bad idea. God honored the fact that the son from Sarah's maid came from Abraham; but this made life complicated and miserable for Abraham and Sarah (and for the slave girl, Hagar).

9. What about men in the Bible who have wives and mistresses?

- 1) The graphic reads: **MAN + WIVES + CONCUBINES** — [Then a list of various men who had mistresses follows]

- 2) This is essentially a repeat of what we have above.

- 3) Abraham was talked into having sex with his wife's personal maid in order to produce a child to fulfill the promises made by God (this was Sarah, his wife's idea, not his, and certainly not God's). Abraham agreed to this, and there were resultant



problems in his marriage and in the interaction between the descendants of this son of this union (Ishmael) and the Jews, who are descended from Abraham and Sarah. Eventually, God had Hagar, the maid, and her son, separate from Abraham's family. Essentially, Hagar acted as a surrogate mother, something which is not encouraged in any way in Scripture.

- 4) This graphic says that Abraham had two concubines (this is old English for a mistress who lived with him). Actually, Abraham had one mistress (Hagar) who had relations with Abraham at the

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insistence of Abraham's wife, Sarah. The other woman in question (Keturah) was Abraham's wife after Sarah passed away.

- 5) Elsewhere in Scripture, there are marriages which include mistresses (concubines). This is *never* presented as God's ideal, any more than polygamy is (this is simply a form of polygamy).
- 6) The one person who could most easily collect wives is a king, and the Bible *specifically* forbids kings from taking several wives. This same passage also forbids a king from taking a huge amount of gold and silver to himself as well (also common temptations for a king). Deut. 17:17 **And he [the king] shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.** (ESV)

10. In the Bible, there is something known as a levirate marriage,

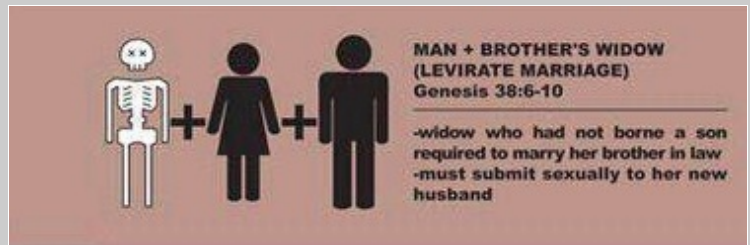
- 1) The graphic reads:

**MAN + BROTHER'S WIDOW
(LEVIRATE MARRIAGE)
Genesis 38:6–10**

**•widow who had not borne a son
required to marry her brother in law**

**•Must submit sexually to her new
husband**

- 2) A favorite theme of those who oppose the Bible is to present the women as having absolutely no say in the matter of marriage or sex. You will note that the widow referenced is *required* to marry her brother-in-law.



The graphic then adds that she *must submit sexually to her new husband*. However, that is not really what the Bible says. The person who wrote the text for this graphic is simply inserting his own made-up ideas into the Bible—an interpretation which is not supported by any text. The widowed wife is *not* required to marry her brother-in-law; nor is she required to sexually submit to him.

- 3) The levirate marriage is described here: "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, **that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.** And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.' (Deut. 25:5–10; ESV mostly; emphasis mine).
- 4) You will note that it is the widowed wife who makes this demand—so, quite obviously, she has more than just a say in the matter. She *initiates* the levirate marriage. The graphic incorrectly states that she *must* marry her brother-in-law and she must submit sexually to him. That is obviously false according to a simple reading of the text.
- 5) Let me add one more thing: the term *brother* in the Bible is an inexact term, just as it is for us today. In the Bible, it referred to a close, living male relative.
- 6) This tradition is first mentioned in Gen. 38:6–10 **And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." But Onan knew that the offspring**

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would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also.

- 7) The passage in Genesis suggests that this was a long-standing tradition, but no information is given to how this was started. When it took place, there was no Mosaic Law. However, this tradition was practiced by more than just the Hebrews, and, in some cultures, it was **required** (which is not the case for the Bible).
- 8) As a general principle, it should be noted that the Law of Moses was given to a particular people at a particular time within the confines of a particular culture. When applying the Mosaic Law to today, one needs to examine if the principles still hold up in the New Testament or whether they simply regulate practices in the ancient world. If a particular culture norm or practice disappears from society, then there is no longer a need to regulate that practice. However, at the same time, there are principles for things no longer found in our country (slavery for instance) which can be applied to analogous situations (some of the principles of slavery can be applied to the relationship between the owner of a business and its workers).
- 9) When it comes to the levirate marriage law, notice that this is not just for any set of brothers; these are brothers who *dwelt together*; that is, they live in the same house or on the same compound. This could be applied by a family not living together, but the passage in Deuteronomy suggests this is the most common application.
- 10) The reason for this is, Jewish families in Israel were given a specific piece of land as an inheritance. One of the applications of a levirate marriage is, every family retained that piece of land for time and eternity. That is, this land grant was something which is for eternity as well. That does not mean that the typical Jewish family will be resurrected right there, in front of their old house; but that the land is both a temporal and an eternal inheritance for the Jews. Therefore, a custom of the ancient world was given some spiritual significance.
- 11) If a man is married, but dies before impregnating his wife, his brother is could be called upon to impregnate the wife, with the understanding that the son from that initial union would be as if he is the son of the man who has died, and by this, he would carry on his "father's" name, inherit his "father's" estate. It appears that the surviving brother would be responsible to some degree for this woman—if not married to her; and that the resulting son would be responsible for his mother when that time came. The way that this would work is, the first son would be heir to the husband who had died. The remainder of the children born would be heirs to their natural father.
- 12) This would be just as if a man had a son, went to war, died in that war, and his brother took up for him in the marriage. With one slight exception: the son would actually have been fathered by the brother who is alive.
- 13) When this was codified into Law by Moses, Moses was taking the long-standing concept of a levirate marriage (found back in Genesis from 400 years previous) and applying it to the concept of the continuing inheritance of Israel. That is, Israel had a real and eternal inheritance, because of their relationship to their father and because of their relationship to God. The Mosaic Law took several long-standing customs of that time period and gave them boundaries and limitations (slavery being an example of this).
- 14) In the illustration of Onan above, the problem was not in exercising an improper method of birth control, but that he had agreed to raise up a son to his brother, but did not. He enjoyed the sexual union with his brother's wife, but intentionally did not impregnate her. That was contrary to the custom of that time.
- 15) In 2013 America, we have a very difficult time relating to this tradition, because so many men have married women who are not virgins. However, once a woman was taken in marriage, it was a rare situation where she would be considered by another man for marriage. She would not be a virgin, and that was, in most cases, a deal breaker. You may like this and you may not, but that was reality for millennia. Women having sex with several men has become much more widespread beginning in the 1960's. However, prior to this, marriage between two virgins was actually quite common. In some geographic areas, a marriage between virgins was the norm.

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- 16) In the past, the union of just one man with just one woman was seen as God's design for all mankind; so that once the husband or the wife passed, the remaining person had already tasted and enjoyed this unique relationship. In most cases, there was no second wife or second husband after the death of a spouse.
- 17) This levirate tradition preserved the name of the husband who had died and provided for the woman of the husband who had died. This was a testament to a future, eternal inheritance.
- 18) It should be clear that in the Law, this was not compulsory, but there was strong social pressure *on the brother* to fulfill this duty (if the wife of his deceased brother insisted on it).
- 19) It should be clear by the narrative in Gen. 38 that, this was something which the woman, Tamar, truly wanted (I did not complete the narrative as it went too far afield of this study).
- 20) If the woman did not desire a child in this way, then a levirate relation was not pursued.
- 21) An application of levirate marriage is found in the book of Ruth, where a relative, Boaz, preserved the inheritance for Ruth, whose husband died before he could father children by her. He was her *kinsman-redeemer* and a relative of her deceased husband, but not his brother. As her kinsman-redeemer, Boaz was a picture of Jesus Christ. The woman, Ruth, is not forced to do anything. See exegesis of the **Book of Ruth** ([HTML](#)) for further information.
- 22) Clearly, in the book of Ruth and in Moses' recitation of the principle, the woman's volition was integral to this ancient tradition.
-
11. A idea that the Bible supports a man marrying his rape victim is simply not accurate at all.
- 1) The graphic reads:
RAPIST + HIS VICTIM
Deuteronomy 22:29–29
-
- virgin who is raped must marry her rapist**
 - Rapist must pay victim's father 50 shekels of silver for property loss**
- 2) Do you see what this dishonest graphic is trying to say? In the Bible, a woman is just a possession, no different than a slave. If a man rapes a woman—no problem.
 - 3) There are several pertinent passages, which need to be taken together. Ex. 22:16–17 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins." Deut. 22:23–29 "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her. If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes [= *takes*] her and lies with her, and they are found, then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated [= *humbled*] her. He may not divorce her all his days."
 - 4) In Ex. 22:16–17, the man seduces the woman and takes her virginity. Her father makes the final determination whether a marriage will be allowed. The logic of the father making the decision here is, if the young woman allowed herself to be seduced, she may not have the most objective



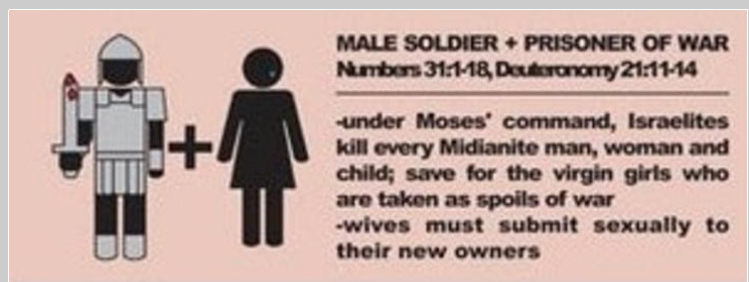
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viewpoint. No doubt there would probably be some input from the young woman. Furthermore, there is no rape involved.

- 5) In Deut. 22:23–29, there are three different situations proposed; and three different outcomes.
 - (1) The first has a woman betrothed to be married, but before the marriage, she is sexually taken by a man. Because this occurs in the city, both she and the man are stoned to death because she could have protested loudly if this was rape so that others could have heard her.
 - (2) In Deut. 22:25–27, a man has sex with a woman who is a betrothed virgin. There is a verb here used to indicate that force was used; and because the woman could not call out and receive help, being out in the country, the man is stoned to death.
 - (3) Finally, in Deut. 22:28–29, it sounds as if it is a similar situation to those previous verses, but there are several differences: (1) she is not betrothed to be married, but she is a virgin; and (2) the second verb used is different, which does not necessarily mean that this woman is raped.
- 6) The verb found in Deut. 22:25 is clearly rape; but the verb found in v. 27 is not necessarily rape. So what are the options?
 - (1) Ex. 22:17 is applicable if she is seduced, which allows the father of the woman to make the determination of allowing them to get married or not. Ex. 22:27 tells us that, if she is raped, the man should be stoned to death.
 - (2) Deut. 22:29 is not a new law, but it simply designates the amount that the man must pay to marry her. So the woman of Deut. 22:28–29 has *not* been raped. The man may have been quite aggressive here, but she has not cried out that she is being raped (as in v. 27), and yet they are still *discovered*. Therefore, this occurs in a populated area. In v. 29, she is said to be *humbled*. This is because she was a virgin and now she is no longer a virgin. In our society, this is something very difficult for people to understand. In any case, *this is not a woman who has been raped and the rapist now gets to marry her*.
 - (3) Sex outside of marriage was far more rare in that era than it is today; and the way that society thought about women who are not virgins is much different than today. There is nothing more complex here than figuring out how does a father deal with his daughter who is no longer a virgin, and, therefore, no longer marriageable.
- 7) A reasonable objection at this point is, *what about my Bible translation? It has the word “rape” in it?* That is simply an inaccurate translation. See the Addendum in **Marriage Alternatives Found in the Bible** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), where this passage is exegeted word-by-word. It will be clear in the exegesis that this is not rape.

12. The male soldier and the prisoner of war (which is, when all is said and done, one man + one woman).

- 1) The graphic reads:
MALE SOLDIER + PRISONER OF WAR
N u m b e r s 3 1 : 1 – 1 8 ,
D e u t e r o n o m y 2 1 : 1 1 – 1 4



•under Moses' command, Israelites kill every Midianite man, woman and child; save for the virgin girls who are taken as spoils of war

•Wives must submit sexually to their new owners

- 2) Num. 31:1–18 is about taking vengeance against Midian. God gave Israel a direct order concerning Midian, which would suggest that God knows what He is doing. All of the Midianites were to be killed, except for the women who were virgins, who could be taken as wives. This indicates that the souls of the virgin women were capable of responding to their Israeli husbands.
- 3) The general principle is found in Deut. 21:10–14. ["When you go out to war against your enemies,](#)

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and the LORD your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire to take her to be your wife, and you bring her home to your house, she shall shave her head and pare her nails. And she shall take off the clothes in which she was captured and shall remain in your house and lament her father and her mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. But if you no longer delight in her, you shall let her go where she wants. But you shall not sell her for money, nor shall you treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.” In war, if a man is taken by the beauty of a woman, she may be taken to his home to be married. In the war, this means that her family has been killed. The man is to spend a month with her, after she has shaved her head, cut back her nails, and has mourned for her parents. This woman would look her worst and feel her worst. If after this, the man still desires her as his wife, he may take her as his wife. If he, after this month’s time, is no longer enthralled by her, then the soldier must allow her to leave freely. She cannot be sold into slavery or kept as a slave.

- (1) Some points need to be made here. When Israel came to the Land of Promise, everyone knew who they were and who their God was. What God had done for these slaves was unprecedented in history. The Jews were not some unknown entity. God’s power in their recent history was well known to the peoples of the land.
- (2) As the Israelites moved along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea, the other peoples could have brought them food and allowed them to pass through; or they could have caused the Jews trouble. The Midianites caused the Jews trouble, so they are beat down by the God of the Jews. The negative volition of the Midianites indicates negative volition toward the God of the Israelites. The story of the Jews becomes common knowledge among the people of that region. How they feel about the Jews is how they feel about the God Who made them.
- (3) When the Jews entered into the land, the various peoples there could make war with them or make peace with them. In some cases, individuals from an enemy group would ally themselves with the Jews.
- (4) When a nation decided to go to war against the Jews, they were doing this with the full knowledge that the God of Israel had delivered them out of Egypt against one of the greatest armies of that time; and that all who opposed the Jews when they came up the King’s Highway were defeated.
- (5) Rejecting the Jews was tantamount to rejecting the God of the Jews. Therefore, those who rejected the Jews would face warfare on earth and eternal damnation. Those who accepted the Jews were received with peace and blessing, and most of these are in Abraham’s bosom right now.
- (6) God allows the Jew soldiers to keep virgins alive for themselves, as long as certain steps were followed. In ancient wars, whether waged by Jews or by some other group, almost the entire population would either be killed or placed into slavery (a notable exception would be when a country is conquered and afterward they pay a tribute to the conquering country for the next few years or decades, as in the first few verses of Gen. 14).
- (7) This Bible-enshrined tradition was *not* was an opportunity for a soldier to take home a woman from every battle, have sex with her for a month, and then cut her loose. It was after a month that they chose to become married; and that would involve sex *at that time*. Engaging in sex was tantamount to becoming married. That is what made them married.
- (8) I would guess, in most circumstances, the man would explain to the woman what the options were. It would be logical that some women, based upon the circumstances, would absolutely reject the Jewish soldier. That means no marriage and she goes free.
- (9) The only analogous situation that we have today are men who have fought in Vietnam or in Korea or in the Philippines at various times who have taken a wife from that area. In some cases, these were women who came from those who opposed the Americans; but such women chose to ally themselves with the Americans. While this is not an exact parallel, in an historical context, it is very similar. No one would look down on the marriage of a soldier and a woman from North Korea or North Vietnam. Similarly, a man who takes a bride from

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the enemy camp was not an unusual thing for that era (one would have to assume that there is some willingness on the part of the woman).

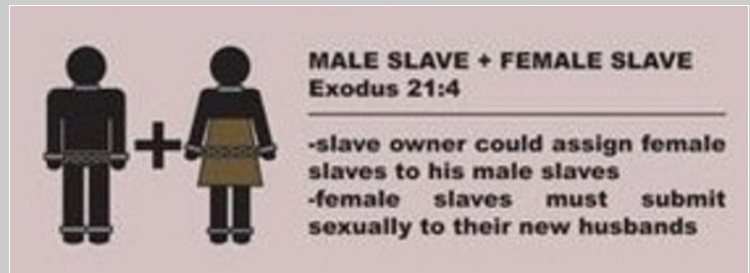
- (10) Throughout this liberal graphic, the free will of the woman is presented as not being an issue. However, that is not necessarily the case for the passages noted or anywhere else in the Bible. The Bible does speak of living with an unhappy woman. Prov. 27:15 reads: *A wife that always wants to argue is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.* (ERV) Similar passages are found here: Prov. 19:13 21:9, 19 25:24. Any man who has forced or even coerced a woman into doing something that she did not want to do has rarely found a good result. In the Bible, when you married a woman, you wanted her *onboard*. You did not just take whatever woman, and that was that. Secondly, the actual examples given in Scripture (like Ruth and Boaz) clearly involve the woman's volition. The repeated refrain in this false marriage graphic, that *the woman must submit sexually to him*, is simply false. Marriage was not akin to slavery; women were not property in Scripture; and the volition of women was not ignored. Now, there is probably a much greater expression of a woman's volition in today's society, but that is a societal norm, not a Biblical norm. The only clear Biblical norm is, a woman who enters into marriage from then on, subjugates herself to her husband. This does not make her a slave; but it does place her under the authority of her husband. A woman who does not want this should not get married.

13. A male slave and a female slave (which is one man + one woman).

- 1) The graphic reads:

MALE SLAVE + FEMALE SLAVE
Exodus 21:4

•**slave owner could assign female slaves to his male slaves**
•**female slaves must submit sexually to their new husbands**



- 2) Ex. 21:4–6 *If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out alone. But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.* Essentially, this is one man and one woman in marriage, with the added fact that they are both slaves.
- 3) There were strict laws placed upon the institution of slavery under the Mosaic Law. There was a time period for which a slave could be owned and there were other constraints. There were also cultures where there were no restraints on a slave owner.
- 4) It ought to be noted that, in slavery, the owner was to provide for the slaves. Here, the slave owner is providing a marriage partner. Note that the slave has the choice here of leaving or remaining, once his time is up. Incidentally, notice that there is a time limit on Jewish slavery.
- 5) Note that there is nothing said here about the female slave being required to submit to the male slave; nor are they required to marry. Also take note of the significant difference of the language. In the graphic, the slave owner *assigns* a female slave to the male slave; however, in the text of Exodus, the slave owner *gives* a female slave to the male slave. These are very different words in the Hebrew. The misleading language was added by the gay marriage proponent in this dishonest graphic. Liberals understand the power of hyperbolic language.
- 6) In slavery, the slaves belong to their master. If the master has male and female slaves, they may become interested in one another. It reads that the slave owner *gives* the female slave to the male slave. This does not mean that the slave owner has required the marriage; it simply means that, since he owns the female slave, he gives her to her betrothed—as a father would do.
- 7) Although nothing is said in Exodus about the volition of the woman, that does not mean that she

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had no say in this matter. The focus of this law is upon a male slave being provided a wife by his master. There is nothing to indicate that a female slave has absolutely no say in this matter.

- 8) Being the slave of a good master was a good position in life. Abraham's top slave had a great deal of power and responsibility (see Gen. 24). Joseph, as a slave, rose to the position of prime minister in Egypt. So, being a slave was not necessarily a lousy position in life nor was it necessarily a dead end job. Being a slave in that era was better than being a minimum wage worker in this era. The master had to provide food and shelter for his slaves; minimum wage workers rarely make enough to pay for those things. A slave had every bit as much upward potential as a worker on the ground floor today. A smart slave owner could recognize a good slave and promoted him (or her) accordingly. Abraham's slave in Gen. 24 managed all of Abraham's finances, which were considerable in that era.
- 9) As an aside, what we think of as slavery was not allowed in the Bible. You could not go out, find a few men, capture them, and then sell them as slaves (Ex. 21:16). That was not allowed in the Bible; that is known as *man-stealing* and it was a sin. However, a person could work off his debts as a slave; and a person captured in war could be allowed to live and to serve as a slave.
- 10) Slaves to Jewish families had a much better time of it than slaves to a nation such as Egypt, because slavery was tightly regulated by the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law took a societal practice (slavery) and regulated it in order to protect those in slavery.

14. In short, there are 3 general problems with many of these characterizations of marriages which are found in the Bible:

- 1) Just because something is found in the Bible, that does not mean that God condones it.
- 2) Some of the "marriages" listed above are misrepresented in the description. Whether honestly or dishonestly, I cannot say. But, I can pretty much guarantee that, if they read this and understand the correct interpretation, they will not take down or revise their inaccurate graphics. No one who has posted this graphic will write below it, "Okay, I understand that *marriages* #3 and 5 are not really represented accurately in this graphic." They will not even write, "There are different interpretations of this passage." They are not interested in truth; they are interested in changing minds in favor of gay marriage and against the Bible.
- 3) Finally, in many cases, proponents of gay marriage who distribute these graphics completely ignore the historical context and apply all current norms and standards to these ancient cultures. Such proponents would not like to see this reversed on them, or they would be executed (homosexual behavior was not just a sin but a crime punishable by death in the Old Testament).

Whenever a sin is promoted as legitimate; there are often attacks upon the Bible as well.

As you can see, in general, when those who put this *Marriage Alternatives in the Bible* graphic together, their intention was to give the most negative understanding of each sort of union found in Scripture. Their intention is not to inform or enlighten, but to propagandize.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

A Quick Review of Genesis 29:15–18: Jacob pulled one too many fast ones on Esau, his twin brother; and so he had to quickly leave Canaan or else Esau would have killed him. He traveled to the east where their cousins lived. Jacob found them and stayed for a month. After that month, Laban, his uncle and boss, said that they should work out a salary schedule so that Jacob was not working for him for nothing.

Genesis 29:15–18 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and

appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." (ESV)

Jacob met Rachel on that very first day and fell in love with her. We have no idea how much interaction occurred between them in the intervening month, but it would have been limited, due to the culture of that time.

And so says Laban, "Good my giving her to you more than my giving her to a man another. Remain with me."

Genesis
29:19

Laban then said, "[It is] better that I give her to you than I give her to another man. Stay with me."

Laban then said, "It is much better that I give her to you than give her to another man. Therefore, please stay with me; I accept your terms."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Laban, "Good my giving her to you more than my giving her to a man another. Remain with me."
Targum of Onkelos	And Laban said <u>with deceit</u> , It is better that I give her to thee, than to another man abide with me.
Latin Vulgate	Laban answered: It is better that I give her to you than to another man; stay with me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban said to him, It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man; abide with me.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban said to him, It is better that I should give her to you, than that I should give her to another man; dwell with me.

Significant differences: There are some additional words in the targum.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban said, It is better for you to have her than another man: go on living here with me.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Laban responded, "It's better that I give her to you than to any other man. Stay with me."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Laban answered, "I would rather give her to you than to anyone else; stay here with me."
<i>The Message</i>	"It is far better," said Laban, "that I give her to you than marry her to some outsider. Yes. Stay here with me."
NIRV	Laban said, "It's better for me to give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Laban said, "I'd rather give her to you than to another man. Stay with me."
Contemporary English V.	Laban replied, "It's better for me to let you marry Rachel than for someone else to have her. So stay and work for me."
New Berkeley Version	Jacob was in love with Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter"; to which Laban replied, "I would rather give her to you than to another man. You stay with me." V. 18 is included for context.
New Living Translation	"Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Laban said to him: 'It's better for me to give her to you than to some other man. So, come and live with me.'
International Standard V	"It's better that I give her to you than to another man," Laban replied, "so stay with me."
Names of God Bible	Laban responded, "It's better that I give her to you than to any other man. Stay with me."
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Better thou, said Laban, than any other husband I could find for her; stay, then, at my side.
Translation for Translators	Laban replied, "It is better for me to let you marry her than for her to marry some other man!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Laban said, "Better to give her to you, than giving her to another man: Dwell with me."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Laban then replied, "Good; she shall be yours. - I will give her for a wife after you have stayed with me."
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Laban replied, it is better that I give her to you than I should give her to another man so remain here with me.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Laban said, "Better that I give her to you, then giving her to another man: make a bond with me."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	Laban replied, "I prefer to give her to you rather than to an outsider. Stay with me."
New Jerusalem Bible	Laban replied, 'It is better for me to give her to you than to a stranger; stay with me.'
New RSV	Laban said, 'It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Lavan answered, "Better that I give her to you than to someone else; stay with me."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Laban says, It is better that I give her to you, than give her to another man: settle with me.
Kaplan Translation	'Better I should give her to you than to another man,' replied Laban. 'You can stay with me.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Lavan said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another ish; abide with me.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Laban said, "It would be better for her to marry you [I'm to give her to you] than someone else, so stay here with me."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man; abide with me. Laban acted with assumed indifference, for his selfishness and covetousness expected great gain for himself by this arrangement.
NET Bible®	Laban replied, "I'd rather give her to you than to another man [Heb "Better my giving her to you than my giving her to another man."]. Stay with me."
The Voice	Laban: <i>Agreed.</i> I'd rather you have her than any other man I know. You may stay here <i>and work.</i>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Lavan ^[White] said, it is functional that I give her to you rather than give her to another man, settle by me,...
English Standard Version	Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me."
Green's Literal Translation	And Laban said, <i>It is better for me to give her to you than to give her to another man; live with me.</i>
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Laban answered: it is better that I give her you, than to another man: bide therefore with me.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And Laban said, It is better that I give her to you, than I should give her to another man. Remain with me.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Laban said, [It is] better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.
Young's Updated LT	And Laban says, "It is better for me to give her to you than to give her to another man; dwell with me."

The gist of this verse: Laban agrees to Jacob's proposal.

Genesis 29:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lâbân (לבן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
ṭôwb (טוב) [pronounced toh ^b v]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine singular adjective which can act like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her</i>	sign of the direct object with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 29:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her</i>	sign of the direct object with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lâmed (לֵ) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (לֵ) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ênôwsh (אֲנֹשׁ) [pronounced <i>en-OHSH</i>]	<i>mortal, mortal man, mankind; fallen man, depraved man, feeble man [liable to disease and calamity]; peons, hoi polloi, the great unwashed, rabble</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #582 BDB #60
'achêr (אֲחֵר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHEHR</i>]	<i>another, following, next; other as well as foreign, alien, strange</i>	adjective/substantive	Strong's #312 BDB #29

Translation: Laban then said, “[It is] better that I give her to you than I give her to another man. The adjective *good* is used as a comparative here. Rather than the literal *my giving*, I translated that *I give*.

There are two primary words for *man*; and this is the word which refers to *fallen, depraved man*. By putting Jacob in apposition to this noun, Laban is giving Jacob a backhanded compliment. *Compared to you*, he is saying, *other men are depraved and rabble*.

James Freeman: *It is still customary among many Eastern tribes to give the preference in marriage to a cousin. It is expected that a man will marry his cousin. He is not compelled to do it, but he has the right, and she is not allowed to marry any other without his consent.*²⁷²

I suggested earlier that Laban may have even held back his daughters, hoping that they might marry someone from his family in the west because the last time that took place, there was a marvelous dowry offered. Jacob shows up with practically nothing and will have to work for his dowry. Notice Laban's words: “[It is] better that I give her to you than I give her to another man.” These are not words of enthusiasm here. If you accept my hypothesis that Laban was hoping to marry off his daughters to his western relatives, and here Jacob shows up with nothing—then we would expect Laban to be less than enthusiastic. But, all things considered, better to give his daughter to Jacob than to some other man.

²⁷² *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 37.

On the bright side, Laban has observed Jacob's work ethic and, despite Jacob's many shortcomings (most of which, Laban knows nothing), it is clear that Jacob is a hard and honest worker. So, Laban can work with that.

What Laban does not realize is, with Jacob, he gets God's blessings. God often blesses those nearby those He blesses. So Laban's business (ranching) would be greatly blessed because Jacob was working for him. This is known as **Blessing by Association** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 29:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yāshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{EV}]	<i>remain, stay; dwell, live, reside; sit</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the cohortative hê	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: Stay with me. Since Jacob is a better man for his daughter, Laban urges Jacob to remain with him.

What appears to be the case is, Laban either does not have sons at this time, or his sons are very young. Therefore, his daughter Rachel is tending the flocks. Laban really needs someone onboard as a head shepherd. Now, off in the future, Laban's sons will come into the picture; and Jacob will be considered less of an asset at that point in time. All of that is related to God's perfect timing. God will want Jacob to leave Laban and Haran and return to Canaan.

Later, Laban will defraud Jacob. It is unclear whether he planned this from the beginning (I believe that this option occurred to him at the beginning). However, if he gets 7 years of work out of Jacob for his daughter, that in itself is a good deal for him. And this gives him 7 years to determine if there is a better way to play this (I think that there is a good chance that Laban, already at this time, knew roughly how he was going to play this, and marry both of his daughters off at the same time).

Jacob is very specific in the woman that he wants. He calls her by name and describes her as Laban's youngest daughter. Laban's answer, on the other hand, is far more cryptic. It sounds as if he has agreed to Jacob's terms, but he has not actually said that.

Gen 29:18 **Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."**

Gen 29:19 **Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." (ESV)**

Laban's Answer to Jacob (Various Commentators)

Uley: *"stay with me" ...is a command...but in context it is an idiomatic way of accepting Jacob's offer to work seven years for Laban as a price for a bride.*²⁷³

Benson: *His answer is ambiguous and crafty. For he does not directly grant Jacob's desire, but only insinuates his consent to it, in such terms as hid his design, which the event showed.*²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Dr. Bob Uley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:15–20.

²⁷⁴ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:18–19.

Laban's Answer to Jacob (Various Commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Laban means that it is in the interests of the family his daughter should be married to one of their own kindred. The marriage of first cousins is considered especially desirable among the Bedouin.*²⁷⁵

Dr. Peter Pett has a slightly different take: *The offer is accepted and it may be that at this stage Laban thought that Leah might be married within the seven years to someone else thus clearing the way for Jacob. The elder daughter was often more attractive status-wise. Thus it may be that at this point in time his aim was honest.*²⁷⁶

Wenstrom: *In those days, marriage between relatives was regarded as very desirable in that it safeguarded purity of blood, property of the family and the welfare of the daughter but this is not what Laban is thinking when he says, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another."*

Wenstrom continues: *Unknown to Jacob was that Laban had no intention of giving Rachel to him before his older daughter Leah. First he would give Leah and then Rachel in order that he might exploit Jacob to the maximum and profit greatly. Jacob's love for Rachel has blinded him as to the true character of Laban.*

Wenstrom concludes: *In order to train Jacob, the Lord has permitted him to reap what he sowed in the sense that because he deceived his father Isaac, now his uncle Laban will deceive him. The Lord's plan was for Jacob to be served by his younger brother but now he will serve his uncle.*²⁷⁷

Bush makes this interesting claim: *Jacob, as a younger brother, had an unquestionable claim to Rachel, the youngest daughter of Laban. Among all the Bedouin Arabs at the present day a man has the exclusive right to the hand of his first cousin; he is not obliged to marry her, but she cannot be married to another without his consent.*²⁷⁸ I don't know if this is true or if it properly applies here.

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Genesis 29:19 And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

Laban looks at this from his own point of view. It makes sense to him to give his daughter—Jacob's cousin—to him in marriage, for the amount of work specified. For a normal father, there is rarely a man who is good enough for his daughter; but Laban reasons that Jacob is probably better than any other prospect (assuming that he has any). Furthermore—and this is not referenced here—Jacob comes from a well-to-do family. Laban no doubt still remembers the gifts and the wealth presented to him and his family decades ago from Abraham's servant. Having her marry into a wealthy family might be good for him.

However, one has to take into consideration that, Jacob has not shown up to Laban's home with 10 camels loaded with stuff. He has arrived possibly with his mother's nanny, and little else by way of supplies. It could be that Jacob has simply arrived at the right time with a proposal that appeals to Laban.

Very little of Laban's devious nature is revealed at first. For the next 7 years, he is going to seem like a good boss and a good father to Leah and Rachel. Jacob will also seem like a changed man, working hard and honestly for Laban.

²⁷⁵ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:19.

²⁷⁶ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:19.

²⁷⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 452) accessed August 10, 2017.

²⁷⁸ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20 (Suggestive Comments).

Constable's Chiasmic Structure of Genesis 29:20–30

- A Jacob's payment for his wife (Genesis 29:20)
 B Consummation of the marriage to Leah by deception (Genesis 29:21-24)
 C Jacob's accusation against Laban (Genesis 29:25)
 C" Laban's defense (Genesis 29:26)
 B" Consummation of the marriage to Rachel by negotiation (Genesis 29:27-30 a)
 A" Jacob's payment for his wife (Genesis 29:30 b).

From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017. This may have been taken in part or entirely from Ross, Creation and . . . , p498..

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And so serves Jacob in Rachel seven years and so they are in his eyes as days a few in his love toward her.

Genesis
29:20

Jacob served [Laban] near Rachel [for] seven years, but they are in his estimation a few days in his love toward her.

Jacob served Laban for Rachel for seven years, but this time was, in his estimation, but a few days, because of his love for her.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so serves Jacob in Rachel seven years and so they are in his eyes as days a few in his love toward her.
Targum of Onkelos	And Jakob served for Rahel seven years; and they seemed in his eyes as a few days, because he loved her.
Latin Vulgate	So Jacob served seven years for Rachel: and they seemed but a few days, because of <u>the greatness of his love</u> .
Peshitta (Syriac)	Thus Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days because he was in love with her.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob served for Rachel seven years, and they seemed only a few days, because of the love that he had for her.

Significant differences: The English version of the other ancient translations used *seemed* to translate *in his eyes*. The Latin appears to add a few words.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jacob did seven years' work for Rachel; and because of his love for her it seemed to him only a very little time.
Easy English	So Jacob worked for 7 years for Rachel. But they only seemed like a few days because he loved her so much.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Jacob stayed and worked for Laban for seven years. But it seemed like a very short time because he loved Rachel very much.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob worked seven years so that he could have Rachel, and the time seemed like only a few days to him, because he loved her.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob worked seven years for Laban. The time seemed like only a few days, because he loved Rachel so much.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Jacob worked seven years for Laban, but the time seemed like only a few days, because he loved Rachel so much.
New Berkeley Version	So Jacob did serve seven years to have Rachel; which seemed to him like a few days because of the love he felt for her.
New Century Version	So Jacob worked for Laban seven years so he could marry Rachel. But they seemed like just a few days to him because he loved Rachel very much.
New Living Translation	So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, Jacob served [Laban] seven years for Rachel, but to him it was like just a few days, because he loved her so much.
Names of God Bible	Jacob worked seven years in return for Rachel, but the years seemed like only a few days to him because he loved her.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So Jacob worked seven years to win Rachel, and they seemed to him only a few days, because of the greatness of his love.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Conservapedia	Jacob served seven years for Rachel. In his eye it was as one day, for he loved her. Jacob was serving out his seven years for Rachel, and they became in his eyes like as many days; that's how much he loved her.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So Jacob waited for Rachel seven years, but they were to him like a single day because of the love he had for her.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob worked for Rachel, seven years; and they were in his eyes like a few days, so did he love her.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	To win Rachel, Jacob worked for seven years which seemed to him only a few days, because he loved her so much.
The Heritage Bible	And Ya'aqob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed in his eyes only one day because of the love he had for her.
New American Bible (2011)	So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, yet they seemed to him like a few days because of his love for her. Hos 12:13.
New Jerusalem Bible	So Jacob worked for seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him like a few days because he loved her so much.
Revised English Bible	When Jacob had worked seven years for Rachel, and they seemed like a few days because he loved her, he said to Laban, "I have served my time. Give me my wife that I may lie with her." V. 21 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	So Ya'akov worked seven years for Rachel, and it seemed only a few days to him, because he was so much in love with her.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov serves seven years for Rachel; and in his eyes, they are but a day in his love to her:...
Kaplan Translation	Jacob worked for seven years for Rachel. But he loved her so much, it seemed like no more than a few days.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov served sheva shanim for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few yamim, because of the ahavah he had for her.
Restored Names Version	And Ya'aqob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed in his eyes only one day because of the love he had for her.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	So Jacob worked for Laban seven years so he could marry Rachel. But they seemed like just a few days to him because he loved Rachel very much.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her. In comparison with the prize which was held out to him at the end of the seven years, all the hardships of the service seemed insignificant. His love for Rachel made him cheerful and joyful, even while he longed for the end of the seven years.
Lexham English Bible	And Jacob worked for Rachel seven years, but they were as a few days in his eyes because he loved her.
NET Bible®	So Jacob worked for seven years to acquire Rachel [Heb "in exchange for Rachel."]. But they seemed like only a few days to him [But they seemed like only a few days to him. This need not mean that the time passed quickly. More likely it means that the price seemed insignificant when compared to what he was getting in the bargain.] because his love for her was so great [Heb "because of his love for her." The words "was so great" are supplied for stylistic reasons.].
The Voice	So Jacob served <i>Laban</i> for seven years in exchange for Rachel. The years <i>went by quickly and</i> seemed to him to be only a few days because of the <i>immense</i> love he had for her.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] served in Rahhel ^[Ewe] seven years and they existed in his eyes like a few days with the affection to her,...
Concordant Literal Version	And serving is Jacob for Rachel seven years. And becoming are they in his eyes as several days, in his love for her.
Context Group Version	And Jacob served seven years for Rachel. And they were like a few days in his eyes, for the love he had for her.
Darby Translation	And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they were in his eyes as single days, because he loved her.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	So Jacob served for Rachel—seven years,—and they became, in his eyes, as single days, for his love to her.
English Standard Version	So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.
The Geneva Bible	And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him [but] a few days [Meaning after the years were accomplished.], for the love he had to her.
Green's Literal Translation	And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they were in his eyes like a few days, in his love for her.
NASB	So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her [Song of Solomon 8:7 ("Many waters cannot quench love, Nor will rivers overflow it; If a man were to give all the...)].
Webster's Bible Translation	And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him [but] a few days, for the love he had to her.
World English Bible	Jacob served seven years for Rachel. They seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had for her.
Young's Updated LT	And Jacob serves for Rachel seven years; and they are in his eyes as some days, because of his loving her.

The gist of this verse: Jacob, because of his love for Rachel and his anticipation, easily serves Laban for 7 years.

Genesis 29:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
‘âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
Ya‘ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-KOH^bV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
sheba ^c (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>she^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>seven</i>	numeral masculine construct	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
shânîym (שָׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-NEEM</i>]	<i>years</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040

Translation: *Jacob served [Laban] near Rachel [for] seven years,...* Jacob worked for Laban for a period of seven years. There is the bēyth preposition used here rather than the lâmed preposition. The bēyth preposition indicates nearness. So, Jacob was able to observe and see Rachel regularly.

Although Guzik questions²⁷⁹ Jacob's ability to work hard, we will find out later that Laban will greatly prosper with Jacob working. So, whether or not Jacob was used to hard work or not, is not really an issue. He delivered when it came to his job with Laban's sheep (God, obviously, prospered both men).

Jacob also works with integrity (something that we will find out later as well), meaning he did what was necessary and he acted honestly and responsibly when it came to his responsibilities.

According to Guzik,²⁸⁰ an offer of 7 years of work for a wife was a very generous offer, far more than a dowry would have normally been.

²⁷⁹ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 29:15–20.

²⁸⁰ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 29:15–20.

Genesis 29:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ḥâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿêynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
This phrase is literally <i>in his eyes</i> , but it can be translated <i>in his opinion, in his estimation, in his sight, to his way of thinking, as he sees [it]</i> .			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
yâmîym (יָמִיִּם) [pronounced <i>yaw-MEEM</i>]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
ʾăchâdîym (אֶחָדִים) [pronounced <i>uh-khaw-DEEM</i>]	<i>the same; joined in one, united; some, a few</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88

When verbs in the infinitive construct are preceded by the bêyth preposition, b^e acts as a temporal conjunction; that is, *in their being created* = *when they were created* (Gen. 2:4); *in their being in the field* = *when they were in the field* (Gen. 4:8).²⁸¹

When the bêyth preposition is followed by an infinitive, it forms a periphrasis for the gerund and is commonly expressed by the conjunctions *while, when, in that, after that, if, though, even if*.²⁸²

²⁸¹ *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1979, pp. 90–91.

²⁸² Okay, a periphrasis is a *round about way of speaking or saying something*. A gerund is a verb which often functions as a noun (in English, our gerunds often end in *ing*).

Genesis 29:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ahābāh (אהבה) [pronounced ah-hu ^b -VAW]	[human] love; sexual desire	feminine singular noun often translated like a verb; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #160 BDB #13
'ēth (את) [pronounced ayth]	her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her	sign of the direct object with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Translation: ...but they are in his estimation a few days in his love toward her. To Jacob, these 7 years seemed like only a few days, because of his love for her. Again, we have the bēyth preposition, so this is more literally, *in his love for her* or *with respect to his love for her*.

Undoubtedly the most romantic verse in the Bible, revealing great depth of emotion on the part of Jacob for Rachel. Today; if a man was willing to wait as Jacob did for his right woman, if a man, having found the woman of his dreams, was willing to work for seven years for her, to be faithful to her and to not have premarital sex with her; how many marriages would end in divorce? This is a commitment and dedication just about unparalleled in human history, and few, if any, contemporary examples can be found which are comparable.

Every male should reflect upon the example set by Jacob here and take it to heart. This is an honor and integrity which would make a marriage work. Jacob's eyes are on the future, as he works. He does not have Rachel. He does not get to marry her first and then work seven years. The impatience and the demands of the typical male today are pathetic by comparison. When a woman (or a man) has character, he should show this passage to her (or, his) fiancée. The concept of faithfulness and waiting and commitment and dedication should be discussed at this point. If you could not wait as did these two, then you should not marry—you have either got the wrong person or you lack the character and integrity which will preserve and prosper your marriage. We again will see similar dedication when we study Hosea.

As Thieme said many times, *the key to marriage is not finding the right person; the key to marriage is being the right person*. As I write this, our country is being destroyed within by the instability of the institution of marriage and the lack of real commitment from either party. Over 50% of marriages are ending in divorce²⁸³; those who live together and then marry have even a higher failure rate; and those who simply live together have a higher failure rate yet. Only spiritual maturity, which comes by growth in God's Word, can rescue the pitiful state to which we have fallen. Preferably this should take place before the marriage and not after.

Jacob has a great many faults; and these are often emphasized (and rightly so). However, there are some good attributes which he has as well. He is a hard and honest worker (as we will find out); and he is a faithful man in marriage.

Genesis 29:20 *Jacob served Laban for Rachel for seven years, but this time was, in his estimation, but a few days, because of his love for her.*

A Labor of Love (Various Commentators on Genesis 29:20)

Benson: *That is, the work or service of that time seemed but little in comparison of the worth of Rachel. An age of work will seem but a few days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearance.*²⁸⁴

²⁸³ This statistic is challenged; so I throw it out there by way of illustration.

²⁸⁴ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:20.

A Labor of Love (Various Commentators on Genesis 29:20)

Matthew Henry: *Love makes long and hard services short and easy; hence we read of the labour of love.*²⁸⁵

Heb. 6:10 **For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.** (ESV)

Blunt: *No other feeling of the human mind could have shortened and sweetened the term of that lengthened bondage. Ambition, avarice, fear, and a host of similar passions, will all make the bond-slave obedient to the beck of the hardest taskmaster; but there is none, save love, the master passion of the human heart, which can enable its possessor to render not only a willing, but a happy and joyful obedience.*²⁸⁶

Kalisch: *Words breathing the purest tenderness, and expressing more emphatically than the flowery hyperboles of romantic phraseology the deep attachment of an affectionate heart. Love capable of shortening seven laborious years into a term of insignificant brevity, is a flame animating and purifying the soul; a sacred longing, forming its own delight and happiness.*²⁸⁷

Gill: *Jacob here respects not so much the time as the toil and labour of service he endured in it; he thought that seven years' service was a trifle, like the service of so many days, in comparison of the lovely and worthy person he obtained thereby; all that he endured was nothing in comparison of her, and through the love he bore to her: besides, the many pleasant hours he spent in conversation with her made the time slide on insensibly, so that it seemed to be quickly gone; which shows that his love was pure and constant.*²⁸⁸

Trapp: *Of all natural delights, that of marriage is the greatest, because there is the greatest communication of one creature to another; and according to the degrees of communication are the degrees of delight.*²⁸⁹

Wesley remarks: *An age of work will be but as a few days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearing.*²⁹⁰

We do not know how often Jacob was allowed to spend with Rachel.

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Genesis 29:20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, but they seemed to him a few days, because of the love he had for her.

This is a passage which is quite personal. No historian would look back and write these words. Moses as an editor might preserve these words, but he would not write this himself as part of an historical narrative. In an historical narrative, it would not occur to someone, 400 years later, to write such words. Moses is called by nearly all commentators the author of Genesis. If he is the author, how do you explain an observation like this? And just as obviously, how would Moses know anything about Jacob, let alone this?

Jacob would write these words as a man deeply in love with Rachel. Jacob, as a man who remembers every single detail of the day that they met, would write these words. For 7 years, he anticipated his marriage to Rachel, and the hard work that he did just kept him focused on the woman that he loved. For him, the work was nothing. He possibly saw Rachel every day, and every day his love grew for her (we really do not know if Laban intentionally kept Jacob and Rachel apart—I would think that he did, and that was not abnormal). He would have

²⁸⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30.

²⁸⁶ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:15–20 (Suggestive comments).

²⁸⁷ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:20.

²⁸⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:20.

²⁸⁹ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:21.

²⁹⁰ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:20.

seen her under the auspices of family meals. It is hard to say if there would have been much direct contact between these two; and there would have been no alone time for them. So, for 7 years, he looked at this woman every day or he thought about this woman every day, and his love for her continued to grow. The beauty and the wonder of this 7 years of anticipation gave Jacob great motivation, and the years passed by quickly. One of the things which is unknown to the current generation is the custom of courtship and engagement. This can be one of the most wonderful periods of time for a man and a woman in love. There is great anticipation and hope between two people in love like this.

This is a summary of points taken out of an [Introduction to Genesis \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Moses is NOT the Author of Genesis

1. Throughout most of the book of Genesis, we follow one patriarch; we see through the eyes of one patriarch. From Gen. 12 and forward, most of this book is written from the view of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Joseph. The change from one man's viewpoint to the viewpoint of his son is generally quite clear, even though they each present themselves in the 3rd person (which is not unusual, even in an autobiographical work).
2. Historically, Moses is understood to have written Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
 - 1) Moses is called the author of the book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31 2Kings 14:6.
 - 2) Moses is called the author of Leviticus in Ezra 6:18.
3. Jesus acknowledges that Moses is the author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
 - 1) The Old Testament is referred to as *Moses and the Prophets* in Luke 16:29, 31 and as *the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms* in Luke 24:44.
 - 2) Jesus told His audience that they do not really believe Moses' writings because they do not believe Jesus' words (John 5:45–47).
 - 3) Furthermore, Moses is called by Jesus the author of Exodus (Mark 7:10 12:26 John 6:32), the author of Leviticus (Matt. 8:4 Mark 1:44 Luke 2:22 5:14), the author of Numbers (John 3:14) and the author of Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7–8 22:24 Mark 7:10 12:19)—or, at the very least, his authorship is clearly implied in these passages (in each of those passages, a quote from that book is attributed to Moses).
4. Jesus never speaks of Moses as writing Genesis.
 - 1) Jesus speaks of God creating man as male and female (quoting Gen. 1:27), but he never cites Moses as the author. Matt. 19:3–9.
 - 2) Jesus explains that circumcision came through the patriarchs and not through Moses. So, aspects of the Mosaic Law actually preceded Moses and did not come from him (John 7:20–23). If Moses wrote Genesis, this parsing of history would have made less sense. John 7:22–23 **Then Moses gave you the rite of circumcision -- not that it had its origin with Moses but with your earlier forefathers [= the patriarchs] -- and you circumcise a male child even on the Sabbath. Well, if a male child undergoes circumcision on the Sabbath, to keep the law of Moses from being broken, are you angry with me for making a man perfectly well on the Sabbath?** Jesus' point is, they circumcise children on the Sabbath, so how can they complain about Him doing good works on the Sabbath? However, as an aside, He also states that circumcision predated Moses and comes from the patriarchs. Jesus could have said, "Did not Moses tell you that the patriarchs began circumcision?" But, He did not say that because Moses did not tell us that (that is, Moses did not author Genesis).
5. Similarly the Apostles referred to Moses as author of the Law (Acts 13:39 15:5 28:23 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 9:19 10:28), of Exodus (Rom. 9:15—where God is said to have spoken to Moses 2Cor. 3:13–15), of Leviticus (Rom. 10:5 Heb. 9:19), of Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22 7:37 Rom. 10:19 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 10:28 12:21); and Moses is associated with the book of Numbers in Heb. 3:2, 5. However, when given the chance to call him the author of Genesis, the Apostles did not in Acts 3:25 7:1–16 Rom. 4:1–3, 9–23 9:6–12 (Moses is, however, mentioned in association with Exodus in v. 15) 1Cor. 6:16 Gal. 3:5–9, 15–18 4:22–26 Eph. 5:31 Heb. 6:13–15 7:1–6 11:8–21 James 2:21–23 1Peter 3:5–6.
6. In most of those passages, a direct reference to Genesis often reads something along the lines of: **And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel before to**

Moses is NOT the Author of Genesis

Abraham: "All the nations will be blessed" "in you." (Gal 3:8 quoting from Gen. 12:3; Green's literal translation). When the source for Genesis is mentioned, it is always *it stands written* or *the Scripture says*; in every instance referring back to Genesis, it is never, *and Moses wrote* or *and Moses commanded* (*said*).

7. Verses that we have studied are intensely personal (such as Gen. 29:20) and make sense if recorded by the person who experienced this (in this case, Jacob), but would have had no place in an historical narrative prepared by some author 400 years later.
8. There are even glosses found in the book of Genesis which are more appropriate to having been added 20, 50 or 100 years later; but not 400 years later. Gen. 19:38 **The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.** (ESV). *Giving birth to the son* fits in with the narrative; calling this baby the father of the Ammonites would have been added many years later—but not necessarily 400 years later.
9. If Moses were the author of Genesis, there would have been problems with the timing. The Jews at the beginning of the book of Exodus are calling upon their God to deliver them. Now, if Moses wrote the book of Genesis, how do the Jewish slaves know about their God?

At one time, I thought I was the only person who saw the book of Genesis as having been written mostly by the patriarchs, but, because of the internet, it has become clear that quite a number of commentators believe the same thing. Answers in Genesis, while disputing the JPED theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch, also list the various **authors of Genesis** (about $\frac{3}{4}$ ^{ths} of the way down).

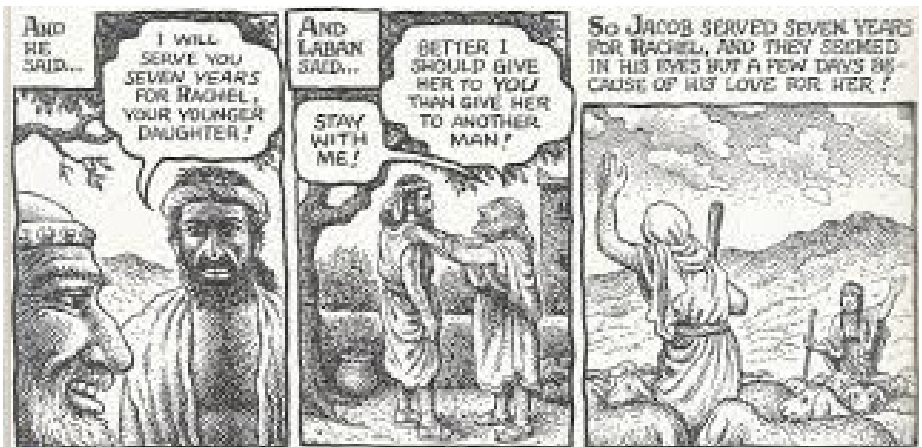
Other examples and a chart of the authorship of Genesis can be found in the **Introduction to Genesis**.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, but they seemed to him a few days, because of the love he had for her.

And, interestingly enough, Jacob, although not much of a decent human being at times, turns out to be a man more than willing to work and to put in a good day's labor for his wages. He was also a man who could experience great love for a woman.



Genesis 29:19–20 (an R. Crumb cartoon); from SavageMinds.org; accessed August 12, 2017.

7 years pass.

David Guzik on True Love Waits

- i. In this ancient culture, Jacob was not allowed to spend as much time as he wanted with Rachel. There were strict social guidelines keeping unmarried men and women apart from each other.
- ii. This clearly demonstrates an important principle: true love waits. Jacob was willing to wait seven years for Rachel.
- iii. In 1990, it was reported that in response to the excesses of the sexual revolution, some 400 concerned

David Guzik on True Love Waits

single adults have joined the National Chastity Association. Member Elaine Marsh, a 35-year-old legal secretary from Orange County, described her commitment to celibacy before her marriage: "It comes from my religion, but it's more than that," she says. "I just feel it's such a precious part of yourself, you don't give it to someone when you haven't made the commitment of marriage." Founder Mary Meyer says the group isn't against sex: "I love hand-holding, I love kissing, I love caressing, I love sex," she says. "But even more than I would love to experience these things right now, I want to be able to have a relationship where I can experience them forever." This is the kind of wisdom and heart Jacob had.

- iv. In the 1990s there was a successful campaign among teens titled "True Love Waits." It persuaded them to take the following pledge: "Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, those I date, my future mate and my future children to be sexually pure until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship." One 18-year-old named Rick said he used to be one of the guys who would come into school on Monday morning and brag about his sexual exploits. His views changed when he became a Christian two years ago, and now he is happy to take the pledge. "Sex is something God made to say, 'I love you,'" he said. "If you have sex with everybody, you can't say I've saved this one thing to say, 'I love you.' "

It was a very different time and the societal standards were much different. However, God's principles concerning marriage still stand today. Society's take on pre-marital sex is just one more area where people today reject God and His Word.

David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 29:15–20.

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Jacob Takes Two Wives (vv. 15-30)

Genesis 29:15–20 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were weak [soft/tender], but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."

Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me."

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:15–20: The First Seven Years

1. Laban's proposal introduced my friendly words seems innocent enough (v. 15).
2. On the surface he seems concerned about his nephew's welfare.
3. For the first month Jacob worked for Laban for just room and board.
4. Laban knows why Jacob is in Haran and what he wants.
5. Laban could have stepped up and helped his nephew get a wife and helped him get what he needed to get back to his home.
6. But Laban sees Jacob as someone to be exploited.
7. Laban comes off caring when he suggests that it is wrong for Jacob to continue on working for him "for nothing" since he is family.
8. In that first month Laban figured out what it was that Jacob wanted more than anything else, and that was his daughter Rachel.
9. Laban is canny, knowing Jacob's motives he seeks to exploit his "flesh and blood."
10. He exploits Jacob's affections for Rachel.
11. Laban asks Jacob what he wants for a wage hoping he will ask for his daughter's hand in marriage.
12. Vv. 16-17 constitute an editorial interruption in the narrative providing necessary background information

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:15–20: The First Seven Years

for the reader.

13. The meaning of the older daughter's name is subject to debate.
14. It may mean "wild cow."
15. Rachel's name means "ewe."
16. Leah's description is somewhat vague.
17. Only her eyes are mentioned as being tender or soft.
18. The NAS and the NIV use the term "weak."
19. In any case Leah's eyes for a focal point whether a negative or something else.
20. Rachel's description on the other hand is glowing as having a "beautiful figure" and an "attractive face."
21. It would appear that the younger daughter got the lion's share of good genetics.
22. We are informed for the first time that Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel during those first thirty days of their acquaintance.
23. As noted Laban was aware of their affections.
24. The surprising thing about v. 18 isn't Jacob's love for Rachel but the price he was willing to pay to have her as his wife.
25. This was to demonstrate to her father the degree of Jacob's affection for this woman.
26. Jacob had no dowry to offer and so he offers to work for his uncle seven years to gain the hand of the younger daughter.
27. This would constitute the "bride price" or "marriage present" offered by groom to the father of the bride.
28. Jacob offered Laban a very substantial marriage gift if one calculates the minimum wage of a common laborer over a seven year period.
29. Laban jumps at the offer as it probably was more generous than he would have required had Jacob asked him to set the time to earn the prize.
30. Laban makes Jacob feel at ease telling him that "it is better I give her to you than to another man; stay with me."
31. Both men go away from the negotiation more than pleased.
32. The question is: Has Laban already schemed to cheat or did this scheme develop over the seven years when he had no takers for his oldest daughter?
33. Jacob was so head-over-heels in love with Rachel that his seven year stint seemed to him "but a few days" (v. 20; again echoing his mother's words).
34. He was in her company during those years (1746-1739 BC), and for that week of years Jacob was broke but on top of the world!
35. As the days grew near for the wage to be honored Jacob was near delirium, but the reality of what he was up against was to come crashing down on his blissful future.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen29.htm> accessed August 7, 2017.

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Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 29:13–20 So it came about, when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, "surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month. Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah's eyes were weak; but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." And Laban said, "it is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man; stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:13–20

1. Once Laban heard from Rachel the news of Jacob's arrival, he wastes no time in going to meet him.
2. No doubt he was interested in him, but would have also desired news of his sister who had left some 97 years earlier.
3. He displays affection for his relative, although his display was somewhat overdone since he did not know Jacob.
4. Laban demonstrates at this first meeting a tendency toward insincerity and phoniness.
5. Having received such a welcome greeting, Jacob explains his presence with them.
6. He would have had to relate some, if not all of the events of Chap 27, as well as his journey.
7. He would have probably told them about his visit from the Lord, as well.
8. Laban, after hearing all his account, readily acknowledges him as a close relative, by using the idiom bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.
9. Jacob stays 30 days with Laban, without attempting to make any provision for long range plans, since he expected to hear from his mother shortly.
10. During this time there is no doubt that Laban observed that Jacob was not only physically strong, but was a competent shepherd.
11. Jacob had a number of STA (sinful trend of Adam) problems, but laziness was not among them.
12. He was a hard worker and God blessed his hard work as He customarily does.
13. Laban desires to enter into some sort of formal contract with Jacob, to ensure that if he stays in the area, he will be certain of his services.
14. He sees an opportunity to hire a good employee.
15. He suggests that it is not proper for Jacob to continue to work for him without any wages, so he asks Jacob what it would take to hire him.
16. Laban demonstrates here that the monetary side of things dominates his thinking.
17. Jacob knows that his arrival was unexpected and must feel that he has imposed on Laban to some degree.
18. Laban exploits this opportunity to get competent labor at a reduced price.
19. The wages between an employer and an employee are to be mutually agreed upon.
20. If either side should renege on the agreement, it should void the agreement.
21. Any labor agreement has the potential for abuse, by either party.
22. Management may seek to take advantage of labor by not rewarding good service, and thus destroying incentive among the workers.
23. Labor may fail to do their job and thus destroy the trust management has placed in them.
24. In any case there is no place for labor unions to resolve any potential problems which arise.
25. vs 16-17 are parenthetical and explanatory.
26. The two daughters of Laban were not anything alike.
27. Leah had no outstanding physical beauty, and her eyes were her most notable feature.
28. The phrase weak of eyes has two possible explanations:
 - a. She could not see well.
 - b. Her eyes were large and soft looking, an attribute not prized in that culture.
29. In either case, she was not nearly as desirable as Rachel.
30. Rachel was a voluptuous woman who was exceedingly beautiful to look at.
31. vs 18 introduces us to the fact that Jacob had fallen for Rachel after only some 30 days.
32. No doubt Laban was aware of this and would use this knowledge to his advantage.
33. Jacob makes an offer to serve Laban for 7 years for the privilege of marrying his daughter.
34. Laban states what is still true to this very time among the middle eastern cultures, the desire on his part to marry his daughter to some relative than a total stranger.
35. In the case of Jacob, he would be all the more valuable, since he was strong and competent.
36. The idea of his daughter's happiness does not seem to enter his thinking, as much as having such a desirable son-in-law.
37. Laban has seven years of free labor, since his daughter would have eventually gotten married anyway.
38. There can be no doubt that Jacob really loved Rachel, since he was penniless and desired her more than money.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:13–20

39. His love and devotion for Rachel are recorded in vs 20, where it states that time flew by for Jacob.
40. Another obvious thing about true love is that it is willing to wait for its fulfillment.
41. Jacob loves Rachel, but does not receive her as his bride for 7 years.
42. RM/RW do not have to be in a hurry to enter and consummate their relationship.
43. Note that Laban never actually gives complete agreement to the wages which Jacob requests.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017.

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Laban Deceives Jacob; Jacob's Marriage to Leah and Rachel

And so says Jacob unto Laban, "Give my woman [to me] for are fulfilled my days, and I will go in unto her."

Genesis
29:21

Jacob then said to Laban, "Give my wife [to me] for my days [of service] have been fulfilled; so that I may go in unto her."

Jacob then said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days of service to you have been completed; so that I may take her as my wife."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Jacob unto Laban, "Give my woman [to me] for are fulfilled my days, and I will go in unto her."
Targum of Onkelos	And Jakob said to Laban, Give <u>me</u> my wife: for the days <u>of my service</u> are completed, and I will go in with her.
Latin Vulgate	And he said to Laban: Give <u>me</u> my wife; for now the time is fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob said to Laban, Give <u>me</u> my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob said to Laban, Give <u>me</u> my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her.

Significant differences: *Me* or *to me* is not found in the Hebrew text; but one might reasonably deduce it. The targum adds some additional text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob said to Laban, Give me my wife so that I may have her, for the days are ended.
Easy English	Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give my wife to me, so that I can have sex with her. I have finished the 7 years of work.'
Easy-to-Read Version	After seven years Jacob said to Laban, "Give me Rachel so that I can marry her. My time of work for you is finished."
<i>God's Word</i> ™	At the end of the seven years Jacob said to Laban, "The time is up; give me my wife! I want to sleep with her."

Good News Bible (TEV) <i>The Message</i>	Then Jacob said to Laban, "The time is up; let me marry your daughter." Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife; I've completed what we agreed I'd do. I'm ready to consummate my marriage."
NIRV	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. I've completed my time. I want to make love to her."
New Simplified Bible	Jacob said to Laban: »Give me my wife for the time is completed. I want to marry Rachel now!«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. New Berkeley Version New Century Version	Jacob said to Laban, "The time is up, and I want to marry Rachel now!" Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife; for my time is up; let me go in to her." After seven years Jacob said to Laban, "Give me Rachel so that I may marry her. The time I promised to work for you is over."
New Life Bible	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife so I may go in to her. For my time is finished."
New Living Translation	Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my agreement," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so I can sleep with her."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Beck's American Translation International Standard V	Then Jacob told Laban: 'Now, give me my woman, because I've served my time.' Then Jacob told Laban, "Give me my wife; my time is up. I want to marry her." Eventually, Jacob told Laban, "Bring me my wife, now that my time of service [The Heb. lacks of service] has been completed, so I can go be with her."
Names of God Bible	At the end of the seven years Jacob said to Laban, "The time is up; give me my wife! I want to sleep with her."
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then he said to Laban, Give me my bride; the time has come now for me to wed her.
Today's NIV	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."
Translation for Translators	After the seven years were ended, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me marry Rachel now, because the time we agreed upon for me to work for you is ended, and I want to marry her. [EUP]"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Conservapedia	Jacob said to Laban, "Grant my woman to come into her, for my days are full." Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, so that I may come to her." The "days" referred to here are not Jacob's term of service, but the minimum interval between betrothal and marriage. That interval was one week (see below). Jacob wasn't wasting any time. The "coming" referred to is the consummation.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then Jacob said to Laban, " Give me my wife, for the time is up, and I will go to her."
HCSB	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed. I want to sleep with her."
NIV, ©2011	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her [Judges 15:1 Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He...]."
Unlocked Literal Bible	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days have been completed—so that I may marry her!"
Urim-Thummim Version	And Jacob said to Laban, give me my woman for my days are accomplished that I may sexually possess her.

Wikipedia Bible Project And Jacob said to Laban, bring my wife, because I have completed all the workdays, and I will come to her.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Jacob then said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for I have served my time and I want to lie with her."
 New American Bible (2011) Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, that I may consummate my marriage with her, for my term is now completed."
 New Jerusalem Bible Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife, for my time is up and I should like to go to her.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Ya'akov said to Lavan, "Give me my wife, since my time is finished, so that I can start living with her."
 The Complete Tanach And Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are completed, that I may come to her."

for my days are completed: [The days] of which my mother told me. Moreover, my days are completed, for I am already eighty-four years old. When will I raise up twelve tribes? This is what he [meant when he] said, "that I may come to her." Now, isn't it true that even the most degenerate person would not say this? But he (Jacob) meant [that he intended] to beget generations. — [from Gen. Rabbah 70:18]

exeGesés companion Bible ...and Yaaqov says to Laban,
 Give me my woman;
 for I fulfilled my days to go in to her.
 JPS (Tanakh—1917) And Jacob said unto Laban: 'Give me my wife, for my days are filled, that I may go in unto her.'
 Judaica Press Complete T. And Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are completed, that I may come to her."
 Kaplan Translation Finally Jacob said to Laban, 'The time is up. Give me my bride and let me marry her.'
 Orthodox Jewish Bible And Ya'akov said unto Lavan, Give me my isha, for my yamim are completed, that I may go in unto her.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible Finally, Jacob said to Laban, Give me my wife, for my time is completed, so that I may take her to me.
 The Expanded Bible After seven years Jacob said to Laban, "Give me ·Rachel [^lmy woman/wife] so that I may ·marry [^lgo to] her. ·The time I promised to work for you is over [^lMy days are fulfilled]."
 Kretzmann's Commentary Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel
 And Jacob said unto Laban, at the end of the seven years, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. Note that he calls Rachel his wife, although only engaged to her, for a rightful betrothal is as binding as marriage in the sight of God.
 Lexham English Bible And Jacob said to Laban, "Give [me] my wife, that I may go in to her, for {my time} is completed."
 NET Bible® Finally Jacob said [Heb "and Jacob said.] to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time of service is up [Heb "my days are fulfilled."]. I want to have marital relations with her [Heb "and I will go in to her." The verb is a cohortative; it may be subordinated to the preceding request, "that I may go in," or it may be an independent clause

The Voice expressing his desire. The verb "go in" in this context refers to sexual intercourse (i.e., the consummation of the marriage).]"
 When the time came, Jacob approached Laban.
Jacob: I have now completed seven years of work for you. *I ask you now to give me my wife so that I may consummate my marriage.*

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] said to Lavan ^[White] , provide my woman given that my days are filled and I will come to her,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Jacob to Laban, "Grant me my wife, for fulfilled are my days, and I will come to her.
Context Group Version	And Jacob said to Laban, Give me my woman { or wife }, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her.
Darby Translation	And Jacob said to Laban, Give [me] my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her.
English Standard Version	Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."
Green’s Literal Translation	And Jacob said to Laban, Give my wife, for my days are completed. And let me go in to her.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And Jacob said unto Laban: give me my wife, that I may lie with her. For the time appointed me is come.
NASB	Laban's Treachery Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is [Lit days are] completed, that I may go in [Judges 15:1 (But after a while, in the time of wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a young goat, and...)] to her."
Webster’s Bible Translation	And Jacob said to Laban, Give [me] my wife (for my days are fulfilled) that I may go in to her.
Young’s Updated LT	And Jacob says unto Laban, “Give up my wife, for my days have been fulfilled, and I go in unto her”

The gist of this verse: Upon the completion of 7 years of work, Jacob asks for his woman to be given to him.

Genesis 29:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
Ya’âqôb (יעקב) [pronounced yah-’guh-KOH ^{BV}]	supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #3290 BDB #784

Genesis 29:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lâbân (לַבָּן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
yâhab (יָהַב) [pronounced yaw-HAWB ^v]	<i>give, give here; grant, permit; provide [with reflexive]; place, put, set; ascribe</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with a voluntative hê	Strong's #3051 BDB #396
Here, Owens has <i>with the cohortative hê</i> ; which is the same result of hanging a hê onto the end of the verb.			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: *Jacob then said to Laban, "Give my wife [to me]... You will notice that Jacob approach Laban concerning this matter. It is my opinion that Laban was fully aware of the time frame and that he already had set up a plan (I think he developed the plan, to some extent, even before Jacob specifically asked for Rachel). However, if he can get an extra day or an extra month of work from Jacob, he is happy to have that.*

Genesis 29:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
mâlê' (מָלֵא) [pronounced maw-LAY]	<i>to fill, to make full; to be filled, to be full, to fulfill; to be accomplished, to be ended; to consecrate; to fill [the hand]</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4390 BDB #569
yâmîym (יָמַי) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: *...for my days [of service] have been fulfilled;... Jacob reminds Laban that he has fulfilled his obligation to him of serving for 7 years. This time has come to an end; Jacob fulfilled his part of the bargain. No doubt, both Jacob and Laban were paying close attention to this; and Jacob brings it to Laban's attention.*

Genesis 29:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bôw' (בוא) [pronounced boh]	to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...so that I may go in unto her.” I do find this interesting, as Jacob has imagined Rachel for all of this time. However, it does seem unusual that he say this to her father, even though this is not a crude expression. It is euphemistic, but clear. This suggests to me that was relatively common to say; or that Laban himself has made remarks which make Jacob feel as if saying this is not a crudity. This might be quite similar to someone today speaking of the wedding night of a just-married couple.

This verse and vv. 23–25 tell us that Jacob and Rachel did not have sexual relations prior to marriage. They waited, although, it is very likely that they did not have a choice here (it was generally common for the father to protect his daughter until her day of marriage²⁹¹). Now, during that time, Laban has not married off Leah and he has done quite well having Jacob work for him. Jacob's dedication toward Rachel resulted in the fact that he worked hard for Laban. He had some good qualities, which are finally coming out.

Genesis 29:21 Jacob then said to Laban, “Give me my wife, for my days of service to you have been completed; so that I may take her as my wife.”

End of the Seven Years (Several Commentators)

Speaking for Jacob, Clarke writes: *My seven years are now completed, let me have my wife, for whom I have given this service as a dowry.*²⁹²

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *At the expiry of the stipulated term the marriage festivities were held. But an infamous fraud was practised on Jacob, and on his showing a righteous indignation, the usage of the country was pleaded in excuse. No plea of kindred should ever be allowed to come in opposition to the claim of justice.*²⁹³

Utle: *Obviously, Laban was in no hurry even at the end of seven years, to give Jacob his daughter. This shows something of the tendency that will be seen throughout these verses concerning the manipulative techniques of Laban. He was looking out for his immediate family's interests.*²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ However, Jacob did not protect his own daughter, Diana, in this way. Gen. 34

²⁹² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:21.

²⁹³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:21.

²⁹⁴ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:21.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Unfortunately for Jacob, Laban is even more devious than Jacob is. There appears to be almost a genetic predisposition toward this which came through his mother Rebekah; and this trait will now be seen in Laban.

Genesis 29:21 And Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, so that I may go in to her.”

Jacob kept track of the time. Laban probably did but would not have said anything. For Laban, if he got 8 years of free work from Jacob, that would have been fine too. Laban used other people. He used his own daughter to build up his own business. He will also cheat Jacob in this whole marriage business as well—very much like Jacob cheated Esau.

Jacob was certainly mindful of the time. And he wanted this woman. He wanted Rachel.

And so gathers together Laban all men of the place and so he makes a feast.	Genesis 29:22	So, Laban gathered all the men of that place together and he made a celebratory feast.
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Therefore, Laban gathered all the men of that place together and he held a celebratory feast.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew) Targum of Onkelos	And so gathers together Laban all men of the place and so he makes a feast. And Laban gathered all the men of the place, and made them a feast. <u>Answering he said to them, Behold, seven years since Jakob came to us the wells have not failed and the watered places are multiplied: and now come, let us counsel against him cunning counsel, that he may remain with us. And they gave him cunning counsel that he should take Leah to him instead of Rahel.</u>
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Laban gathered all the people of the place, and made a feast. <u>And Laban answered and said to them, Behold seven years are from the coming of this just man to us; our waterings have not failed, and our springs are many: and now come, give me counsel how we may settle (or subject) him among us yet seven years. And they gave him cunning counsel to take Leah to him instead of Rahel.</u>
Latin Vulgate	And he, having invited a great number of his <u>friends</u> to the feast, made the <u>marriage</u> .
Peshitta (Syriac) Septuagint (Greek)	And so Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a marriage feast.
Significant differences:	The targums are filled with additional text. The Latin has <i>friends</i> instead of <i>men</i> ; and <i>marriage</i> rather than <i>feast</i> . The Greek <i>marriage feast</i> is probably okay.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	So Laban gathered together all the local men and he made a *feast.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Laban gave a party for all the people in that place.
Good News Bible (TEV)	So Laban gave a wedding feast and invited everyone.
<i>The Message</i>	Laban invited everyone around and threw a big feast.
NIRV	So Laban brought all of the people of the place together and had a big dinner prepared.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	So Laban gave a big feast and invited all their neighbors.
New Berkeley Version	Laban then invited all the people there and served a banquet.
New Century Version	So Laban gave a feast for all the people there.
New Life Bible	And Laban gathered all the men of the place together, and made a special supper.
New Living Translation	So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So Laban assembled all the people and prepared a wedding banquet.
Beck's American Translation	So Laban got all the men of the place together and gave a dinner.
International Standard V	So Laban gathered all the men who lived in that place and held a wedding festival.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	So Laban invited a great company of his friends to the wedding feast;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

NIV, ©2011	So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. Judges 14:10 Isa. 25:6 John 2:1-2
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Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011)	So Laban invited all the local inhabitants and gave a banquet.
Revised English Bible	Laban brought all the people of the place together and held a wedding feast.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And Laban gathers all the men of the place and works a banquet:...
Kaplan Translation	[Laban] invited all the local people and made a wedding feast.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Lavan gathered together all the anshei hamakom, and made a mishteh (feast).

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast [with drinking].
The Expanded Bible	So Laban gave a ·feast [banquet] for all the people there.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. He arranged the customary marriage-festival, making it as splendid as his wealth allowed.
NET Bible®	So Laban invited all the people [Heb "men."] of that place and prepared a feast.
The Voice	So Laban gathered together all of the people in the area and prepared a <i>great</i> feast.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Lavan ^[White] gathered all the men of the place and he made a feast,...
Concordant Literal Version	And gathering is Laban all the mortals of the place and is making a feast.
English Standard Version	So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast.
Green's Literal Translation	And Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then Laban bade all the men of that place, and made a feast.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Laban assembled all the men of the place, and made a feast.
Young's Updated LT	And Laban gathers all the men of the place, and makes a banquet.

The gist of this verse: Laban throws a wedding feast.

Genesis 29:22a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âçaph (אָפַח) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i>]	<i>to collect, to relocate, to transfer, to transport, to gather (together), to gather and remove, to remove</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #622 BDB #62
This is at least the third time that this verb is used in this chapter.			
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'ânâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i>]; also spelled 'îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
mâqôwm (מִקְוֵם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

Translation: *So, Laban gathered all the men of that place together...* This is the third time in this chapter that this verb is used. It is not clear if we are speaking of the men of Laban's town or whether these are the men who work for him. Reasonably we may assume these are men with whom Laban has a relationship. It seems reasonable to suppose that, come what may, they will back Laban up.

Genesis 29:22b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Genesis 29:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mishteh (מִשְׁתֶּה) [pronounced <i>mish^e-TEH</i>]	<i>a feast, a drink, a drinking bout, a party, a banquet</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4960 BDB #1059

Translation: ...and he made a celebratory feast. Laban holds a feast for Jacob and his impending nuptials. This party is, more or less, the celebration of the wedding. The wedding night, where Jacob takes the virginity of Laban's daughter, makes the marriage official. This is so fundamental, and goes back so far in history, that even today, in most nations, a marriage can be annulled if the marriage is not consummated (even in nations where the dissolution of a marriage is not easy to get).

Dinners and celebrations are commonly done with marriages. However, there is an additional reason that Laban is throwing this feast—everyone who comes to the feast will know that Jacob is marrying Laban's daughter.

Throughout this feast, Laban continually refers to Jacob becoming the husband of his daughter. Most assuredly, he never speaks specifically of his daughter *Rachel*. This is how his mind works. He will switch daughters on Jacob, so that Jacob wakes up the next morning in the arms of Leah.

Genesis 29:22 Therefore, Laban gathered all the men of that place together and he held a celebratory feast.

The Marriage Feast—Commentators on Genesis 29:22

The Cambridge Bible: *The marriage feast was a great affair. The ceremonial lasted for seven days. Cf. Judges 14:10; Judges 14:12; Tob. 11:18. "All the men of the place," not only "brethren," i.e. "relations," are invited. "The place" is the residence of a large community, cf. Gen. 29:26.*²⁹⁵

Clarke: *Laban - made a feast* - *מִשְׁתֶּה* *mishteh* signifies a feast of drinking. As marriage was a very solemn contract, there is much reason to believe that sacrifices were offered on the occasion, and libations poured out; and we know that on festival occasions a cup of wine was offered to every guest; and as this was drunk with particular ceremonies, the feast might derive its name from this circumstance, which was the most prominent and observable on such occasions.²⁹⁶

Benson: *Laban gathered all the men of the place — His kindred and neighbours, according to custom, Judges 14:10–11; John 2:1–2. Probably he collected a greater number, that the marriage might be more solemn and public, and that Jacob, being overawed by their presence and authority, might not attempt to disannul the marriage and reject Leah, which otherwise he might have done.*²⁹⁷

Dr. Peter Pett: *The wedding feast is arranged. It will last for seven days (Gen. 29:27). And it is now that we first begin to see Laban's deceitful ways, although we must be fair and recognise that he has been put in a difficult position. He had hoped that Leah might be married off, but it had not happened, and custom forbade Rachel being married first.*²⁹⁸

Whedon: *The marriage festival, in such a home as Laban's, would doubtless be worthy of all parties. It was continued seven days. Comp. Gen. 29:27–28; Judges 14:12; Judges 14:17.*²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:22.

²⁹⁶ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:22.

²⁹⁷ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:22.

²⁹⁸ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:22–24.

²⁹⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:22.

Although some commentators speak of the bride being heavily veiled, she may not be in attendance. Even though this is specifically a wedding feast, that does not mean that the bride is there. They do not have a ceremony as we do where vows are exchanged.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

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

To celebrate the nuptials, Laban throws a feast. You see here that he gathers together the men of the place. That means, this was a bachelor party, of sorts. At this feast, it is likely that some drinking took place.

Jacob does not realize, but Laban is gathering up witnesses (this is how I read the landscape). Laban is going to paint Jacob into a cultural corner.

Before we go on to the next verse, I want you to think back on why Jacob is there in Padan-aram. At the direction of his mother, Jacob went to his virtually blind father and pretended to be Esau, his brother. He pretended to be Isaac's other son and he deceived his father in this way, taking the blessing that Isaac had meant for Esau.

God's plan is not moved forward on deception. God's people are not advanced in life by duplicity. This scheme was not what allowed God's blessing through Isaac to fall upon Jacob, but a dishonest act by an adult man who should have known better.

God is able to bring His will to pass, despite the deception and evil that men do. God works all things together for the good. This theme will be continued even here.

One of the amazing truths found in the final quarter of Genesis is, God's plan moves forward, whether we are speaking of the life of Jacob (who often fought against God) or the lift of Joseph (who understood the will of God and usually placed himself in the right place doing the right thing).

Genesis 29:22 Therefore, Laban gathered all the men of that place together and he held a celebratory feast.

Trapp on the Marriage Feast in the Bible

Never more seasonable, surely, than [a marriage feast] at the recovery of the lost rib. The wedding day is called, "The day of the rejoicing of a man's heart". {Son. 3:11} Our Saviour graced such a feast with his presence and first miracle: he supplied them with wine to glad their hearts; not with a little, for health's sake only, but with a great quantity, for sober delight and honest affluence. It is noted as an absurd thing in Samson's wife, that "she wept all the days of the feast". {Judges 14:17} A feast, then, there was at Samson's wedding, and of seven days' continuance. And so there was at Jacob's, as may be gathered out of Gen. 29:27. "Fulfil her week," saith Laban; to wit, of banquet or bride-ale, as we call it: only that of Chrysostom comes here in fitly, De nuptiis Iacobi legimus; de choreis et tripudiis non legimus :of Jacob's wedding feast we read; but of dancing and dalliance, of tracing and tripping on the toe, we read not. In maxima libertate, minima licentia , saith Salvian. Merry we may be, at such a time, but in the Lord: eat and drink we may, but "before the Lord". {Deut. 12:7} The old world may be a warning to us: they "fed without fear"; {Judges 1:12} and therefore perished without favour. Let such look to it, as "live in pleasure, and are wanton"; {James 5:5} that eat to excess, and drink to drunkenness, accounting nothing mirth, but madness; no bread sweet, but stolen; no such pleasure, as to have the devil their playfellow; so "nourishing their hearts as in a day of slaughter," or belly-cheer, {James 5:5} and swallowing down those murdering morsels now, that they must digest in hell.

Mention of marriage feasts in the Bible: Judges 14:10–18, Rth. 4:10–13, Matt. 22:2–10, Matt. 25:1–10, John 2:1–10, Rev. 19:9 .

John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:22.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Based upon this passage, the NEV Commentary asks: *[It is] hard to imagine that Rachel didn't get wind of the conspiracy, and was not in some way part of it too. We are to suppose that in the earlier part of the ceremony, Rachel was acting the part of the bride; and then, as stated here, only in the evening, when Jacob was drunk, was Leah brought to Jacob. The idea was clearly that once Jacob had slept with her, he had to have her as his wife. So Rachel was surely involved in the deception. After all, where was she whilst all this was going on? What did she feel, what did she say?*³⁰⁰ There are a few assumptions made in this commentary—that Rachel was there at the marriage celebration before their wedding night. We do not know that to be true. However, I will provide a fairly good explanation as to who exactly was in on this deception and why.

And so he is in the evening and so he takes Leah his daughter and so he brings her unto him. And so he goes in unto her.

Genesis
29:23

And so it is in the evening that Laban [lit., he] takes his daughter Leah and brings her to Jacob [lit., him]. And Jacob [lit., he] goes in unto her.

Later that evening, Laban took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob and Jacob had relations with her, not knowing that she was Leah.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is in the evening and so he takes Leah his daughter and so he brings her unto him. And so he goes in unto her.
Targum of Onkelos	And it was in the evening that he brought Leah his daughter, and <u>introduced</u> her to him, and he went in with her.
Latin Vulgate	And at night he brought in Lia, his daughter, to him,...
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass in the evening, he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in unto her.
Septuagint (Greek)	And so it was, that he took his daughter Leah, and brought her in to Jacob, and Jacob went in to her.

Significant differences: The targum has *introduced* rather than *brings*. The Latin leaves off that Jacob went in unto her (a fairly important part of the narrative³⁰¹). However, the Latin adds that detail to the end of v. 24.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and he brought her to Jacob. And Jacob had sex with Leah.
Easy-to-Read Version	That night, Laban brought his daughter Leah to Jacob. Jacob and Leah had sexual relations together.
God's Word™	In the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob. Jacob slept with her. When morning came, he realized it was Leah.
Good News Bible (TEV)	But that night, instead of Rachel, he took Leah to Jacob, and Jacob had intercourse with her.

³⁰⁰ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017.

³⁰¹ In this chapter, this is probably one of the most substantive diversions from Hebrew text. It does not mean much overall, as the other languages back up the Hebrew; but it is surprising to find it missing in the Latin.

<i>The Message</i>	At evening, though, he got his daughter Leah and brought her to the marriage bed, and Jacob slept with her.
NIRV	But when evening came, he gave his daughter Leah to Jacob. And Jacob made love to her.
New Simplified Bible	In the evening when it was dark, he took Leah, his daughter, and gave her to him. Jacob slept with her.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	However, in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he slept with her.
Contemporary English V.	But that evening he brought Leah to Jacob, who married her and spent the night with her.
New Berkeley Version	But in the evening he took his daughter Leah to him and he went in to her.
New Century Version	That evening he brought his daughter Leah to Jacob, and they had sexual relations.
New Living Translation	But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her.
Translation for Translators	But that evening, instead of taking Rachel to Jacob, Laban took his older daughter, Leah, to him. But because it was already dark, he could not see that it was Leah and not Rachel, and he had sex [EUP] with her.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then that evening, he took his daughter LeAh and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob [had sex] with her.
Beck's American Translation	But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, who married her.
International Standard V	<i>Laban Deceives Jacob</i> That night Laban took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob [Lit. him]. He had marital relations with her.
Names of God Bible	In the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob. Jacob slept with her. When morning came, he realized it was Leah. The first part of verse 25 (in Hebrew) has been placed in verse 23 to express the complex Hebrew paragraph structure more clearly in English.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	...but that night he matched Jacob with his daughter Lia instead,...
Today's NIV	But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	And it happened in the evening, that he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him, and he came to her.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and when it was dark he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him, and he went to her.
NIV, ©2011	But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah [Genesis 29:16 (Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.)] and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her.
Unlocked Literal Bible	In the evening, Laban took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob, who slept with her.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then at sunset, he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him, and he possessed her sexually.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was in the evening, and he took Leah, his daughter, and brought her to him; and he came to her.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And it was in the dusk that he took Leah, his daughter, and brought her to him and he went in to her.
New American Bible (2011)	At nightfall he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he consummated the marriage with her.
New Jerusalem Bible	But when night came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he slept with her..
Revised English Bible	In the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he lay with her.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	In the evening he took Le'ah his daughter and brought her to Ya'akov, and he went in and slept with her.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and so be it, in the evening, he takes Leah his daughter and brings her to him; and he goes in to her.
Kaplan Translation	In the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to [Jacob] who consummated the marriage with her.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass in the erev, that he took Leah his bat, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But when night came, he took Leah his daughter and brought her to [Jacob], who had intercourse with her.
The Expanded Bible	That evening he brought his daughter Leah to Jacob, and they had sexual relations [“he (Jacob) went into her].
Kretzmann’s Commentary	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. This deception on Laban's part could be carried out all the more easily, since custom required that the bride be heavily veiled when led to the bridegroom and to the bridal chamber.
Lexham English Bible	And it happened [that] in the evening he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him, and he went in to her.
NET Bible®	In the evening he brought his daughter Leah to Jacob [Heb "to him"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], and Jacob [Heb "he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity] had marital relations with her [Heb "went in to her." The expression "went in to" in this context refers to sexual intercourse, i.e., the consummation of the marriage.].
The Voice	But in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob slept with her <i>thinking she was Rachel</i> .

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and it came to pass in the evening and he took Le'ah ^[Weary] his daughter and he brought her to him and he came to her,...
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it in the evening that Laban is taking Leah, his daughter, and is bringing her to Jacob, and Jacob is coming to her.
English Standard Version	But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her.
The Geneva Bible	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. The reason Jacob was deceived was that in ancient times the wife was covered with a veil, when she was brought to her husband as a sign of purity and humbleness.

God's Truth (Tyndale)	And when even was come, he took Lea his daughter and brought her to him: and he went in unto Her.
NASB	Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and <i>Jacob</i> went in to her.
World English Bible	It happened in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him. He went in to her.
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass in the evening, that he takes Leah, his daughter, and brings her in unto him, and he goes in unto her.

The gist of this verse: Laban brings Leah to Jacob that night rather than Rachel. Jacob unknowingly consummates his marriage with Leah.

Genesis 29:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿereb (בֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>GEH-re^{bv}</i>]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787

Translation: *And so it is in the evening...* Sometimes, the verb *to be* simply advances the action. It means *and so it comes to pass; and so it is*.

The reason the time of day is important is, Jacob is not going to know who has come to him in the middle of the night.

Genesis 29:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 29:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123

Translation: ...that Laban [lit., he] takes his daughter Leah... The daughter Jacob was expecting was Rachel; but Laban is going to bring Leah to him. This means that Leah must be in on this to some extent. In order for Laban to get away with this, Leah cannot speak. Now, no matter what story Laban tells Leah ("Jacob decided that he wanted to marry you"), she has also been told not to speak. I can envision Leah being told not to say anything on her wedding night, as that is tradition—so, there may be a way to exonerate her from this deception.

Genesis 29:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בָּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her</i>	sign of the direct object with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...and brings her to Jacob [lit., him]. In the Hebrew, it is clear as to who is who; I have added the proper names in order to clarify the actions.

We are unsure about what part Rachel played in all of this. Was she taken away for a period of time and Jacob give a story about her being gone? We don't know. Did Laban tell her that Jacob wanted her sister instead?

Somehow, in some way, Rachel was kept away completely from Jacob and Leah was brought to him. Leah was probably complicit in this deception; Rachel possibly not. But we really don't know. However, it is clear that Laban is the mastermind of this entire deception.

The NET Bible: *Laban's deception of Jacob by giving him the older daughter instead of the younger was God's way of disciplining the deceiver who tricked his older brother. D. Kidner says this account is "the very embodiment of anti-climax, and this moment a miniature of man's disillusion, experienced from Eden onwards" (Genesis [TOTC], 160). G. von Rad notes, "That Laban secretly gave the unloved Leah to the man in love was, to be sure, a monstrous blow, a masterpiece of shameless treachery. It was certainly a move by which he won for himself far and wide the coarsest laughter" (Genesis [OTL], 291).*³⁰²

It is reasonable to assume that Laban engineered things so that Jacob and Rachel saw very little of one another in the final months preceding the marriage. There was probably not a point in time when Jacob and Rachel beheld one another and remarked, "The next time we see each other, we will be married."

Genesis 29:23d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bōw' (בו) [pronounced boh]	to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (ל) [pronounced eh]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: *And Jacob [lit., he] goes in unto her.* Although some details are not given us; apparently Leah went to Jacob in the dark and nothing was said (at least by Leah). Jacob may have been somewhat inebriated (but Laban would see to it that he is not dead drunk). Their marriage was consummated, so that there was no backing out for Jacob at that point.

Whereas, I see Laban as a scheming rat who had some plans from the very beginning, Dr. Peter Pett cuts him more of a break than I do: *we must be fair and recognise that he has been put in a difficult position. He had hoped that Leah might be married off, but it had not happened, and custom forbade Rachel being married first.*

Pett continues: *As he ponders the problem he sees the solution. Instead of being open and honest he foists Leah, who would be heavily veiled for the wedding, on Jacob. When they go to bed it is dark and presumably Leah kept silent. Thus Jacob does not realise until daylight that his silent and submissive companion is Leah. And by then it is too late. He is legally committed to Leah.*³⁰³

This feast would involve some drinking and it would have been completely dark when Leah was brought to Jacob. Leah would have been a part of this duplicity. She was not the one who concocted this plan, but she was likely

³⁰² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen29.htm> (footnote) accessed November 14, 2014.

³⁰³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:22–24.

in collusion with her father.³⁰⁴ She needed only to say a word to Jacob—just one word, and he wouldn't have consummated their marriage. Jacob was not in love with her. Now she and Rachel would be similar in form and their fragrance would be similar. In the dark, since Jacob had not slept with Rachel, he would not be able to tell the difference.

Now, you will note that there is a big feast here offered by Laban. He is not a generous man. This may be customary; however, since he pulls this switch on Jacob, my thinking is that he wanted a whole lot of witnesses to the fact of the marriage. It is likely that neither sister is around for the feast. There may have been some drinking which occurred as well, with Jacob being encouraged to imbibe (I say this as an educated guess; we do not find it in the Hebrew text).

Genesis 29:23 And it happened in the evening, he [Laban] took his daughter Leah and brought her to him [Jacob]. And he [Jacob] went in to her [Leah].

Laban apparently made some arrangements with Jacob; and this may have been the standard way of doing things. Laban brought Jacob's wife to him in the evening. However, Laban brings Leah to him rather than Rachel. We will reasonably assume that it is pitch dark, Jacob might be a little tipsy, and that was part of what Laban planned.

As a result, Jacob consummates his marriage to Leah, thinking he is consummating his marriage with Rachel.

Utey asks the kind of questions many might ask: *Although it was obvious from Laban's character that this kind of behavior was to be expected, it is surprising that Leah did not say something or that Rachel did not say something. But, we must judge this day in light of its own culture and not in ours, and because of the lack of specific textual information modern interpreters must not speculate.*³⁰⁵

We have no idea how Rachel was edged out here and Leah was put in. This was certainly Laban's doing, but we do not know what he said or did to pull this off.

What Laban may have done to bring Leah to Jacob rather than Rachel

1. There are things that we know for certain: Leah went to the marriage bed rather than Rachel; and Jacob, quite obviously, expected Rachel.
2. Leah would have had to refrain from talking during that night, or Jacob would have known. Obviously, things were pitch black, so that Jacob had no idea that the women in bed with him was Leah and not Rachel.
3. We do not know how much interaction occurred between Leah, Rachel and Jacob. Once Jacob and Laban came to an agreement, it is possible that almost all communication between Jacob and the daughters was ended.
4. Laban could have told Leah that Jacob was going to marry both sisters, and sent her in. We must bear in mind that, whatever happened, Leah was told to keep quiet.
5. Laban could have told both Rachel and Leah that Jacob had changed his mind, and wanted Leah.
6. Laban could have convinced Leah to go along with him and to agree to quietly go with Jacob in the middle of the night.
7. Laban could have simply told Leah, "You will not get married unless you marry Jacob. It is that simple. I am your father; do what I tell you to do."
8. Laban could have send Rachel away for a time, where she did not realize *when* Jacob was going to marry her. She may simply have not been told *when* their marriage was to occur.
9. There is the possibility that Laban, as the father of Leah and Rachel, told them exactly what was happening and why. They would have known that it is traditional for the older daughter to marry first.
10. Did Laban deceived his daughters at all here? Did he tell them, "Jacob has agreed to this"? Or, did he say, "I know that Jacob will marry both of you."

³⁰⁴ There is a narrow way by which this could have been all on Laban.

³⁰⁵ Dr. Bob Utey, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:25.

What Laban may have done to bring Leah to Jacob rather than Rachel

11. There is certainly the possibility that Laban, Leah, and Rachel all know what is going on. That would perhaps be the simplest explanation.
12. Even though Laban did not tell Jacob in advance, "You cannot marry Rachel until Leah is first married;" he may have said this to Leah and Rachel. If this is the local custom (and I have no doubt that it was), then this may have been all that these gals needed to hear in order to go along with Laban's plan. Remember that, at this point in time, Leah and Rachel's ties to their father were much deeper than their ties to Jacob (this *will* change, however, after 13 years of marriage).
13. That explanation allows for the relationship between Jacob, Leah and Rachel that we observe. Leah, even though she is not the favored wife, will clearly be a part of their family, bearing children on a regular basis (which requires some cooperation from Jacob and from Rachel).
14. Let us assume, for the moment, that Laban, Leah and Rachel are all onboard for this marriage of Jacob to the two sisters (which I think is the most likely scenario); why not get Jacob in on the deal? Why not explain to him up front as to why he must also marry Leah? My opinion—and let me emphasize that this is still just speculation—is that Jacob may or may not have agreed and, more importantly to Laban, Jacob may not have agreed to working 14 years. His love for Rachel was so strong that, I believe he would have considered marrying both women; but more as a favor to Laban and to have Rachel; which agreement would have precluded working 14 years.
15. However, exactly this happened, Laban wanted this to ultimately benefit him and his business.

As you see, there are several different things which Laban could have done, resulting in Leah going to be with Jacob rather than Rachel. Obviously, all of this is speculation.

Personally, I lean toward Laban informing his daughters of what he would be doing, as per the traditions of their land, and that, being under his authority, they agreed to it.

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How did Jacob not figure out what was happening? Both Leah and Rachel were sisters, and we must reasonably assume that their body types were not dramatically different. Leah was brought over at night, when it is pitch dark. Jacob has no doubt imbibed in alcohol and was probably egged on to some extent by his uncle (but, he could not be *dead drunk*). And, it is absolutely imperative that Leah not say a single word that night.

Genesis 29:23 [Later that evening, Laban took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob and Jacob had relations with her, not knowing that she was Leah.](#)

Laban's Guile (Commentators on Genesis 29:23)

Benson: *This deceit he might the more easily practise, as it was customary in those times to bring the bride to her husband veiled, and without lights. This guile of Laban undoubtedly sorely grieved Jacob; and perhaps it happened as a punishment to him for the guile he had used in supplanting his brother.*³⁰⁶

Clarke: *As the bride was always veiled, and the bride chamber generally dark, or nearly so, and as Leah was brought to Jacob in the evening, the imposition here practiced might easily pass undetected by Jacob, till the ensuing day discovered the fraud.*³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:23.

³⁰⁷ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:23.

Laban's Guile (Commentators on Genesis 29:23)

Gill: *After the feast was over, and the guests were departed; when it was night, a fit season [for Laban] to execute his designs, and practise deceit, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her...to Jacob, in his apartment, his bedchamber, or to him in bed (it is still the custom in some eastern countries for the bridegroom to go to bed first, and then the bride comes, or is brought to him in the dark, and veiled, so that he sees her not). Armenians have now such a custom at their marriages that the husband goes to bed first; nor does the bride put off her veil till in bed^(o): and in Barbary the bride is brought to the bridegroom's house, and with some of her female relations conveyed into a private room^(p); then the bride's mother, or some very near relation, introduces the bridegroom to his new spouse, who is in the dark, and obliged in modesty not to speak or answer upon any account: and if this was the case here, as it is highly probable it was, the imposition on Jacob is easily accounted for.*³⁰⁸

Dr. Peter Pett: *[Laban] ponders the problem [and] he sees the solution. Instead of being open and honest he foists Leah, who would be heavily veiled for the wedding, on Jacob. When they go to bed it is dark and presumably Leah kept silent. Thus Jacob does not realise until daylight that his silent and submissive companion is Leah. And by then it is too late. He is legally committed to Leah.*³⁰⁹ I personally think that Laban had a plan like this nearly from the beginning.

Whedon: *There was no formal public ceremony of marriage; the parties were not openly presented to one another, but in the evening the bride, closely veiled, was led to the husband's tent. Hence the ease with which it was possible to present Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel.*³¹⁰

One more thing ought to be considered. Jacob, in his wildest imagination, would never have thought that Laban would do this. Laban was able to think of this, but Jacob could not think far enough outside the box to prepare for something like this. Up to this point in time, I would guess that Jacob looked upon his Uncle Laban as a pretty good guy.

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Was Leah God's Plan A for Jacob? At least two commentators remark something along the lines of, it was God's intention for Jacob to marry Leah all along. One claims that **Leah is Jacob's right woman**; the NEV Commentary says, *the Divine 'Plan A' that he marry Leah.*³¹¹ The NEV Commentary adds, that Jacob was *obsessed with Rachel.*³¹² Love in its early stages tends to be somewhat obsessive. Furthermore, how can anyone claim that, if a person is in love and about to marry the woman he loves, that giving him a substitute should be acceptable? It is not obsessive to want to be married to the person you expected to marry.

It seems that some commentators certainly want to speculate about Jacob's marriages and come to the conclusion that, he should have married Leah and Leah alone.

The NEV Commentary writes: *[Jacob] had a Divinely provided opportunity here to accept Leah as the wife God intended, and return home to the eretz, trusting God to keep His promise of bringing him home in peace. But his infatuation with the unspiritual Rachel and his pride led him to agree. And so many spiritual people have become obsessed with an unspiritual partner, leading to many wasted*

³⁰⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:23 (edited). Gill cites ^(o)Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, vol. 3. p. 255. ^(p)Ockley's Account of Southwest Barbary, c. 6. p. 78.

³⁰⁹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:22-24.

³¹⁰ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874-1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:24.

³¹¹ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017.

³¹² The NEV Commentary even makes the claim *That same kind of obsession had led Jacob and Rebekah to defraud Esau of the birthright and blessing.* Sorry, not buying that.

years, and frustration of the Divine possibilities for them. And we all miss Divine possibilities and potentials.³¹³

Although speculation as to what might have been is sometimes interesting, it is, in many cases, irrelevant. Jacob is who he is; Laban is who he is. Leah and Rachel are who they are. God brings His plan to fruition not just in spite of who people are, but based upon who they are. Although we have genuine free will, as God designed us; God also knows us perfectly, He knows all circumstances in our future perfectly, and He knows who we are and what we will do in our lives. This does not negate free will; it allows for free will.

Furthermore, bear in mind that polygamy was not disallowed at this time in human history. Although we can deduce from the first few chapters of Genesis that God's design for man and woman is a permanent union between one man and one woman, and that such a union is natural and best protects the woman and the subsequent children, there is still no hard-and-fast rule against polygamy. My point being, Jacob will not sin to marry both Leah and Rachel. See the **Doctrine of Polygamy** is alluded to ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Now, if this seems weird to you, don't worry—we live in the Church Age and polygamy is not allowed. There are cults where polygamy or some form of it is allowed, but that is not an option for the Church Age believer (and case histories in the Bible make it clear that polygamy is not the way to go if one desires happiness in life).

And so gives Laban to her Zilpah his maid to Leah his daughter [for a] maid. Genesis 29:24 **Laban also gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah [to be her] maid.**

(Laban also gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so gives Laban to her Zilpah his maid to Leah his daughter [for a] maid.
Targum of Onkelos	And Laban gave to him Zilpha his daughter, <u>whom his concubine had borne to him, and he delivered her</u> to Leah his daughter to be her handmaid.
Latin Vulgate	Giving his daughter a handmaid, named Zelpha. <u>Now when Jacob had gone in to her according to custom, when morning was come he saw it was Lia.</u> In the Latin, there is more text for v. 24.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah for a servant.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah, as a maid for her.
Significant differences:	The targum has a lot of additional text. What should have been in v. 23, in the Latin, is found in v. 24.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban gave Zilpah, his servant-girl, to Leah, to be her waiting-woman.
Easy English	(Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be Leah's maid.)

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Laban also gave Zilpah to Leah as her servant woman.
New Life Bible	Laban also took Zilpah, a woman who served him, and gave her to his daughter Leah, to serve her.

³¹³ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017.

Translation for Translators (Laban had already given his slave girl Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her maid/servant.)

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Laban also gave his servant ZelPha to his daughter LeAh, to be her handmaid.
 International Standard V Laban also gave his servant woman Zilpah to Leah to be her maidservant.
 New Advent (Knox)Bible So Laban invited a great company of his friends to the wedding feast; but that night he matched Jacob with his daughter Lia instead, giving her a maid called Zelpha to wait on her. So, with all due ceremony, Jacob took her to his bed, and it was not till morning he found out that it was Lia. Vv. 22–23 are included for context.
 Today's NIV And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia Laban gave his maid, Zilpah, to his daughter Leah for a handmaid. This relationship will be important later on.
 Ferar-Fenton Bible Laban also gave Zilfa his servant, to Leah to be her servant.
 Jubilee Bible 2000 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah, his maid, for a handmaid.
 NIV, ©2011 And Laban gave his servant Zilpah [Genesis 30:9 (When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to...)] to his daughter as her attendant [Genesis 16:1 (Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar;)].

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Laban gave his slave girl Zilpah to Leah to be her maid.
 New American Bible (2011) Laban assigned his maidservant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her maidservant.
 Revised English Bible At the same time Laban gave his slave-girl Zilpah to his daughter Leah.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible And Laban gives his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid as her maid.
 Kaplan Translation Laban had also given his servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her handmaid. A servant rather than a slave (Lekach Tov; Josephus, Antiquities 1:19:8).
 Orthodox Jewish Bible And Lavan gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah shifchato (his maid) for a shifchah.
 Restored Names Version And Laban gave his slave girl Zilpah to his daughter Le'ah as a slavegirl..

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah, his maid, for an handmaid. This fact is here expressly mentioned on account of later developments.
 Lexham English Bible And Laban gave Zilpah his female servant to her, to Leah his daughter [as] a female servant.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Lavan^[White] gave her Zilpah^[Trickling], his maid, to Le'ah^[Weary], his daughter, for a maid,...

Footnote: - *The word Maid (final word of the verse) appears to be missing the prefix "to~" (see 29:29 for a comparison).*

Concordant Literal Version And giving is Laban Zilpah, his maid, to Leah, his daughter, for a maid.
 Context Group Version And Laban gave Zilpah his female slave to his daughter Leah for a slave.

English Standard Version	(Laban gave [Or had given; also verse 29] his female servant [Genesis 30:9-12] Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.)
Green's Literal Translation	And Laban gave to her Zilpah, his slave-girl, to his daughter Leah as a slave.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Laban gave unto his daughter Lea, Zilpha his maid, to be her servant.
Third Millennium Bible	And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid for a handmaid.
World English Bible	Laban gave Zilpah his handmaid to his daughter Leah for a handmaid.
Young's Updated LT	And Laban gives to her Zilpah, his maid-servant, to Leah his daughter, a maid-servant.

The gist of this verse: Laban gives his own personal servant, Zilpah, to Leah to be her servant.

Genesis 29:24

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
Lâbân (לבן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Zil ^e pâh (זִלְפָּה) [pronounced <i>zihl-PAW</i>]	<i>a trickling (as myrrh fragrant dropping) transliterated Zilpah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #2153 BDB #273
ISBE says ³¹⁴ the meaning of her name is unknown; Wenstrom suggests ³¹⁵ her name means <i>intimacy</i> (I could not find anyone else with that opinion). Dr. Thomas Constable says that her name means: <i>small nose</i> . ³¹⁶			
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
bath (בת) [pronounced <i>bath</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123

³¹⁴ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Zilpah.

³¹⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 454) accessed August 10, 2017.

³¹⁶ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:24

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced shif-KHAW]	maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046

Translation: Laban also gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah [to be her] maid. This seems like an oddly placed thought. Laban has pulled one over on Jacob—in fact, that part of the narrative has not really played out yet—and suddenly, we are told that Laban gave Leah his maid.

I do not necessarily think that it is remarkable for Zilpah to be called *his maid*. No doubt, Laban purchased her at some point in time, so speaking of her in that way would be natural.

Genesis 29:24 (Laban also gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)

Laban's One Gift to Leah—Commentators in Genesis 29:24

Dr. Peter Pett: *The mention of Zilpah is to indicate that she no longer belongs to Laban but to Leah, and thus indirectly to Jacob. She joins those whom Jacob has brought with him as a member of his 'household'. But noteworthy is the meagreness of the gift. There is no mention of any other dowry. Laban is getting rid of his daughters on the cheap. (Rebekah was provided with a number of young women – Gen. 24:61). Jacob has come with little in the way of gifts. Laban returns the compliment.*³¹⁷

Bush: *It is still customary in the East for a father, who can afford it, to transfer to his daughter, on her marriage, some female slave of the household, who becomes her confidential domestic and humble friend. This slave forms a link between the old and new households, which often proves irksome, but he has little, if any, control over the female slaves in his establishment.*³¹⁸

Clarke: *Slaves given in this way to a daughter on her marriage, were the peculiar property of the daughter; and over them the husband had neither right nor power.*³¹⁹

Utey: *We learn from the Nuzi Tablets, which describe the Hurrian culture of the same period (2nd millennium B.C.), that this was a common practice. In case the daughter was barren, the servant could bear a child in her behalf (cf. Gen. 29:28–29; Gen. 30:3). Gen. 29:24; Gen. 29:29 are a narrator's parenthesis preparing us for chapter 30.*³²⁰

Whedon: *Rebekah had a nurse and several damsels. Gen. 24:59; Gen. 24:61. Sarah had her handmaid, Hagar. Such maidservants became the special property of the wife to do with as she pleased. See Gen. 16:1–6.*³²¹

NEV Commentary: *Laban gave Jacob his castoff maidservant, rather than Leah having her own maidens, as happened with Rebekah. This was somewhat of an insult, and an attempt to get power over Jacob in this way too. Zilpah was apparently given to Leah before the evening, if these verses are chronological. So she too was part of the deception.*³²²

³¹⁷ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:22–24.

³¹⁸ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:24 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

³¹⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:24.

³²⁰ Dr. Bob Utey, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:24.

³²¹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:24.

³²² From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen29com.html> accessed August 11, 2017.

Laban's One Gift to Leah—Commentators in Genesis 29:24

Dr. Thomas Constable: *It was customary for the bride's father to give her a large present when she got married: a dowry. In the ancient world the gift normally consisted of clothing, furniture, and money, and it served as a nest egg for the wife in case her husband died or divorced her. Some dowries were exceptionally valuable, such as slave-girls (Genesis 24:61; Genesis 29:29) or a city (1 Kings 9:16). Laban was being generous.*³²³

The NEV Commentary might be a bit harsh here, claiming that Zilpah was some *castoff maidservant*. That would have reflected badly on Laban; so I doubt that there was some defect in Zilpah or that she was past her prime.

Despite Constable suggesting that this was a generous gift and the NEV suggesting that the offering reflected Laban's cheapness, the key is, each wife would have her own servant and that fact would figure into the family of Jacob.

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Before Jacob wakes up and realizes what has happened, we are told that Laban gives Leah this maid. Now what is that all about? Laban realizes that Leah may not be a 100% willing participant so perhaps he has sweetened the pot. She gets to marry Jacob (and you know there has to be some sibling rivalry and some jealousy on her part—after all, few men would have waited seven years as Jacob did) and, as long as she goes through with this, she has her very own, personal maid. Laban is covering all the bases here. Laban has become a wicked, despicable man, whose duplicity even exceeds that of his sister Rebekah and nephew Jacob.

There is a perverse **poetic justice** here, sad in that it exploits with Jacob's love for Rachel, yet apropos for someone like Jacob. He has met his match in his uncle Laban and can see the extent of the destructiveness which occurs when one is devious and underhanded. Above and beyond all of this, God's plan will carry on, with a perfection that defies human comprehension.

I believe that there is a reason for this. Zilpah, even though she is given to Leah as her maid, will be, at least for awhile, loyal to Laban. So, what does that mean? Zilpah is going to be there the morning that Jacob and Leah wake up. She is going to collect the blood stained sheets, indicating that Leah was a virgin and is no longer a virgin; deflowered by Jacob on a wedding night, celebrated by almost everyone in the vicinity. All of this is devised to put Jacob in a box. No matter how he was deceived, he will have to take Leah as his wife. The whole town knows he got married to Laban's daughter; the evidence is made secure by a maid beholden to Laban; and Jacob has his own personal conscience to deal with as well.

How does all of this happen? Leah's maid comes in later that morning—a maid Jacob may have met already—and she takes the sheets, which is standard procedure for that era. So, at that point, Jacob does not even realize that he has been swindled, and he certainly allows for the sheets to be taken, as that is what was done in that era (we find this practice referenced a few hundred years later in Deuteronomy). Once the sheets are taken by Zilpah, a maid primarily responsible to Laban, and they are in Laban's hand, Jacob wanders out into the kitchen for coffee and there is Leah, having already made a pot (I modernize this ending somewhat); and Jacob blows a fuse. Next verse.

I don't know if this is exactly how it all went down, but what I have suggested here is completely consistent with the narrative. It would also explain things like this verse which seem to be stuck in the middle of the narrative for no reason. This would be the reason.

A Quick Review of Genesis 29:18–23: Jacob had been with his Uncle Laban for a month, and Laban asked him what sort of wages did he expect. Jacob answered:

³²³ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:18 **Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."** (ESV)

Laban gives this serious thought and then answers:

Gen. 29:19 **Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me."** (ESV)

Despite his many failures as a human being, Jacob was a hard worker, and Laban agreed to his conditions of working 7 years to marry his daughter.

Gen. 29:20 **So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.** (ESV)

We know from this that Genesis was recorded by those who experienced these events and not by someone like Moses, who came along 400 years later.

Genesis 29:21–23 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (ESV)

Jacob had agreed with his Uncle Laban that he would work 7 years in exchange for Rachel, that he might marry her. However, in the night they were to be married, Laban saw to it that Leah, Rachel's older sister, was delivered to Jacob. Clearly it is dark and clearly Leah does not reveal who she really is.

Laban had deceived Jacob.

Do you see the parallel? Rebekah, Jacob's mother, orchestrated a deception, where her husband, Isaac, gave a blessing to Jacob, thinking that he was giving a blessing to Jacob's brother, Esau. Now, Laban (Rebekah's brother), the father of Rachel, orchestrates a deception. He brings Leah to Jacob rather than Rachel, deceiving Jacob with the wrong daughter. Rebekah caused Jacob to deceive his father by pretending to be Esau. Now, Laban causes Jacob to be deceived by bringing Leah to him, who will pretend to be Rachel. Both deceptions are the result of the planning of brother and sister, Laban and Rebekah. Jacob pretended to be his brother Esau; Leah will pretend to be her sister Rachel.

Parallel Deceptions		
	Rebekah's Deception	Laban's Deception
Orchestrates the deception:	Rebekah, Jacob's mother.	Laban (Rebekah's brother), Jacob's uncle.
The deception:	Rebekah prepares a feast for Isaac, so that he thinks he is eating wild game killed by Esau.	Laban prepares a feast for Jacob, making him think that he will marry his daughter, Rachel.
Participants	Rebekah and her son, Jacob, collude to deceive Isaac.	Laban and his daughter, Leah, collude to deceive Jacob.
The one deceived:	Isaac	Jacob (his son)
The deception:	Jacob will pretend to be his brother Esau.	Leah will pretend to be her sister, Rachel.

Parallel Deceptions		
	Rebekah's Deception	Laban's Deception
The pawns:	Rebekah will deceive Isaac and she will leave Esau out in the cold.	Laban will deceive Jacob (and possibly Rachel); Leah is used as a pawn to further her father's interests. Rachel is left out in the cold.
The parallels:	Rebekah beguiled Isaac, by presenting the younger son instead of the older.	Laban beguiled Jacob by presenting the older daughter instead of the younger.
	Jacob's mother intentionally plots to deceive her husband concerning his two sons.	Rachel's father intentionally plots to deceive his nephew concerning his two daughters.
	Jacob intentionally violates the custom of birth order.	Whether knowingly or unknowingly, Jacob violates the custom of birth order.
	Rebekah took advantage of Isaac's poor vision.	Laban took advantage of Jacob being unable to see in the dark night.
	The deception was almost uncovered because Jacob had to speak to his father.	This deception was not uncovered, as Leah was probably a silent bride on their wedding night.
The loser (s):	Esau will think he has lost out on the blessing.	Jacob will think that he will not marry Rachel. Leah is potentially stuck in a loveless marriage.
The result:	Despite the deception, Isaac's blessing of Jacob stands.	Despite the deception, Jacob's marriage to Leah stands.
God blesses out of grace:	Esau will become the father of a great ancient kingdom (Gen. 36).	Jacob will still marry Rachel and he will become the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Interestingly enough, a great deal of the relationship between Jacob and Esau was based upon sibling rivalry, something which Jacob did not need to engage in, in order to be blessed by God. But, Jacob will soon find himself married to two sisters who will, for much of his marriage, also be engaged in sibling rivalry.

Do you see how rich this story is with irony and deception? Everything that Jacob did to deceive his own father has come back on him.

2 of these taken from George Sayour, from the [Christ Rescue Mission site](http://www.christrescuemission.com); accessed September 16, 2017.

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Wenstrom: The fact that Jacob is trapped into another seven years of service was a manifestation of divine discipline in the life of Jacob for his deception of his father Isaac and cheating Esau.³²⁴

Armstrong put together a similar list of parallels:

³²⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 454) accessed August 10, 2017.

Stephen Armstrong's Parallels

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Jacob was able to deceive his father, Isaac, because he took advantage of his father's blindness	Laban was able to blind Jacob with the darkness in the tent and the veil over Leah's face
Leah went along with the plan of her parent, Laban, pretending to be someone she wasn't	Jacob likewise went along with the plan of his parent, Rebekah, pretending to be someone he wasn't
Jacob was tricked into marrying the older daughter when he intended to marry the younger	Isaac was tricked into blessing the younger son when he intended to bless the older
Jacob entered into a binding agreement with Leah, one he couldn't reverse	While Isaac entered into a binding agreement with Jacob, one he couldn't reverse

From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29b.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

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Wenstrom: It is interesting that in both deceptions, Jacob and Rebekah's and Laban and Leah's, the deception had been commanded by a parent and in both cases the purpose of the deception was to acquire something desperately desired. In their case with Esau and Isaac, Jacob and Rebekah were convinced that their deception was a case of the ends justifying the means. In the case of Jacob and Rachel, Laban and Leah were convinced that their deception was also a case of the ends justifying the means since the custom was that the older daughter be married first and not be preceded by the younger.³²⁵

Let's pull all of this together now:

Conclusions that we can draw from this deception

1. We must reasonably assume that, Rachel and Leah had similar figures; Jacob's description of Rachel focused on her figure, for the most part (not easily discerned in most translations); so Jacob had an idea as to Rachel's shape.
2. On the wedding night, Leah would have been brought to Jacob while in the dark; whether by tradition or the plan of Laban, Jacob does not actually see his bride. Leah may have been wearing a veil as well.
3. Also, on this wedding night, Leah would have to say nothing. She would have been complicit in this ruse. There is no other way that this could be pulled off without her desiring what Rachel was going to have. At no time does Leah stop Jacob and say, "Listen, I am Leah; I am not Rachel. If you want to stop; we can stop."
4. There are a limited number of ways where Leah could have been taken to Jacob, where it is not her fault. She and Rachel may have been told there was a change of plans. Laban may have told them, "I must marry off the older daughter first; and Jacob has agreed to this." Laban could have lied and said, "Jacob has decided that he wants to marry you, Leah."
5. In any case it appears to be imperative that Leah not speak on her wedding night or Jacob would know. If Jacob convinced Leah that Jacob wanted her and not Rachel (or was willing to marry her in order to have Rachel); then Laban has to convince her to say nothing for the entire night. So there is limited deception on the part of Leah.
6. Leah would have also seen Jacob day after day; so to deceive Jacob, she must have been willing.
7. The text of this passage, at no time, blames Leah or puts her in a harsh light. As discussed, we do not know her part in this charade, if any. There is a reason for this. At the end of this night, Leah will be genuinely married to Jacob and she will become the mother of 6 tribes of Israel. Therefore, we have to

³²⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 455) accessed August 10, 2017.

Conclusions that we can draw from this deception

- accept her as Jacob's wife, despite the actions of Laban.
8. We do not know where Rachel was during all of this; and it is even possible that Laban got her (and Leah) away from their residence for a week or so, while all the festivities were going on. It would have been easy for Laban to say, "Your wife-to-be is preparing herself for your marriage; and her sister is there with her and helping her."
 9. It is not clear why Rachel is not there. However, one can come up with several reasonable explanations: (1) she was ordered by her father to stay away; (2) she was told by her father that Jacob changed his mind and wanted Leah; (3) she possibly thinks that her wedding night is later than it really is. Whatever the reason, it is surely related to Laban's deceptive plan.
 10. Laban is clearly in charge and he clearly has a plan. Jacob is simply a pawn in Laban's game, in order for him to get what he wants.
 11. With what follows, it will be clear that Laban thought all of the details through.
 12. Based on the narrative, we can blame Laban all day long for his deception. However, there is nothing in the text which allows us to blame Leah or Rachel for these developments. Despite Laban's actions, Jacob's marriage to Leah (and later to Rachel) is completely legitimate.
 13. God's plan always takes into account that the world is filled with sinful people; and yet, God's plan must move forward. We know from our studies that God's plan moves ahead, whether those in His plan make good or bad decisions. At no time in human history, has God viewed the landscape, and the people involved, and decided, "I cannot mix this mess together for good; I need to go back to the drawing board and come up with an idea."

Laban and his daughter, Leah, are probably both a part of the deception; just as Rebekah and her son, Jacob, were clearly a part of the deception of Isaac.

Gill suggests³²⁶ that Leah may have been enticed by becoming a part of the promised seed. I do not know how much the Haran family understood anything about the chosen seed. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob heard this promise many times in their lives; and they would have shared it with their immediate family. However, would Isaac have sent a letter to Haran, proclaiming, "I am the promised seed and you are not"? Did Jacob pretend that he was anything greater than Laban or his family? We do not find that in the text. So it is questionable whether anyone in the Haran family had some kind of understanding about the Seed of Promise.

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[Genesis 29:24](#) And Laban gave Zilpah his slave woman to his daughter Leah for a handmaid.

This may seem to be a very odd verse to be placed right here. We have a series of actions which are consecutive; they are imperfect verbs held together with wâw consecutives, which generally indicates that there is series of consecutive actions. This occurs from v. 18 pretty much through to the end of the chapter. However, there are only imperfects and wâw consecutives in vv. 22–25a.

So, what is this all about? Why do we have the wrong daughter being sent to Jacob in the middle of the night; Jacob and Leah consummating their marriage, and suddenly a maid is given to Leah? The placement of this thought should seem to be pretty random to you. However, there is probably a very specific purpose here.

What is likely occurring is, the maid will come in to collect and save the bed sheets. They will stand as a testimony to the consummation of Jacob and Leah's marriage. There will be two witnesses to the sheets—Leah and her maid. The stained bed sheets were typically collected by the father of the bride as proof of the consummation of the marriage between the husband and the virgin bride (see Deut. 22:13–17). Essentially, this traps Jacob. No matter what he says or does, he took the virginity of Leah on their wedding night (and there were perhaps dozens of men who celebrated his upcoming marriage at the bachelor party). Therefore, Jacob cannot simply cast her aside.

³²⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25.

Furthermore, during this grand party to celebrate his marriage to Laban's daughter, Laban need only speak of the impending marriage of his daughter. Even though Jacob was quite specific about marrying Rachel, there is no need for Laban to have even spoken of her by name at this party. So, all of those at the party would be celebrating the upcoming marriage between Jacob and the daughter of Laban. This is a cultural trap. All that is occurring is what the culture requires. Jacob, unless he is a complete cad, cannot really back out of this situation. He is now legally and culturally bound to Leah.

Benson: *Surely Jacob's sin in pretending to be Esau, and cheating his own father, would now be brought to his remembrance, when his father-in-law thus cheated him; and he would be compelled to acknowledge that, how unrighteous soever Laban was.*³²⁷

Jacob will ask Laban 3 questions.

And so he is in the morning and behold she [is] Leah. And so he says unto Laban, "What [is] this you have done to me? Did I not in Rachel serve with you? And for why have you deceived me?"

Genesis
29:25

And so it is the morning and, Jacob saw [that] she [was] Leah. Therefore, he said to Laban, "What [is] this [that] you have done to me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?"

In the morning, Jacob saw that he had consummated his marriage with Leah. Therefore, he went to Laban and said, "What is this that you have done to me? Did I not serve you in order to marry Rachel. How could you deceive me like this?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is in the morning and behold she [is] Leah. And so he says unto Laban, "What [is] this you have done to me? Did I not in Rachel serve with you? And for why have you deceived me?"
Targum of Onkelos	And it was <u>the time of the morning and he saw her</u> , and behold, she was Leah, <u>whom all the night he had thought to be Rahel; because Rahel had delivered to her all the things with which Jakob had presented her. But when he saw this</u> , he said to Laban, what is this that thou hast done to me? Was it not for Rahel that I served with thee? Why hast thou deceived me?
Latin Vulgate	...when morning was come he saw it was Lia. And he said to <u>his father-in-law</u> : What is it that thou didst mean to do? did not I serve thee for Rachel? why hast thou deceived me? This includes a portion of v. 24 in the Latin.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass in the morning, behold, it was Leah; and Jacob said to Laban, What is this thing that you have done to me? Did not I serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?
Septuagint (Greek)	So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah; and Jacob said to Laban, What is this that you have done to me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? And why have you deceived me?

Significant differences: The targum has additional text; the verse division is different in the Latin (and the Latin lacks a *behold*). The Latin has *his father-in-law* rather than *Laban*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

³²⁷ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:24.

Bible in Basic English	And in the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What have you done to me? was I not working for you so that I might have Rachel? why have you been false to me?
Easy English	In the morning, Jacob saw that it was Leah. He said to Laban, `You have cheated me. I worked for you so that I could marry Rachel. Why have you cheated me?'
Easy-to-Read Version	In the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah he had slept with. Jacob said to Laban, "You have tricked me. I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel. Why did you trick me?"
God's Word™	"What have you done to me?" Jacob asked Laban. "Didn't I work for you in return for Rachel? Why did you cheat me?"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Not until the next morning did Jacob discover that it was Leah. He went to Laban and said, "Why did you do this to me? I worked to get Rachel. Why have you tricked me?"
The Message	Morning came: There was Leah in the marriage bed! Jacob confronted Laban, "What have you done to me? Didn't I work all this time for the hand of Rachel? Why did you cheat me?"
NIRV	When Jacob woke up the next morning, there was Leah next to him! So he said to Laban, "What have you done to me? I worked for you to get Rachel, didn't I? Why did you trick me?"

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	In the morning, there she was-Leah! Jacob said to Laban, "What have you done to me? Didn't I work for you to have Rachel? Why did you betray me?"
Contemporary English V.	The next morning Jacob found out that he had married Leah, and he asked Laban, "Why did you do this to me? Didn't I work to get Rachel? Why did you trick me?"
New Berkeley Version	And so it was in the morning, see, it was Leah. He said to Laban, "Is this the way to treat me? Have I not worked with you for Rachel? Why then have you cheated me?"
New Century Version	In the morning when Jacob saw that he had had sexual relations with Leah, he said to Laban, "What have you done to me? I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel! Why did you trick me?"
New Life Bible	When the morning came, Jacob saw that it was Leah. He said to Laban, "What have you done to me? Did I not work for you for Rachel? Why have you fooled me?"
New Living Translation	But when Jacob woke up in the morning-it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?"
Translation for Translators	The next morning, Jacob was shocked to see that it was Leah who was with him! So he went to Laban and told him very angrily, "◀What you have done to me is disgusting!/What is this that you have done to me?▶ [RHQ] I worked for you to get Rachel, did I not? So why did you deceive me?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, it was [the next] morning before [Jacob realized] that it was LeAh. So Jacob [went to] Laban and asked: 'What have you done to me? Didn't I serve you for RachEl? Why have you deceived me?'
Beck's American Translation	In the morning he saw it was Leah. "What did you do to me?" Jacob asked Laban. "Didn't I work for you for Rachel? Why did you cheat me?"
International Standard V	The next morning, Jacob [Lit. <i>he</i>] realized that it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" he demanded of Laban. "Didn't I serve you for seven years in order to marry Rachel? Why did you deceive me?"
Names of God Bible	"What have you done to me?" Jacob asked Laban. "Didn't I work for you in return for Rachel? Why did you cheat me?"

New Advent (Knox)Bible Whereupon he said to Laban, What meanest thou? Did not I work for thee to win Rachel? What is this trick thou hast played on me?

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear In the morning he had beheld Leah, and said to Laban, "What *did* you do to me? *Did I* not serve with you for Rachel? Why deceive me?"

Conservapedia It happened that, in the morning, [Jacob saw that] it was Leah. He said to Laban, "What have you done to me? Didn't I agree to serve you for Rachel? Why have you scammed me?" When the scammer gets scammed, that's justice of a sort, though highly imperfect.

Ferar-Fenton Bible But when it was morning he discovered it was Leah, and said to Laban, " Why have you done this to me ? Was it not for Rachel that I served you ? Then why have you cheated me? "

NIV, ©2011 When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me [Genesis 12:18]? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me [Genesis 27:36]?"

Urim-Thummim Version Then at sunrise he looked, and it was Leah and he said to Laban, what is this you have done to me? Did I not work with you for Rachel? How come you deceived me?

Wikipedia Bible Project And it was morning, and here she is, Leah; and he said to Laban "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel's sake that I have worked for you? Why did you cheat me?"

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) When morning came, there was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What have you done to me? Haven't I worked with you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?"

The Heritage Bible And it was, that in the dawn, behold, it was Leah, and he said to Laban, What is this you have done to me? Did I not work for you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?

New American Bible (2002) In the morning Jacob was amazed: it was Leah! So he cried out to Laban: "How could you do this to me! Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why did you dupe me?" Jacob was amazed: he had not recognized Leah because a bride was veiled when she was brought to her bridegroom; cf ⇒ Genesis 24:65

New American Bible (2011) In the morning, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban: "How could you do this to me! Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why did you deceive me?"

New Jerusalem Bible When morning came, it was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, 'What have you done to me? Did I not work for you for Rachel? Why then have you tricked me?'

Revised English Bible But when morning came, there was Leah! Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? It was for Rachel I worked. Why have you played this trick on me?"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible In the morning Ya'akov saw that he was with Le'ah, and he said to Lavan, "What kind of thing is this that you've done to me? Didn't I work for you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?"

The Complete Tanach And it came to pass in the morning, and behold she was Leah! So he said to Laban, "What is this that you have done to me? Did I not work with you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?"

And it came to pass in the morning, and behold she was Leah: But at night, she was not Leah, because Jacob had given signs to Rachel, but when she saw that they were bringing Leah, she (Rachel) said, "Now, my sister will be put to shame. So she readily transmitted those signs to her." - [from Meg. 13b]

exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, in the morning, behold, it is Leah: and he says to Laban, What is this you worked to me? Served I not you for Rachel? Why deceived you me?
Hebraic Transliteration	And it came to pass, that in the morning, Hinnei, it [was] Leah (האל): and he said to Lavan, What [is] this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel (להר)? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?
Kaplan Translation	In the morning, [Jacob discovered that] it was Leah. He said to Laban, 'How could you do this to me? Didn't I work with you for Rachel? Why did you cheat me?'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass, that in the boker, hinei, it was Leah! And he said to Lavan, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? So why then hast thou deceived me?

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But in the morning [Jacob saw his wife, and] behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, What is this you have done to me? Did I not work for you [all those seven years] for Rachel? Why then have you deceived and cheated and thrown me down [like this]?
The Expanded Bible	In the morning when Jacob saw that he had had sexual relations with [it was] Leah, he said to Laban, "What have you done to me? I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel! Why did you trick [deceive; defraud] me?"
Kretzmann's Commentary	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? While the fraud which was practiced upon Jacob may, in a sense, be regarded as a just punishment, his reproof of Laban was nevertheless fully justified, and he might well, according to the contract, have dismissed Leah.
Lexham English Bible	And it happened [that] in the morning, behold, it [was] Leah! And he said to Laban, "What [is] this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Now why did you deceive me?"
NET Bible®	In the morning Jacob discovered it was Leah [Heb "and it happened in the morning that look, it was Leah." By the use of the particle הִנֵּה (hinneh, "look"), the narrator invites the reader to view the scene through Jacob's eyes.]! So Jacob [Heb "and he said"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said to Laban, "What in the world have you done to me [Heb What is this you have done to me?" The use of the pronoun "this" is enclitic, adding emphasis to the question: "What in the world have you done to me?"]! Didn't I work for you in exchange for Rachel? Why have you tricked me?"
The Voice	When morning came, Jacob realized Leah was the one <i>with him in the marriage bed</i> . Jacob: What have you done to me? Did we not have a deal-seven years of labor in exchange for <i>your daughter</i> Rachel? Why have you deceived me?

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and it came to pass in the morning and look, she is Le'ah ^[Weary] , and he said to Lavan ^[White] what is this you did to me, did I not serve in Rahhel ^[Ewe] with you and why did you betray me,...
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it in the morning, and behold! She is Leah. And saying is Jacob to Lavan, "What is this you do to me? Did I not for Rachel serve with you? And why do you deceive me?"

English Standard Version	And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"
Green's Literal Translation	And it happened in the morning; behold! She was Leah. And he said to Laban, What have you done to me? <i>Did</i> I not serve with you for Rachel? And why have you tricked me?
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And when the morning was come, behold it was Lea. Than said he to Laban: wherefore have you played thus with me? did not I serve you for Rahel, wherefore then have you beguiled me?
NASB	So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me [Gen 12:18; 20:9; 26:10]? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived [1Sam 28:12] me?"
New European Version	It happened in the morning that, behold, it was Leah. He said to Laban, What is this you have done to me? Didn't I serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass in the morning, that lo, it is Leah; and he says unto Laban, "What is this you have done to me? For Rachel have I not served with you? And why have you deceived me?"

The gist of this verse: Jacob sees that it is Leah with him, and go goes to Laban and complains about being deceived.

Genesis 29:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced BOH-ker]	<i>morning, daybreak, dawn; the next morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133
This is in contrast with the previous verse which read <i>in the evening</i> .			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Genesis 29:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
<p>This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i>. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.</p>			
<p>When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i>. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i>.</p>			
hîy' (אִיה) [pronounced <i>hee</i>]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is, is implied</i>	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521

Translation: *And so it is the morning and, Jacob saw [that] she [was] Leah.* At night, Jacob did not realize who he was with. He did not know that he was consummating his marriage with Leah. He had assumed that this is Rachel.

In this phrase, we have the word *behold, look, take note!* The idea here is more than *behold, it's Leah*; the complete idea is, *behold, it's Leah, and Laban deceived you!*

Behold, it was Leah! (a graphic); from [Free Bible Images](#); accessed August 12, 2017.

Bullinger writes: *[This is a] Figure of speech Asterismos. To call attention to the fact that he was deceived, as he had deceived Isaac (Genesis 27).*³²⁸

Barnes: *Jacob had no house of his own to which to conduct the bride. In the evening: when it was dark. The bride was also closely veiled, so that it was easy for Laban to practise this piece of deceit.*



³²⁸ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25.

Barnes continues: *It is still the custom not to give the younger in marriage before the older, unless the latter be deformed or in some way defective. It is also not unusual to practise the very same trick that Laban now employed, if the suitor is so simple as to be off his guard. Jacob, however, did not expect this at his relative's hands, though he had himself taken part in proceedings equally questionable.*³²⁹ This seems like a very odd *trick* to me to assert that it is common.

We have no idea how much Jacob interacted with Rachel during those 7 years; and particularly, the final month or two before he married Laban's daughter. It is reasonable to suppose that a father like Laban protected his daughter (s)—from men and from sexual relations. Even with a promise of marriage, how likely is it that Jacob and Rachel spent any time alone together? My guess is, that never happened.

Interestingly enough, there is no discussion of Leah's feelings prior to this marriage. If her father spoke to the two daughters and suggested that Rachel could not marry until Leah had married, did Leah have a crush on Rachel's fiancée, Jacob?

Leah's Feelings Toward Jacob

1. There is limited information about how Leah felt about the initial marriage to Jacob. Did she have a crush on him? Did she find him handsome? Did she go along with Laban's plan because of these things (assuming that she was completely aware of Laban's plan—which I believe she was)?
2. However, after the marriage began (she and Rachel married Jacob within a week of one another), her feelings are stated on several occasions.
3. For the first 3 sons that Leah bears, it will be clear that she is thinking about her husband's feelings towards her.
4. With the birth of Judah, Leah enjoys a time of independence from her husband—that is, she does not name Judah in accordance with her feelings or desires concerning her husband; but just expresses her own praise to God for his birth (Gen. 29:35).
5. In the next chapter, the sons who will be born by Leah, Rachel and their maidservants (surrogate sons), the sisters will express somewhat of a back-and-forth about themselves and their marriage to Jacob and the competition that seemed to be in their souls.
6. Both Leah and Rachel felt in a bit of a competitive situation with Jacob—Leah was upset because Jacob spent most of his time with Rachel and Rachel was upset because Leah had so many sons. So they were jealous of one another.
7. Leah's strongest expression of feeling was when her son found some Mandrakes (perhaps a sexual stimulant or a pregnancy help), and she says, "[Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?](#)" (Gen. 30:15b; ESV) That sounds more like an expression of jealousy as opposed to an expression of love.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

According to the law as presented in Deuteronomy, there was a custom of the bed sheets from the wedding night being preserved and delivered over to the father of the bride. The whole purpose of that is proof that the father delivered a virginal bride over to her husband. These sheets became a legal document, of sorts, which prove that the father did his duty regarding his daughter (s).

How did Laban know that Jacob would not just grab Rachel and elope with her? Laban, in order to manipulate people, also had to be a keen observer of people. Laban particularly observed Jacob, to determine how he could work this situation to his own benefit, given that Jacob did not show up with 10 camels loaded with stuff. He noticed that Jacob demonstrated some sense of integrity. And, even though he was tricked, how could Jacob desert his wife (Leah is his wife, like it or not); and moreover, how could Jacob desert his potentially pregnant wife?

³²⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25–30.

(Which is even more important to Jacob) So, Laban's gamble was certainly something that clearly was in his favor.

Genesis 29:25b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lâbân (לבן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
mâh (מה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
zô'th (זה) [pronounced zoth]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine of singular zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
Together, mâh zeh mean <i>what [is] this; how [can] this [be]; why [is] this [occurring]; what [do we have] here; possibly now explain this.</i> I could not find this listed in Gesenius, so this is my most reasonable guess.			
'âsâh (עשה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: Therefore, he said to Laban, “What [is] this [that] you have done to me? There is a lot of action left out of this narrative. Jacob has to get up, go out and track down Laban. All of these necessary actions are missing from the text, because Jacob is upset and in a hurry. He is flabbergasted. How could he and his uncle have a clear, shake-hands deal, and Jacob wakes up, and he was deceived! What the hell! Jacob possibly says not a word to Leah, but marched straight over the Laban's tent to *discuss* this matter.

Jacob will have 3 questions for Laban, the first being, “What is this that you have done to me?”

Genesis 29:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]		interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .	Strong's #none BDB #209
lô' (לוּל or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Hă lô' together expect an affirmative answer and can be translated <i>is not?</i> Let me suggest, this might be understood to mean, <i>is it not true that?</i> Or, <i>isn't this the case that?</i> Or, <i>is it not obvious that?</i> These two words together present a question with an obvious, self-evident answer. This combination is found in Gen. 4:7 20:5 Job 1:10 Num. 23:26 1Kings 1:11.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
Râchêl (לְרַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe</i> and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
'âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: *Did I not serve you for Rachel?* Jacob cannot believe what has happened here. They had a deal; they shook hands, they agreed—but then, Laban pulled a switcheroo. Who does that sound like? Doesn't this sound like something that Jacob himself might pull? In fact, Jacob is there, as Laban's guest, because that is precisely what Jacob did to his own father.

Genesis 29:25d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 29:25d

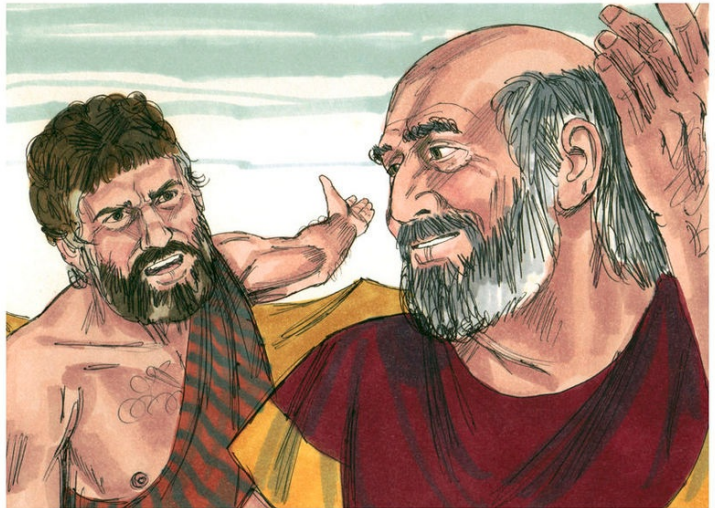
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Lâmed + mâh together literally mean <i>for why</i> . They can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence. BDB also offers the rendering <i>lest</i> . Gesenius, perhaps for this passage alone (1Chron. 15:13), offers the rendering <i>on account of [that] which, because that</i> .			
râmâh (רָמָה) [pronounced <i>raw-MAW</i>]	<i>to beguile, to deceive, to mislead, to deal treacherously with, to betray</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect with the 1 st person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #7411 BDB #941

The NET Bible: *The Hebrew verb translated tricked here (רָמָה, ramah) is cognate to the noun used in Gen 27:35 to describe Jacob's deception of Esau. Jacob is discovering that what goes around, comes around. See J. A. Diamond, "The Deception of Jacob: A New Perspective on an Ancient Solution to the Problem," VT 34 (1984): 211-13.*³³⁰

Translation: *Why have you deceived me?* Jacob is upset and beside himself. "We had a deal! What happened? Why did you deceive me?" Jacob worked for Laban; he assumed that Laban was an honest, forthright man—and Laban out-Jacob'ed Jacob.

Jacob Complains to Laban by Jim Padgett (a graphic); from [Wikimedia](#); accessed August 11, 2017.

And here's the thing. Laban can do this because he knows (1) Jacob truly loves Rachel and (2) Jacob probably won't just take Leah and Rachel and leave (or take only Rachel). Leah was a virgin at the beginning of that evening and Jacob has deflowered her. Now Leah's prospects for marriage are almost nil unless Jacob keeps her. So, Laban depends upon enough character in Jacob to stay with Leah, despite the fact that Laban bamboozled him.



Jacob had no qualms about deception, as long as he was the one who did the deceiving. When he was deceived, he was rather offended by it. After all, he had the most intimate contact with Leah that he possibly could have. He is caught in a morality play which is unbreakable. He has slept with Leah. Nothing else matters; the deception is immaterial (and, his being deceived could even be contested by Laban).

Later in the Mosaic Law, it was mandated that when you sleep with someone, that is the end of it; you are, for all intents and purposes, married to that person. The Mosaic Law is very clear on that. As Paul said, the Gentiles have the Law of God written in their hearts and here is a place where that is revealed. Jacob is now committed to a life with Leah. She and Laban were both a part of this deception. Laban kills two birds with one stone—he marries off his oldest (and possibly less attractive³³¹) daughter, gets seven years of excellent labor in the meantime; and, once all is said and done, he will receive another seven years of hard labor from Jacob. How

³³⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen29.htm> (footnote) accessed November 14, 2014.

³³¹ This is overplayed in most commentaries; and the text does not completely bear this out.

ironic that Jacob should be faced with someone even more deceptive than he and Jacob fell for it. Jacob was blind-sided. This is a twist that Jacob did not see coming.

A lot if made out of Gandhi and how he stood up to the British in India and used non-violent methods to secure India's sovereignty. All of this seems quite noble and fantastic until you realize, this cannot happen unless the British are noble people—including the people who ruled there. We already know what would happen in China—they would run the person down and we would never hear from them again. In North Korea, they would be thrown into a prison camp and the next 2 or 3 generations after would be raised in a prison camp. In Russia, such a protestor would disappear (not sure about now, but in past decades, they would). There is no such thing as Gandhi in China, Russia or North Korea. Gandhi does not exist apart from the honor of the British rulers in India. Peaceful, non-violent protests in those other countries are met with life-threatening violence. There is no Gandhi remembered from North Korea (or Russia, or China). These countries lacked the honor that the British Empire had. A country without honor easily kills the Gandhi figure and that ends the rebellion. Gandhi could resist the British Empire only because it was a moral and righteous empire.

Laban's plan only works if Jacob has some honor and nobility. Now, we know that it isn't much, but there is some. Jacob does not reject Leah; he does not desert her—and God will bless Jacob for this. Jacob will have many sons by Leah and the greatest tribes of Israel come through Leah.

Laban will insure that Jacob will remain by immediately offering him Rachel, and for the same deal (7 years of labor).

Gen. 29:22–23, 25 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?" (ESV)

Laban deceives Jacob—*Whatever a man sows...* (Many Commentators)

Matthew Henry: *This was Laban's sin; he wronged both Jacob and Rachel, whose affections, doubtless, were engaged to each other, and, if (as some say) Leah was herein no better than an adulteress, it was no small wrong to her too. But it was Jacob's affliction, a damp to the mirth of the marriage-feast, when in the morning behold it was Leah (Gen. 29:25). It is easy to observe here how Jacob was paid in his own coin. He had cheated his own father when he pretended to be Esau, and now his father-in-law cheated him.*³³²

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *When the time came for the bride to be conducted to the marriage chamber, Laban substitutes Leah for Rachel. It was not difficult to carry out this deception, as it was evening and the bride was conducted to the chamber of the husband closely veiled.*³³³

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *According to the custom of those eastern nations, the bride was conducted to the bed of her husband, with silence, in darkness, and covered from head to foot with a veil; circumstances all of them favourable to the wicked, selfish plan which Laban had formed to detain his son-in-law longer in his service.*³³⁴

³³² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30.

³³³ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:21–28 (Main Homiletics of the Paragraph).

³³⁴ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:23 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

Laban deceives Jacob—*Whatever a man sows...* (Many Commentators)

Trapp: *God pays us often in our own coin, {a} and measures to us again the self-same measure that we have meted to others. {Matt. 7:2} Herod mocked the wise men, and is mocked of them. {Matt. 2:16} And how oft do we see those that would beguile others, punished with illusion? God usually retaliates, and proportions jealousy to jealousy, provocation to provocation, {Deut. 32:21} number to number, {Isa. 65:11–12} choice to choice, {Isa. 66:3–4} device to device, {Mic. 2:1; Mic. 2:3} frowardness to frowardness, {Psalm 18:26} contrariety to contrariety. {Lev. 26:21} Even the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, {Prov. 11:31} as was Jacob.*³³⁵

The Cambridge Bible: *beguiled] i.e. “deceived,” as Joshua 9:22; but a different word in the Hebrew from that in Gen. 3:13. Laban had succeeded in astutely bestowing his less attractive daughter in marriage.*³³⁶

Gill: *[A]lthough Laban is not to be justified in this action, yet here appears in Providence a righteous retaliation of Jacob; he beguiled his own father, pretending he was his brother Esau; and now his father-in-law beguiles him, giving him blear eyed Leah instead of beautiful Rachel.*³³⁷

As an aside, many commentators speak this way, in how they compare the unattractive eyes of Leah to the beauty of Rachel. Although that may be true, it is not really the emphasis of the Bible when describing both women; and one must bear in mind that, we are getting the description of Jacob, so we see Rachel through his eyes. I do not doubt that she was more beautiful to him. As already discussed, it is difficult to determine what is meant about Leah's eyes.

There are certainly some semi-objective qualities to beauty, but so much of it is subjective. I have had a lady friend for the past 4 years whom I believe is one of the most beautiful women in the world. I would choose her over any movie starlet; but someone else might not.

Dr. Peter Pett: *When Jacob realises what has happened he is no doubt furious and immediately marches in to where Laban is to lay his complaint. The terms of his contract have been broken. The reader, however, knowing the story of Esau will recognise that he has received as he gave. The trickster has been tricked. He who deceived a blind man, has himself been deceived when blinded by a veil. He who supplanted an elder kin has an elder kin planted on him. What a man sows he reaps. And he learns his first lesson in dealing with Laban.*

Pett continues: *But Laban was no doubt waiting for the visit and has his excuses ready. He is a smooth-tongued liar and confident because the strength is on his side. He is master here. Jacob can do nothing.*³³⁸

Wesley: *Jacob had cheated his own father when he pretended to be Esau, and now his father - in - law cheated him. Herein, how unrighteous soever Laban was, the Lord was righteous.*³³⁹

Whedon: *Jacob now feels the weight and bitterness of deception. But it is a retribution for his own supplanting and defrauding of Esau.*³⁴⁰

³³⁵ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:23.

³³⁶ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:25.

³³⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25.

³³⁸ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:25.

³³⁹ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:25.

³⁴⁰ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:25.

Laban deceives Jacob—*Whatever a man sows...* (Many Commentators)

Clarke: *The marriage feast, it appears, lasted seven days; it would not therefore have been proper to break off the solemnities to which all the men of the place had been invited, Gen. 29:22, and probably Laban wished to keep his fraud from the public eye; therefore he informs Jacob that if he will fulfill the marriage week for Leah, he will give him Rachel at the end of it, on condition of his serving seven other years. To this the necessity of the case caused Jacob to agree; and thus Laban had fourteen years' service instead of seven: for it is not likely that Jacob would have served even seven days for Leah, as his affection was wholly set on Rachel, the wife of his own choice. By this stratagem Laban gained a settlement for both his daughters. What a man soweth, that shall he reap. Jacob had before practiced deceit, and is now deceived; and Laban, the instrument of it, was afterwards deceived himself.*³⁴¹

Two of the questions which Jacob asks—"What is this you have done to me? Why then have you deceived me?"—could Isaac have not asked Jacob the same things when Jacob deceived him?

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Genesis 29:25 And it happened in the morning, he saw that [lit., *behold*] it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you tricked me?"

Jacob is furious. He has been in love for 7 years with Rachel. He expected to wake up the next morning and see the woman whom he loves, and he sees Leah instead.

Apparently, Jacob shoots out of their bed and goes right on over to Laban's home and he yells at him. This happens so quickly that we do not even have verbs saying, *and he got up and he exited the tent and he went to speak to Laban*. No. He woke up, he saw Leah and, in the next instant, he is vigorously lodging a complaint with Laban. Leaving out all of the stuff in between, suggests that Jacob was in a hurry and that he is furious and that he raced from his bed to Laban's tent.

Meanwhile, Zilpah, Leah's maid, comes in and collects the sheets and delivers them to Laban (or to a predetermined place, where they will be stored). Zilpah is a witness to these blood-stained sheets the next morning; and, quite obviously, so is Leah. Laban, as a father, had kept his part of the bargain; he preserved his daughter's purity.

Jacob has no way out of this marriage. That he consummated his marriage to Leah has witnesses and physical evidence. Now, so that you understand, none of these things are in the narrative—the bed sheets, the maid viewing the stained bed sheets and then fetching the bed sheets, the placing of these bed sheets into storage with the father—but this is very likely the way that things went down. This would explain why the maid is mentioned and these cultural norms are confirmed by Deut. 22:13–17.

Jacob thinks back to the night before, and the witnesses there are these men who are all beholden to Laban; and Laban never speaks the name of his daughter; he only makes reference to *my daughter*. So, no one can claim that Laban spoke of Rachel; and Leah and her maid Zilpah both would testify to the willing consummation of their marriage.

Again, much of this is conjecture, but it all holds together. These additional details help to explain what is actually going on.

In other words, Jacob is legally married to Leah. It does not matter how it all happened; it does not matter that he was deceived. Just like Isaac's blessing to Jacob when Jacob deceived him. It does not matter that Isaac was deceived; the blessing still stands. Similarly, it does not matter how Jacob was deceived; the marriage still stands as well.

³⁴¹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:27.

My guess is, Jacob never appreciated the irony of these circumstances, but we are able to.

Gal. 6:7 springs to mind: **Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.** (ESV) Jacob, the great deceiver, was deceived.

A great deal is made out of the virginity of Leah (and any woman married in the ancient world). In fact, even up to the 1950's and 1960's, many men and women married, having only one sexual partner. Because of the cultural propaganda that we are exposed to today, most young people (and even older people) view this as quaint and old-fashioned. However, this still occurs. That is, there are still times when two people (1 man and 1 woman) get married, having never had sex prior to their wedding night. This is God's plan. This is why marriages were so solid throughout most of the history of the United States; until the whole *free love* movement in the 1960's; and, at that point, marriages began to fall apart.

If you have normal Christian values (or **divine establishment** values), it is easy to look at today's society and think, *society is pursuing everything that is wrong and rejecting everything that is right*. It is not God's plan for men or women to go out and sexually experiment; and then, at some point, become house partners with some random gender, perhaps married, perhaps not; perhaps with children and perhaps not. This is a formula for temporary relationships and a great deal of heartache. Furthermore, these non-traditional relationships are hell on the children. A father and a mother is normal to a child; a father and a mother who stick together is normal for a child. This gives a child stability, as well as specific limits.

The further a society moves away from these traditional, divine establishment values, the more that society suffers as a whole. The result is, we have a generation of young people who have some of the goofiest notions a generation could have. They believe in virtually anything and everything except for truth. For instance, there is a very large percentage of people in the United States who believe that a more socialistic government is the right way to go. They trust people to run everything (that is what a socialist government does) who have never run anything in their entire lives. And despite being able to find a socialist government that is not a full-on mess today, these people still support socialism. I write this in 2017 and we were not too far from electing a socialist as a main party candidate for president in 2016.

Our adversary is brilliant, and can think circles around any of us. He can take the most bizarre and illogical set of views and make them seem palatable and desirable. For those who have rejected the truth, what Satan offers up is what they want in their lives.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 29:21–25 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, and let me go in to her." And Laban gathered all the men of the place, and made a feast. Now it came about in the evening that he took his daughter Leah, and sent her into him; so Jacob came in to her. Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. And it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?"

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:21–25

1. Since the time seemed so short to Jacob, Moses leaps ahead to the end of the seven years.
2. Jacob has faithfully served Laban and was looking forward to marriage to Rachel.
3. Laban obviously did not make any move to finalize the agreement by bringing up the matter to Jacob.
4. Jacob in very emphatic terms reminds Laban that it is time for him to receive his agreed upon wages.
5. Laban invites all those in the surrounding vicinity to the wedding feast, which no doubt included much drinking.
6. This not only fits the custom of the wedding feast which is a time of rejoicing, but will somewhat dull the senses of Jacob.
7. The party continued into the evening past sundown.
8. Laban conceives a plan whereby he can fulfill two distinct desires he has.
9. The first is how to marry off his older daughter who was obviously less attractive than Rachel.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:21–25

10. The second was how to obtain the very desirable services of Jacob for a longer period of time.
11. He sends Leah into the tent under the cover of darkness, and with the customary veil.
12. There can be no doubt that Leah was apart of the conspiracy, and her cooperation was imperative.
13. She saw an opportunity to get a very desirable husband, and perhaps an opportunity to put one over on her more attractive sister.
14. Keep in mind that she was the oldest and was likely fighting the "old maid" tag.
15. All these things and perhaps other motivations we are not aware of cause her to join willingly in this deception.
16. Once she is safely in the tent, Jacob leaves the feast and goes to the tent to consummate the wedding vows.
17. He has no reason to be suspicious, and his overwhelming love for Rachel would have caused him to be quite anxious for this night.
18. Rachel and Leah must have been similar enough in height and weight not to arouse suspicion.
19. Although what man would have ever considered that his promised bride would turn out to be another woman??
20. Laban demonstrates his conniving, deceitful nature, as he hatches a plan which is both daring and vicious.
21. The parallels here are obvious to the plot which Jacob participated in with his mother Rebekah.
22. The deceiver is now deceived by a superior deceiver, demonstrating the truth that "you will reap what you sow".
23. In the morning Jacob, having already engaged in sex with Leah, finds out to his astonishment that he has been deceived.
24. He obviously realizes that Laban is the culprit and so immediately asks him three pointed questions.
 - a. Why have you done this??
 - b. Did we not make an agreement for Rachel??
 - c. Why did you trick me??
25. Laban demonstrates that he and his sister Rebekah have strikingly similar sinful trend of Adam trends in this area.
26. Neither shows any remorse for the intentional deception which they engineer in their family.
27. Like Jacob, Leah willingly goes along with the plan, and is not guiltless.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And so says Laban, "[It] is not done so in our place to give the youngest to faces of the firstborn. Fulfill a week of this and let us give to you also another in service which you will serve with me also seven years following."

Genesis
29:26–27

Laban then said, "[It] is not done this way in our country, to give the youngest [daughter in marriage] before the firstborn. Also fulfill a week of this one and let us give you another [one] by the service which you will perform for me [with] yet seven more years."

Laban then said, "We don't do things like that in our country—we don't give the youngest daughter away in marriage before the firstborn. First fulfill this celebratory week and we will give you another wife in exchange for your service—just 7 more years."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Laban, "[It] is not done so in our place to give the youngest to faces of the firstborn. Fulfill a week of this and let us give to you also another in service which you will serve with me also seven years following."
Targum of Onkelos	And Laban said, It is not so done in our place, to give the younger before the elder. Fulfill now the seven days <u>of the feast</u> of this, and I will give thee also that for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	...Fulfill the seven days of this feast of Leah, and I will give...
Latin Vulgate	Laban answered: It is not <u>the custom</u> in this place, to give the younger <u>in marriage</u> first. Make up the week of days <u>of this match</u> : and I will give thee her also, for the service that thou shalt render me other seven years.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Laban said to Jacob, It is not so done in our <u>country</u> , to give the younger in marriage before the elder. Finish the <u>wedding feast</u> for this one, and then I will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me yet another seven years.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban answered, It is not done thus in our <u>country</u> , to give the younger before the elder. Fulfill then her week, and I will give her to you also in return for your service, which you serve with me, yet seven other years.

Significant differences: The Latin has *the custom* rather than *so done* in the Hebrew; but the gist is about the same. Both the Syriac and the Greek have *country* rather than *place*, which is more of an interpretation than a translation from the Hebrew.

It may seem odd, but *before* is a legitimate translation of *to faces of*.

In the second sentence, the Hebrew has *us*, but all of the other ancients translations have *I*. The various translations add in *of the feast* (targum), *of this match* (Latin); and *the wedding feast* (Syriac).

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban said, In our country we do not let the younger daughter be married before the older. Let the week of the bride-feast come to its end and then we will give you the other in addition, if you will be my servant for another seven years.
Easy English	Laban said, 'Here, in our country, the younger daughter should not marry before the daughter that was born first. That is not our custom. Finish the *feast for the wedding. The *feast lasts for a week. Then we will give the other daughter to you. But you must work for me for 7 more years.'
Good News Bible (TEV)	Laban answered, "It is not the custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older. Wait until the week's marriage celebrations are over, and I will give you Rachel, if you will work for me another seven years."
<i>The Message</i>	"We don't do it that way in our country," said Laban. "We don't marry off the younger daughter before the older. Enjoy your week of honeymoon, and then we'll give you the other one also. But it will cost you another seven years of work."
NIRV	Laban replied, "It isn't our practice here to give the younger daughter to be married before the older one. Complete this daughter's wedding week. Then we'll give you the younger one also. But you will have to work for another seven years."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Laban said, "Where we live, we don't give the younger woman before the oldest. Complete the celebratory week with this woman. Then I will give [LXX, Sam, Syr, Tg, Vulg; MT we will give] you this other woman too for your work, if you work for me seven more years."
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Contemporary English V.	Laban replied, "In our country the older daughter must get married first. After you spend this week with Leah, you may also marry Rachel. But you will have to work for me another seven years."
New Berkeley Version	Laban replied, "It just is not done in these parts, to marry the younger before the older. Complete this one's week and for another seven years of service we will give you the other one, too." Perfect retribution. As Jacob had impersonated Esau at a most critical moment, so Laban made
Leah impersonate Racliel at	an even more critical time.
New Century Version	Laban said, "In our country we do not allow the younger daughter to marry before the older daughter. But complete the full week of the marriage ceremony with Leah, and I will give you Rachel to marry also. But you must serve me another seven years."
New Living Translation	"It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied. "But wait until the bridal week is over; then we'll give you Rachel, too-provided you promise to work another seven years for me."
Translation for Translators	Laban replied, "In this land, it is not our custom to give a younger daughter to be married before we let someone marry our firstborn daughter. After we finish this week of celebration, we will let you marry the younger one also. But in return, you must pay for Rachel by working for me for another seven years."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Laban answered: 'In our country, it isn't proper to give the younger before the eldest. Serve me for seven [more years] and I'll give her to you also, in return for your labor of seven more years.'
Beck's American Translation	"We don't do such things here," Laban answered. "We don't give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. Finish the bridal week with this daughter; then you will get the other one too by working seven more years for me."
International Standard V	But Laban responded, "It's not the practice of our place to give the younger one in marriage [The Heb. lacks in marriage] before the firstborn. Fulfill the week for this daughter [Lit. one], then we'll give you the other one in exchange for serving me another seven years."
Names of God Bible	Laban answered, "It's not our custom to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. Finish the week of wedding festivities with this daughter. Then we will give you the other one too. But you'll have to work for me another seven years."
New Advent (Knox)Bible	And Laban answered, It is not the custom of our country to wed our younger daughters first. Celebrate this wedding of thine for a full week, and I will give thee Rachel too, and thou shalt work for me another seven years to earn her.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	Laban said, "It's not the done thing in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn in marriage. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service that you will render to me, for seven more years." The week means literally seven days, which was the minimum interval.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But Laban answered, "It is not our custom in this country to give the younger before the elder. Count the seven for this, then I will give to you also the other, and for her you shall serve with me another seven years afterwards.'
New Heart English Bible	Laban said, "It is not done so in our place, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you will serve with me yet seven other years."

Urim-Thummim Version But Laban replied to him, it is not the custom in our region to give the younger before the firstborn. Finish Leah's bridal week and we will give you Rachel too, for an additional seven years of your labor.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Laban said, "It is not our custom to give the younger daughter before the first-born. As soon as the marriage week is over, I will give you my younger daughter as well, but you must work with me for another seven years

The Heritage Bible And Laban said, It is not done this way in our country, to give the younger before the face of the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this other one also for the work which you shall work for me yet another seven years.

New American Bible (2002) "It is not the custom in our country," Laban replied, "to marry off a younger daughter before an older one. Finish the bridal week [The bridal week: an ancient wedding lasted for seven days of festivities; cf ⇒ Judges 14:12.] for this one, and then I will give you the other too, in return for another seven years of service with me."

New American Bible (2011) Laban replied, "It is not the custom in our country to give the younger daughter before the firstborn. Finish the bridal week [an ancient wedding lasted for seven days; cf. Jgs 14:12, 17.] for this one, and then the other will also be given to you in return for another seven years of service with me." Hos 12:13.

New Jerusalem Bible Laban replied, 'It is not the custom in our place to marry off the younger before the elder. Finish this marriage week and I shall give you the other one too in return for your working for me for another seven years.'

Revised English Bible Laban answered, "It is against the custom of our country to marry off the younger sister before the elder. Go through with the seven days' feast for the elder, and the younger shall be given you in return for a further seven years" work.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Lavan answered, "In our place that isn't how it's done, to give the younger daughter before the firstborn. Finish the marriage week of this one, and we'll give you the other one also in exchange for the work you will do for me during yet another seven years."

The Complete Tanach And Laban said, "It is not done so in our place to give the younger one before the firstborn. Complete the [wedding] week of this one, and we will give you this one too, for the work that you will render me for another seven years."

Complete the [wedding] week of this one: Heb. שָׁבִיעַ. This is the construct state, because it is vocalized with a chataf (a sheva), [and means] the week of this one, which are the seven days of feasting [celebrated by a newly wedded couple]. [This appears in the] Talmud Yerushalmi, Mo'ed Katan (1:7). It is impossible to say [that it means] really a week [in the absolute state and should be rendered: this week,] because, if so, the "shin" would have to be vowelized with a "patach," (he means to say a "kamatz" שָׁבִיעַ). Furthermore, שָׁבִיעַ is in the masculine gender, for it is written: (Deut. 16:9) "You shall count seven weeks (שָׁבִיעַ שָׁבִיעַ שָׁבִיעַ)." Therefore, it does not signify a week but seven [days], septaine in Old French.

and we will give to you: [This is] a plural expression, similar to (above 11:3, 7), "Let us descend and confuse"; "and let us fire them." This, too, is an expression of giving.

this one too: immediately after the seven days of feasting, and you will work after her marriage. — [from Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 36]

exeGesés companion Bible And Laban says,
It is not worked thus in our place,
to give the younger at the face of the firstbirth:

fulfill her week
and we give you this also
for the service you serve with me
yet another seven years.

Kaplan Translation

'In our country it is something that is simply not done!' replied Laban. '[We never] give a younger daughter in marriage before the first-born. But wait until this week [of wedding celebrations] [(Rashi; Yov'loth 28:28). See Judges 14:12,17. From here is derived the custom of making seven days of feasts for a bride and groom (sheva berakhoth) even today (Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer 16).] for [Leah] is over. Then we will give you the other girl - in return for the work that you will do for me for another seven years.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Lavan said, It must not be so done in our land, to give the younger before the bechirah. Finish her shvu'a (week), and we will give thee this also for the avodah (service, work) which thou shalt do for me yet sheva shanim acherot.

The Scriptures 1998

And Laban said, "It is not done this way in our place, to give the younger before the first-born. "Complete the week of this one, then we give you this one too, for the service which you shall serve with me still another seven years."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

And Laban said, It is not permitted in our country to give the younger [in marriage] before the elder. Finish the [wedding feast] week [for Leah]; then we will give you [Rachel] also, and you shall work for me yet seven more years in return.

The Expanded Bible

Laban said, "In our ·country [·place] we do not allow the younger daughter to marry before the ·older daughter [·firstborn]. But complete the full week of ·the marriage ceremony with Leah [·this one], and I will give you ·Rachel [·the other one] to marry also. But you must serve me another seven years."

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger-afore the first-born. Granted that this was an established custom in the place, or district, where Laban was living, his excuse was still a flimsy pretext, for his business would have been to acquaint Jacob with that custom at the time the contract was made His selfish motives, especially his avarice, here came to the surface, even as it was in evidence more and more in the succeeding years. Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. The nuptial feast lasting seven days, Jacob was to confirm marriage with Leah by accepting her as his wife during this time. In the second week he was then given Rachel as his wife, with the understanding that he would serve another seven years for her, thus really paying a greater price than he owed.

Lexham English Bible

Then Laban said, "{It is not the custom} in our country to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, then I will also give you the other, {on the condition that you will work for me} another seven years."

NET Bible®

"It is not our custom here [*Heb* "and Laban said, 'It is not done so in our place.'" The order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.], " Laban replied, "to give the younger daughter in marriage [*Heb* "to give the younger." The words "daughter" and "in marriage" are supplied in the translation for clarity and for stylistic reasons.] before the firstborn. Complete my older daughter's bridal week [*Heb* "fulfill the period of seven of this one." The referent of "this one" has been specified in the translation as "my older daughter" for clarity.] [*Bridal week*. An ancient Hebrew marriage ceremony included an entire week of festivities (cf. Judg 14:12)]. Then we will give you the younger one [*Heb* "this other one."] too, in exchange for seven more years of work [*Heb* "and we will give to you also this one in exchange for labor which you will work with me, still seven other years."]."

The Voice

Laban: That isn't something we do here in this country-giving the younger daughter in marriage before the firstborn. If you complete this wedding week *with Leah*, then I will also give you Rachel. But in return, you must serve me another seven years. **Wedding celebrations last seven days, plenty of time for Leah to become pregnant with Laban's first grandchild.**

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Lavan ^[White] said, he will not be done so in our place, to give the little one before the firstborn woman, fulfill this week and we will also give to you this one with the service which you will serve by me yet again another seven years,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Laban, "Not so is it being done in our place, to give the inferior in station before the firstborn. Fulfill the seven of this one, and give will I to you this one, moreover, for the service which you shall serve, withal, further another seven years.
English Standard V. – UK	Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete [Judges 14:12] the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Laban answered: it is not the manner of this place, to marry the youngest before the eldest. Pass out this week, and then shall this also be given you for the service which you shall serve me yet seven years more.
NASB	But Laban said, "It is not the practice [Lit <i>done thus in</i>] in our place to marry off [Lit <i>give</i>] the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve [Gen 31:41] with me for another seven years."
Young's Updated LT	And Laban says, "It is not done so in our place, to give the younger before the firstborn; fulfil the week of this one, and we give to you also this one, for the service which you will serve with me yet seven other years."

The gist of this verse:

Laban claims that Leah must be married first because of the traditions of his area, but he will give Rachel to Jacob if he works an additional 7 years.

Genesis 29:26

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Genesis 29:26

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Wenstrom: T. ³⁴² 'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to be done [made, produced]; to be offered, to be observed, to be used; was made [constructed, fashioned], to be formed, to be prepared</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mâqôwm (מִקוֹמ) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
tsâ'îyr (צָעִיר) [pronounced <i>tzaw-GEER</i>]	<i>little, insignificant, young, youngest, least</i>	feminine singular adjective used as a substantive; with the definite article	Strong's #6810 BDB #859
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פְּנֵים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> . This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L ^o pânîym (לפְּנֵים) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i> . Literally, this means <i>to faces of</i> .			
b ^e kîyrâh (בְּרִיבָה) [pronounced <i>b^e-kee-RAW</i>]	<i>firstborn [always of women]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1067 BDB #114

³⁴² From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p.) accessed August 10, 2017.

Translation: Laban then said, “[It] is not done this way in our country, to give the youngest [daughter in marriage] before the firstborn. Note the way that Laban explains this. “This is how things are done in our country. This is your country as well, Jacob. This is how things are done. We don’t give the youngest daughter’s hand in marriage before the firstborn daughter. You should know this.”

The Geneva Bible: *[Laban] valued the profit he had from Jacobs service more than either his promise or the customs of the country, though he used custom for his excuse.*³⁴³

Benson suggests³⁴⁴ that no such custom existed. I would not be surprised if such a custom did exist; and it is possible that some men of that era married the older sister in order to have the younger.

Note the impersonal way that Laban uses to refer to his daughters throughout.

Genesis 29:26 And Laban said, “It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.

Laban’s explanation is, “Look, I don’t know what your customs are there, but here, you cannot marry off the youngest daughter first. That just is not done.” Laban and Jacob have already established the price for marrying a daughter. Laban got that price; he marries off his least marriageable daughter; and he is certainly willing to agree to the same contract for Rachel.

Jacob had a desire for all the things promised to the firstborn, and manipulated things to go in that direction. Laban had a desire to marry off both of his daughters and to get some free work from the deal, so he manipulated things to go in that direction. Jacob (and his mother Rebekah) have been the manipulators, expecting to turn circumstances to their own liking. Jacob had no idea that this same manipulation would be done to him. God took these very imperfect men, with their very imperfect plans, and moved his plan forward. From Jacob would come all the Hebrew people.

The Bible is a history of man’s sinfulness, his bad decisions; and God still taking all of this and moving His plan forward. No matter how good and honorable men are (like Abraham or Joseph); or how much they resist His will (Jacob), God has a perfect plan and He will bring it to pass.

This does not mean that people with bad intentions and actions are rewarded for this. We know what happened as a result of Rebekah’s scheming to make her husband Isaac bless Jacob rather than Esau. She was able to keep her part of this scheme secret from Isaac and Esau; but she lost her favorite son, Isaac. She will never see him again. It will be the same with Laban. Because of his own greed and the greed of his sons, they will eventually drive Jacob (and his wives) away; and Laban will never see his grandchildren grow up.

David Guzik: *Laban is a perfect picture of a deceptive manipulator. He ends up getting exactly what he wanted (both his daughters married). Yet, this will turn out badly for both himself and his daughters. Oftentimes, God judges manipulators by giving them what they in their sinful desires and methods want and allowing it to be loss for them.*³⁴⁵

Wenstrom: *The terms “younger” and “firstborn” are unknowingly employed by Laban under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to remind Jacob of the deception of his older brother Esau and stunned Jacob into silence so that he does not reprove Laban for not having informed him of the local custom in the first place.*

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob knows now first hand what it feels like to be deceived and cheated. Here we see that the Lord is teaching Jacob that the ends does “not” justify the means! This, the Holy Spirit*

³⁴³ From <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/geneva-study-bible/genesis/genesis-29.html> accessed November 16, 2014.

³⁴⁴ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25–26.

³⁴⁵ *David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 29:26–30.

*convicts Jacob of since Jacob's anger subsides and he agrees to work another seven years for Laban to consummate his love for Rachel.*³⁴⁶

In life, we can learn one of two ways: the easy way (taking in and applying Bible doctrine) or the hard way (which is going against the will of God and seeing very negative consequences as the result). God uses Laban's deception to show Jacob what kind of a man *he* was. Did Jacob get it? Was he able to put it all together? That is hard to tell, although he does work honestly for Laban for these 20 years (apart from his attempt to influence genetics). However, bear in mind, Jacob's experiences were not just for him, but for us as well.

Recall Rebekah's manipulation to get her husband Isaac to bless Jacob. The end result of all that was, she would never see Jacob again. She was so focused on the blessing, that she did not consider the consequences of her actions.

Genesis 29:26–27 Laban then said, “[It] is not done this way in our country, to give the youngest [daughter in marriage] before the firstborn. Also fulfill a week of this and let us give you another [one] by the service which you will perform for me [with] yet seven more years.”

Laban's Frivolous Excuse (Many Commentators)

Matthew Henry: *The excuse was frivolous: It must not be so done in our country, Gen. 29:26. We have reason to think there was no such custom of his country as he pretends; only he banterers Jacob with it, and laughs at his mistake. Note, Those that can do wickedly and then think to turn it off with a jest, though they may deceive themselves and others, will find at last that God is not mocked. But if there had been such a custom, and he had resolved to observe it, he should have told Jacob so when he undertook to serve him for his younger daughter.*³⁴⁷

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Laban...said, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born." But, then, if that were the prevailing custom of society at Haran, he should have apprized his nephew of it at an early period in an honorable manner...[such] tricks [can still be found in]...the marriage festivities among the greater sheiks, [and similar deceits] are accordant with the habits of the people in Arabia and Armenia in the present day.*³⁴⁸

The Cambridge Bible: *Laban's excuse was specious, that it was necessary to conform to local customs, and that Jacob, as a stranger, did not know them. But, if so, he should in decency and honour have explained the custom to Jacob before consenting to the marriage with the younger sister. In this disgraceful deception Laban's character is revealed; while Jacob, who deceived his father and his brother, is made to suffer himself from deception.*³⁴⁹

Gill: *[I]t does not appear there was any such custom, and it was a mere evasion; or otherwise, why did not he inform him of this when he asked for Rachel? and why did he enter into a contract with him, contrary to such a known custom? and besides; how could he have the nerve to call the men of the city, and make a feast for the marriage of his younger daughter, if this was the case?*³⁵⁰

Keil and Delitzsch: *A perfectly worthless excuse; for if this had really been the custom in Haran as in ancient India and elsewhere, he ought to have told Jacob of it before.*³⁵¹

³⁴⁶ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 455) accessed August 10, 2017.

³⁴⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30.

³⁴⁸ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:21.

³⁴⁹ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 27:26.

³⁵⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:26.

³⁵¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:26.

Laban's Frivolous Excuse (Many Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *Laban knew that Jacob would have to recognise the strength of his argument. Custom could not be broken. Every one in the tribe would know the situation, and they were no doubt smiling behind Jacob's back. And behind his triumphant but partly concealed smile is the implication that Jacob should have known, and that had he been smarter he would have known. It was probably not an uncommon requirement, although marriage to the elder daughter did in fact place Jacob in a more privileged position. (An argument which Laban might well have called on when placating Jacob. Marriage was not on the whole looked on as a romantic affair).*³⁵²

Whedon: *[I]f such were the law at Haran, Jacob was ignorant of it until now, and Laban deceived him in not explaining it to him when he bargained for Rachel. Gen. 29:18.*³⁵³

Clarke disagrees that this is a phony excuse, and he provides plenty of evidence: *It was an early custom to give daughters in marriage according to their seniority; and it is worthy of remark that the oldest people now existing, next to the Jews, I mean the Hindoos, have this not merely as a custom, but as a positive law; and they deem it criminal to give a younger daughter in marriage while an elder daughter remains unmarried. Among them it is a high offense, equal to adultery, "for a man to marry while his elder brother remains unmarried, or for a man to give his daughter to such a person, or to give his youngest daughter in marriage while the eldest sister remains unmarried."* - *Code of Gentoo Laws, chap. xv., sec. 1, p. 204. This was a custom at Mesopotamia; but Laban took care to conceal it from Jacob till after he had given him Leah. The words of Laban are literally what a Hindoo would say on such a subject.*³⁵⁴

There is the possibility that this is a very important custom in that area; nevertheless, how Laban went about fulfilling the requirements of that custom was underhanded.

James Freeman also reports of cultures where the younger child *cannot* get married before the older, unless the older is deformed, blind, deaf or dumb.³⁵⁵

I do not think that this is a phony excuse on Laban's part. I think it is a real custom which he uses to his own advantage here.

I conclude that this is a real thing for that place and era, and that Laban probably used this fact on his daughters to get them to cooperate (I believe that both Leah and Rachel cooperated with their father in this charade—or, at the very least, obeyed their father). This is speculative, but Leah and Rachel seemed to settle in to their relationship with Jacob quite naturally, despite the obvious conflict of two women in a marriage with one man. If Rachel were tricked concerning this situation, would she not for years carry a grudge against her sister and father? Would she not do everything possible to monopolize her time with Jacob, had that been the case?

Therefore, let me suggest that Laban, at some point, took Rachel aside and said, "You know that you cannot marry Jacob, as long as Leah is not married. Do you think she will marry anytime soon?" Laban could have begun that in the first year, preparing Rachel for the inevitable (inevitable in the eyes of Laban). If Rachel complained, "What if Jacob no longer wants me, if he is married to Leah? What is he is not willing to work another 7 years for me?" Laban would readily answer, "Then he is not the man for you."

I do not doubt that such a custom existed where Laban lived; but that he used it for his own advantage.

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The ESV; capitalized is used below.

³⁵² Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:26–27.

³⁵³ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:26.

³⁵⁴ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:26.

³⁵⁵ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 37.

Wenstrom on the Discipline of God

Now, he knows how his brother Esau and his father Isaac felt. God the Holy Spirit has rebuked and disciplined Jacob for deceiving his father Isaac and cheating his brother Esau in order to advance him to further spiritual growth. This discipline was a demonstration of the Lord's love for Jacob.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is conformity to the Father's will.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness.

The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer.

Rev. 3:19 **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.**

Heb 12:5–6 **And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."** (Prov. 3:11, 12)

Heb 12:7 **It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.** (Isa. 35:3; Prov. 4:26)

The punishment leads to **rebound**, which restores one to fellowship.

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character and integrity, which is meant by the phrase "share His holiness."

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and undeserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might acquire the character of our heavenly Father.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 **In the good day, be in good spirit, but also see in the evil day, that God has made one along with the other, so that man should not find anything after him.**

In order to receive discipline without getting bitter and complaining, the believer must recognize and submit to the authority of the Word of God, the delegated authority of the pastor-teacher and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ who controls history and therefore the believer's circumstances.

Proverbs 3:11–12 **My son, do not reject the chastening of Jehovah, and do not loathe His correction; for whom Jehovah loves He corrects, even as a father corrects the son with whom he is pleased.**

Job 5:17–18 **Behold, blessed is the man whom God corrects; and despise not the chastisement of the Almighty. For He wounds, and He binds up. He shatters, and His hands heal.**

Wenstrom on the Discipline of God

Proverbs 15:32–33 He casting off correction despises his own soul, but he who hears reproof gets understanding. The fear of Jehovah is instruction in wisdom, and before honor is humility.

From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 455–457) accessed August 10, 2017.

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Genesis 29:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâlê' (מָלֵא) [pronounced <i>maw-LAY</i>]	<i>fill, make full, fill up, fulfill; satisfy; complete, accomplish, confirm</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #4390 BDB #569
shâbûa' (שָׁבֹעַ) [pronounced <i>sha^b-VOO-ahó</i>]	<i>seven, period of seven (days or years), heptad, week; Feast of Weeks</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7620 BDB #988
There are 3 ways for this word to be spelled.			
zô'th (זֹתָ) [pronounced <i>zoth</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine of singular zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260

Translation: Also fulfill a week of this one... I took the word *also* from the phrase which follows. All of these words here are rather clunky; but I assume that they all sound better in the Hebrew. There are two possible interpretations: (1) the wedding festivities occur over a week's time, and Jacob must participate all of them as he is married to Leah. Or (2) Laban is saying, "You just do another week of service—that is, seven more years. However, the next verse, because of the way it is constructed, suggests that this was a wedding celebration with Leah that Jacob fulfilled. This is hidden in the verb structure. Since the 7 years is specified later in this verse, this leads me to believe that there would be another week of a marriage celebration—which was apparently standard—and Laban would give his second daughter to Jacob—provided that he work another 7 years after.

Sometimes in prophetic language, a *week* can refer to 7 years; but this discussion between Jacob and Laban seems to be pretty clear that a *week* is just 7 days.

Genesis 29:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	1 st person plural suffix, Qal imperfect; with the cohortative hê	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

I will give is found in LXX, Sam, Syr, Tg, Vulg; MT *we will give*.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ From <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+29&version=CEB> (footnote) accessed November 16, 2014.

Genesis 29:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
E. W. Bullinger: <i>we, i.e. I, by Figure of speech Heterosis (of Number)</i> . ³⁵⁷			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
gam (גם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
zô'th (זֹת) [pronounced <i>zoth</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine of singular zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘ăbôdâh (עֲבֹדָה) [pronounced <i>gû^b-vo-DAWH</i>]	<i>labour, work, service</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5656 & #5647 BDB #715
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
‘âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
‘ôwd (וְעַד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
sheba ^c (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>she^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>seven</i>	numeral masculine construct	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
shânîym (שָׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-NEEM</i>]	<i>years</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
’achêr (אַחֵר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHEHR</i>]	<i>another, following, next; other as well as foreign, alien, strange</i>	feminine plural adjective/substantive	Strong's #312 BDB #29

Translation: ...and let us give you another [one] by the service which you will perform for me [with] yet seven more years.” All of this is Laban’s idea, but note that he refers to *our place (country)*, and he says *we will give*. Does he have a mouse in his pocket? I think that the reference is to Laban’s and his entire family. Giving one’s

³⁵⁷ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:27.

daughters in marriage is a family decision, and not Laban's alone—or so Laban makes it appear to Jacob by saying these words.

However, all of this is Laban's idea. At some point in time, he decided to do things this way. I would not be surprised if Laban had a pretty good idea what he would do after Jacob had been there a month.

There is the saying that a lawyer should not ask a witness a question unless he knows how the witness will answer. When coming to the original agreement, I suspect that Laban knew exactly who Jacob wanted (before he said it) and very likely, what he was willing to trade for it (the 7 years of work). I do not doubt that Laban was open to someone marrying Leah during that first 7 years; but after that time passed, this was the only way that Laban could get a return on his *investments*. If Leah was not married, there would be no dowry and she would become a dependent, very likely, for the rest of his life.

Now, interestingly enough, this requires that Jacob have more integrity than Laban. He knows Jacob and his daughter Rachel well enough to not decide that they will just run off together. Rachel appears to be okay as part of a polygamous marriage (which will be the result of all this). Laban gets his daughters married off and he gets 14 years of service in exchange. We may reasonably assume that Jacob was a good worker. Laban's calculations are, he cannot withhold Rachel for another 7 years; but that he could probably get another 7 years of work from Jacob if he allows Jacob to have Rachel as his wife as well.

Laban promises: “First fulfill this celebratory week and we will give you another wife in exchange for your service—just 7 more years.” It is worthwhile noticing in the way that Laban speaks of his daughters: *this one, the other one*. I don't know if that is his actual thinking towards his daughters, or if he expresses himself this way to make it seem as if this is how he considered his daughters—there's the younger one and the older one, and the older has to be married first. It is quiet impersonal, but maybe that is his intention. Perhaps that is the impression that Laban wants to give to Jacob.

Dr. Thomas Constable: *The Hebrew name "Rachel" means "ewe," and "Leah" means "cow." Ironically, Laban treated them as cattle and used them for bargaining and trading.*³⁵⁸

Genesis 29:27 Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years.”

Then Laban makes the deal which he had planned on all along (this is my conjecture). “Look, you can still marry Rachel. I won't stand in your way. Just work another 7 years for her.” I do not believe that Laban came up with the idea right on the spot; I think that was his intention all along. He will get 14 years of service from Jacob, for his two daughters. Actually more, because Jacob will not have earned anything in all of that time. That is, after 14 years, Jacob will have nothing in his name, apart from Laban's two daughters. In other words, Jacob cannot just take his two wives at this point and leave. He will work an additional 6 years after this in order to put together a nest egg.

Is Laban exhibiting poor behavior by using his daughters to get ahead in business? To some degree, yes, although this was customary for this era. It is dangerous to take modern values and superimpose them on events from over 3000 years ago. However, Laban intentionally deceived Jacob; and, as has been discussed, Leah and Rachel were probably in on it, to a limited degree. That is, Laban hatched this plan in his own mind—possibly as far back as the first month of Jacob working for him—and then Laban simply did not give his daughters any viable options. To Rachel, he possibly said, “Listen, little missy, you cannot marry this man until your sister is married first. Since she does not have any suitors now, the only way we can work this out is to have Leah stand in for you on your wedding night. Otherwise, we will have to call the whole thing off until your sister is first married, and that may be *never*.” That Rachel and Leah are aware of what is happening is not clearly revealed in the Bible; but I believe this reasonably explains their behavior as wives later on. They seem to accept their situation with some sibling rivalry; but it is not so great as to destroy the marriage.

³⁵⁸ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Genesis 29:26–27 Laban then said, “[It] is not done this way in our country, to give the youngest [daughter in marriage] before the firstborn. Also fulfill a week of this and let us give you another [one] by the service which you will perform for me [with] yet seven more years.”

Laban Agrees to Give Rachel to Jacob as a Second Wife (Many Commentators)

Barnes: *Laban requests him to Complete the week, and then he will give him Rachel also. If, however, Leah was fraudulently put upon him at the close of the week of feasting, then Laban in these words proposes to give Rachel to Jacob on fulfilling another week of nuptial rejoicing. The latter is in the present instance more likely. In either case the marriage of Rachel is only a week after that of Leah. Rather than lose Rachel altogether, Jacob consents to comply with Laban’s terms.*

Barnes continues: *Rachel was the wife of Jacob’s affections and intentions. The taking of a second wife in the lifetime of the first was contrary to the law of nature, which designed one man for one woman Gen. 2:21–25. But the marrying of a sister-in-law was not yet incestuous, because no law had yet been made on the subject.*³⁵⁹

Carroll characterizes it in this way: *Laban then said, "As soon as the week of wedding festivities is over, I will let you have Rachel, provided you will serve seven more years. You can take her at the end of the week, but you take her on a credit until you have served the seven years." Jacob made that trade. Fourteen years of hard work.*³⁶⁰

Utley: *This bridal week was common to this culture (cf. Judges 14:12; Judges 14:17). It is also reflected in the extra-canonical book of Tob. 11:18. The concept of the month being broken into weeks is uniquely biblical (cf. Gen. 2:1–2). The fact that Laban could make the unbelievable request that Jacob serve him seven more years shows the exploitive attitude of this man. Jacob has met his match and now knows how it feels to be tricked (cf. Gen. 27:35).*³⁶¹

Keil and Delitzsch: *But to satisfy Jacob, Laban promised him that in a week he would give him the younger also, if he would serve him seven years longer for her.*³⁶²

Dr. Peter Pett: *Laban is not averse to Jacob and placates him with a further offer. Let him go through the seven-day wedding feast (see Judges 14:12) without trouble, giving Leah her full due, and then he can also marry Rachel. After which he must work another seven years for the privilege, as a now privileged member of the tribe.*³⁶³

Whedon: *The seven days of the marriage feast. Laban proposes, as a recompense, after the week has ended, to give him Rachel also, but on condition that he serve for her yet seven other years. Two wives in eight days, but fourteen years of service for them both.*³⁶⁴

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Genesis 29:26–27 Laban then said, “[It] is not done this way in our country, to give the youngest [daughter in marriage] before the firstborn. Also fulfill a week of this and let us give you another [one] by the service which you will perform for me [with] yet seven more years.”

³⁵⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25–30.

³⁶⁰ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10-31:55.

³⁶¹ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:27.

³⁶² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:27.

³⁶³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:26–27.

³⁶⁴ *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:27.

Fulfilling the Week of Celebration (commentary and discussion)

Stephen Armstrong: *[T]he marriage process in the ancient East was a week-long affair. The week began with the marriage day and marriage night. Jacob entered the tent on that first night. His bride was waiting in the dark tent, fully veiled. So Jacob was unable to detect Laban's deception until after the marriage was consummated. So Jacob emerged from the tent married, like it or not. To add insult to injury, the marriage still had another week of celebration, where the bride and groom were expected to celebrate their union with the guests. This would be the greatest celebration in their lives, and it was especially important for the woman. In this patriarchal culture, the woman was rarely celebrated or made the center of attention. So the marriage week was perhaps the biggest week of her life.*³⁶⁵

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *The public marriage feast made on this occasion, seems to have formed the regular method of recognising the marriage, and lasted seven days: it would therefore have been improper to have broken off the solemnities to which all the men of the place had been invited – Gen. 29:22 and probably Laban wished to keep the fraud from the public eye. It is perfectly plain that Jacob did not serve seven years more before he got Rachel to wife. Gen. 29:28.*³⁶⁶

Keil and Delitzsch: *"Fulfil her week;" i.e., let Leah's marriage-week pass over. The wedding feast generally lasted a week (cf. Judges 14:12; Job. 11:19). After this week had passed, he received Rachel also: two wives in eight days.*³⁶⁷

Poole: *Fulfil her week, the seven days usually devoted to the feast and solemnity of marriage, as Jude 14:12, 15, 17. And this he desired, that a week's cohabitation with Leah might either knit his affections to her, or at least confirm the contract and marriage with her.*³⁶⁸

The Cambridge Bible: *Laban's proposal is that when the week's marriage festivities for Leah are over, Jacob shall take Rachel as his second wife, on condition that he gives his services for another period of seven years. Nothing would justify the interruption of the seven days' marriage ceremonial.*

The Cambridge Bible continues: *Marriage with two sisters was evidently free from objection in the primitive days of the Israelites; and, perhaps for that reason, it is introduced into the prophetic symbolism of Jer. 3:6 ff. and Ezekiel 23. But, in the Levitical law, marriage with two sisters simultaneously is forbidden; Lev. 18:18.*³⁶⁹

Clarke: *It is perfectly plain that Jacob did not serve seven years more before he got Rachel to wife; but having spent a week with Leah, and in keeping the marriage feast, he then got Rachel, and served afterwards seven years for her.*³⁷⁰

E. W. Bullinger: *A popular mistake to suppose that Jacob did not marry Rachel till the end of the second seven years, for in the first seven were born seven sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, and Joseph. In the second seven: Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon, and Dinah.*³⁷¹

³⁶⁵ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

³⁶⁶ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁶⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:27.

³⁶⁸ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:27.

³⁶⁹ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:27.

³⁷⁰ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁷¹ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

Fulfilling the Week of Celebration (commentary and discussion)

Gill: *Not Rachel's week, or a week of years of servitude for her, but Leah's week, or the week of seven days of feasting for her marriage; for a marriage feast used to be kept seven days, according to the Jewish writers⁽¹⁾, and as it seems from Judges 14:17; and the Targum of Jerusalem fully expresses this sense, "fulfil the week of the days of the feast of Leah;" and to the same sense the Targum of Jonathan, Aben Ezra and Jarchi.*³⁷²

Gill: *...and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also; not after seven years' service, as Josephus (u) thinks, but after the seven days of feasting for Leah; though on condition of the above service, as appears from various circumstances related before the seven years' service could be completed; as his going in to Rachel, Gen. 29:30; her envying the fruitfulness of her sister, Gen. 30:1; giving Bilhah her handmaid unto him, Gen. 30:3; and the whole series of the context, and life of Jacob.*³⁷³

I believe that Benson takes this too far: *The seven days usually devoted to the feast and solemnity of marriage, Judges 14:12–17; for it does not appear that it relates to the seven years Jacob afterward served. This Laban seems to have desired, that by a week's cohabitation with Leah, his affections might be knit to her, and the marriage with her confirmed. We will give thee this also — Hereby he drew Jacob into the sin, and snare, and disquiet of multiplying wives. Jacob did not design it, but to have kept as true to Rachel as his father had done to Rebekah; he that had lived without a wife to the eighty-fourth year of his age, could then have been very well content with one: but Laban, to dispose of his two daughters without portions, and to get seven years' service more out of Jacob, thus imposes upon him, and draws him into such a strait, that he had some colourable reason for marrying them both.*³⁷⁴

It is reasonable to ask, *why does Laban insist upon the week of celebration before giving Rachel to Jacob?* This is a reasonable question, bearing in mind that any conclusion or theory is speculative.

Benson suggests that this additional week will allow Jacob to become closer to Leah. It is possible that the week-long celebration was customary, and Jacob's marriage to Leah becomes cemented—not necessarily based upon Jacob's feelings toward Leah, but by the customs of that day.

If this week of marriage feasting was cut short by another marriage, then this would make Leah's marriage appear real and less of a trick.

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This basic question could apply to hundreds of people named in the Bible.

The Bible Query on, *Should we admire Laban?*

Q: In Gen 29:15-25, why should we admire Laban in the Bible, since he deceived and lied to Jacob?

A: Whoever said we should admire Laban? This question presupposes the Bible can only talk God's people in a vacuum, and it cannot mention the other people with whom they had to deal. Of course the Bible talks of evil people as well as good people. Furthermore, the Bible shows us that even the good people were not good all the time either.

An analogy might help here. Someone might say, "you cannot admire American heroes. Look for example at John Wilkes Booth, who shot Abraham Lincoln." Well, we can read how John Wilkes Booth played a significant role in American history, but he was no American hero.

Laban played a role in the history of Israel, but he was no hero either. The analogy of Booth might seem a bit

³⁷² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:27. ⁽¹⁾T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 80. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 16, 36.

³⁷³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁷⁴ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:27 (slightly edited).

The Bible Query on, *Should we admire Laban?*

silly, since no one looks up to Booth as a hero, but bringing up Laban to criticize people who we should look up to in the Bible, (as an atheist actually did), seems out of place, too.

Bible Query; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15.

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Genesis 29:25–27 (an R. Crumb cartoon); from [SavageMinds.org](#); accessed August 12, 2017.

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When Jacob came in to complain to Laban, I believe that he had a ready explanation. He knew that Jacob was an honorable man, and depended upon his honor in order for his scheme to work.



Jacob seems to have deceived his father, received a second blessing from his father, and escaped the wrath of Esau unscathed. Now, here he is, having met his future wife, whom he loves. There seems to be nothing in Jacob's way.

Arthur W. Pink on Reaping What You Sow

In drawing this article to a close we would seek to expand briefly what seems to us to be the outstanding principle in the scripture we have just examined, namely, the principle of Divine retribution. **"Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same"** (Job 4:8). In Laban's treatment of Jacob we see the deceiver deceived! This principle that **whatever a man sows that shall he also reap** is written large across the pages of Holy Scripture and is strikingly, in fact, marvelously, illustrated again and again. Pharaoh, King of Egypt, gave orders that every son of the Hebrews should be drowned (Ex. 1:22), and so in the end he was drowned (Ex. 14:28). Korah caused a cleft in the Congregation of Israel (Num. 16:2, 3), and so God made a cleft in the earth to swallow him (Num. 16:30). Again, we read of one Adoni-bezek that he fled, **"and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-bezek said, Three score and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me!"** (Judg. 1:6, 7). Wicked Ahab caused Naboth to be slain and the dogs came and licked up his blood (1 Kings 21:19), accordingly we read that when Ahab died he was buried in Samaria, **"And one washed the chariot (in which he had been slain) in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood"** (1 Kings 22:38). King Asa caused the prophet to be placed in **"the house of the stocks"** (2 Chron. 16:10 R. V.), and accordingly we read later that God punished him by a disease in his feet (1 Kings 15:23). Haman prepared a gallows for Mordecai, but was hanged upon it himself (Esther 7:10). Saul of Tarsus stood by and consented to the stoning of Stephen, and later we read that at Lystra the Jews stoned Paul (Acts 14:19)- this is the more noticeable because Barnabas who was with him escaped!

Arthur W. Pink on Reaping What You Sow

But the most striking example of what men term "poetic justice" is the ease of Jacob himself. First, he deceived his father and was, in turn, deceived by his father-in-law: Jacob came the younger for the elder to deceive Isaac, and has the elder daughter of Laban given instead of the younger for a wife. Second, we may mark the same principle at work in Jacob's wife. In deceiving Jacob in the matter of Leah, Laban tricked Rachel; later we find Rachel tricking Laban (Gen. 31:35). Again, we note how a mercenary spirit actuated Jacob in buying the birthright from Esau for a mess of pottage; the sequel to this was the mercenary spirit in Laban which caused him to change Jacob's wages ten times (see Gen. 31:41). Finally we may remark, what is most striking of all, that Jacob deceived Isaac by allowing his mother to cover his hands and neck with "the skins of the kids of the goats" (Gen. 27:16), and later Jacob's sons deceived him by dipping the coat of Joseph in the blood of "a kid of the goats" (Gen. 37:31) and making him believe an evil beast had devoured him: note, too, that Jacob deceived Isaac in regard to his favorite son (Esau), and so was Jacob deceived in regard to his favorite son (Joseph).

(I do believe that Rachel was not tricked by her father, but guided into playing a part in his grand deception of Jacob. However, this is not clearly stated in Scripture.)

While it is true that very often the connection between evil-doing and its evil consequences is not so apparent as in the above examples, nevertheless, God has given us, and still gives us, sufficient proof so as to provide us with solemn warnings of the fact that He is not mocked, that He does observe the ways of men, that He hates sin wherever it is found, and that His righteous government requires that "every transgression and disobedience" shall receive "a just recompense of reward" (Heb. 2:2). This "just recompense of reward" is visited upon His own children here in this world, not sent in anger but in love, not in judgment but directed to the conscience and heart so as to bring them to judge themselves for their evil doing. With the wicked it is often otherwise. Frequently they flourish here as a green bay tree, but at the Great White Throne the books shall be opened and every one of them shall be "judged according to their works."

From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_30.htm accessed August 13, 2017 (slightly edited).

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And so does Jacob therefore and so he fulfills a week of this and so he gives to him Rachel his daughter to him for a woman.

Genesis
29:28

Jacob therefore did [what Laban said] and fulfilled [another] week of this [celebration]. Consequently, Laban [lit., he] gave to him Rachel his daughter for his wife.

Jacob therefore fulfilled the agreement to celebrate his wedding over the next seven days; and Laban gave Jacob Rachel as his wife.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so does Jacob therefore and so he fulfills a week of this and so he gives to him Rachel his daughter to him for a woman.

Targum of Onkelos

And Jakob did so, and fulfilled the seven days of the feast of Leah, and he gave him Rahel his daughter to wife.

Latin Vulgate

He yielded to his pleasure: and after the week was past, he married Rachel:...

Peshitta (Syriac)

And Jacob did so, and finished her wedding feast; and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to wife.

Septuagint (Greek) And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also.

Significant differences: The Latin has *was past* rather than *he fulfills*. The Syriac has *her wedding feast* rather than *a week of this*. The targum adds additional text.

The Syriac and the Greek give the gist of the final phrase, without translating the Hebrew literally.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And Jacob did so; and when the week was ended, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel for his wife.

Easy English Jacob did that. He finished the *feast for Leah's wedding. Then Laban gave Rachel to Jacob as his wife.

Easy-to-Read Version So Jacob did this and finished the week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

God's Word™ That's what Jacob did. He finished the week with Leah. Then Laban gave his daughter Rachel to him as his wife.

Good News Bible (TEV) Jacob agreed, and when the week of marriage celebrations was over, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

The Message Jacob agreed. When he'd completed the honeymoon week, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

NIRV So Jacob did it. He completed the week with Leah. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible So that is what Jacob did. He completed the celebratory week with this woman, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

Contemporary English V. At the end of the week of celebration, Laban let Jacob marry Rachel, and he gave her his servant woman Bilhah. Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah, but he had to work another seven years for Laban. The CEV has combined vv. 28–30 here.

New Century Version So Jacob did this, and when he had completed the week with Leah, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.

New Living Translation So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too.

Translation for Translators So that is what Jacob did. After the week of celebration was ended, Laban gave him his daughter, Rachel, to be his wife.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible So, that's what Jacob did. he served for seven [more years]. Then Laban also gave his daughter Rachel to be his woman.

Beck's American Translation Jacob did so; he finished the week with Leah. Then Laban's daughter Rachel also was given to him as his wife.

International Standard V So Jacob completed another seven years' work, and then Laban [Lit. he] gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

Names of God Bible That's what Jacob did. He finished the week with Leah. Then Laban gave his daughter Rachel to him as his wife.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Companion Bible	Jacob did so and filled that week. He gave him Rachel his daughter as woman. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled <i>Leah's week</i> : and he gave him Rachel is daughter to wife also. A popular mistake to suppose that Jacob did not marry Rachel till the end of the second seven years, for in the first seven were born seven sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, and Joseph. In the second seven, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Jacob therefore agreed to it, that he would serve thus, so he gave Rachel his daughter to him for a wife.
HCSB	And Jacob did just that. He finished the week of <i>celebration</i> , and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.
Unlocked Literal Bible	Jacob did so, and completed Leah's week. Then Laban gave him Rachel his daughter as his wife also.
Urim-Thummim Version	Jacob did so and finished her bridal week, and he gave him Rachel his daughter to marry also.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob did so, and he fulfilled his oath, and he gave him Rachel his daughter for him as a wife.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011)	Jacob did so. He finished the bridal week for the one, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.
Revised English Bible	Jacob agreed, and completed the seven days for Leah. Then Laban gave Jacob his daughter Rachel to be his wife; and to serve Rachel he gave his slave-girl Bilhah. V. 29 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov agreed to this, so he finished her week, and Lavan gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.
exeGesés companion Bible	And thus Yaaqov works and fulfills her week: and he also gives him Rachel his daughter to woman:...
Hebraic Transliteration	And Ya'akov (בַּקָּעִי) did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel (לֶרַח) his daughter to wife also.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And Jacob did so, and he completed the week of this one, and he gave his daughter Rachel to him as a wife.
Kaplan Translation	Jacob complied and completed the week of celebration for [Leah]. [Laban] then gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife. After the Torah was given, it was forbidden to marry two sisters (Leviticus 18:18).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov did so, and fulfilled her shvu'a; and he gave him Rachel his bat to be his isha also.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So Jacob complied and fulfilled [Leah's] week; then [Laban] gave him Rachel his daughter as his wife.
The Expanded Bible	So Jacob did this, and when he had completed the week ·with Leah [^L of this one], Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week; and he gave him Rachel, his daughter, to wife also. On either aide, sinful weaknesses had played a role and therefore Jacob's married life in more than one instance became a school of afflictions.
NET Bible®	Jacob did as Laban said [Heb "and Jacob did so." The words "as Laban said" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.]. When Jacob [Heb "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] completed Leah's bridal week [Heb "the seven of this one." The referent of "this one" has been

specified in the translation as Leah to avoid confusion with Rachel, mentioned later in the verse.], **Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife** [Heb "and he gave to him Rachel his daughter for him for a wife." The referent of the pronoun "he" (Laban) has been specified in the translation for clarity.].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] did so and he fulfilled this week and he gave to him Rahhel ^[Ewe] , his daughter, for him for a woman,...
Concordant Literal Version	And doing so is Jacob. And fulfilling is he this one's seven. And giving to him is Laban Rachel, his daughter, for his wife.
Context Group Version	And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week. And he gave him Rachel his daughter as woman { or wife }.
Darby Translation	And Jacob did so, and fulfilled the week [with] this one, and he gave him Rachel his daughter to be his wife.
English Standard Version	Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.
Green’s Literal Translation	And Jacob did so, and he fulfilled the week of this one, and he gave to him his daughter Rachel, to him for a wife.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And Jacob did even so, and passed out that week, and then he gave him Rahel his daughter to wife als.
Restored Holy Bible	Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel, his daughter, for a wife also.
Young’s Updated LT	And Jacob does so, and fulfills the week of this one, and he gives to him Rachel his daughter, to him for a wife.

The gist of this verse: Jacob continues with the week-long celebration of the wedding feast, and is given Rachel also as his wife.

Genesis 29:28a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
Ya‘ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ġuh-KOH ^{BV}]	supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #3290 BDB #784
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

Translation: **Jacob therefore did [what Laban said]...** Jacob was very much in love with Rachel, so he did what Laban had asked him to do.

What this is all about is, Jacob is face to face with a man who is as manipulative and crooked as he is—in fact, more so, and Laban is better at it.

Genesis 29:28b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mâlê' (מָלֵא) [pronounced <i>maw-LAY</i>]	<i>to fill, to make full, to fill up, to fulfill; to overflow; to satisfy; to complete, to accomplish, to confirm</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #4390 BDB #569
shâbûa' (שָׁבֻעַ) [pronounced <i>sha^b-VOO-ahg</i>]	<i>seven, period of seven (days or years), heptad, week; Feast of Weeks</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7620 BDB #988
There are 3 ways for this word to be spelled.			
zô'th (זֹתָ) [pronounced <i>zoth</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	feminine of singular zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260

Translation: ...and fulfilled [another] week of this [celebration]. It is easy to mistakenly believe that Jacob works for Laban another seven years. However, this week refers to the wedding celebration of Jacob and Leah. This is what Jacob fulfills. Laban has depended upon Jacob's character to come through on his agreements.

Genesis 29:28c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932

Genesis 29:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾîshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: [Consequently, Laban](#) [lit., *he*] [gave to him Rachel his daughter for his wife](#). Laban did fulfill his part of the bargain, and he did give Rachel to Jacob as his wife.

Now, the rule for wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs in a narrative is, action is presented in chronological order (or things are coterminous). So Jacob did what Laban asked him to—he fulfilled a week and *then* he was given Rachel as his wife. Given the children as they are born, and Rachel not having a child at first, this indicates that Jacob had Rachel as his wife a literal week after Leah. So the week here refers to the wedding week celebration; not the 7 years of work that Jacob will do for Laban.

We see the words *to him* twice in this part of the verse. The second time it occurs, ownership is implied (which is often what that phrase indicates). Since, instead of repeating *to him*, I used the word *his* instead.

Genesis 29:28 [Jacob therefore fulfilled the agreement to celebrate his wedding over the next seven days; and Laban gave Jacob Rachel as his wife.](#)

More Commentary on Jacob and Laban's Two Daughters

Matthew Henry: *Laban, to dispose of his two daughters without portions, and to get seven years' service more out of Jacob, thus imposes upon Jacob, and draws him into such a strait by his fraud, that (the matter not being yet settled, as it was afterwards by the divine law, Lev. 18:18, and more fully since by our Saviour, Matt. 19:5) he had some colourable reasons for marrying them both.*

Henry continues: *[Jacob] could not refuse Rachel, for he had espoused her; still less could he refuse Leah, for he had married her; and therefore Jacob must be content.*³⁷⁵

Bible Query: *Jacob worked for seven years, was given Leah, waited a week, and then was given Rachel at that time in return for the promise of another seven years.*³⁷⁶

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *It is evident that the marriage of both sisters took place nearly about the same time, and that such a connection was then allowed, though afterwards prohibited (Lev. 18:18).*³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30 (slightly edited).

³⁷⁶ *Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:27.

³⁷⁷ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:28.

More Commentary on Jacob and Laban's Two Daughters

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob carries out his part of the bargain. He gives Leah due deference for the week of the marriage ceremony, and fulfils his responsibilities as a husband. Then he also marries Rachel. Leah's part was not a happy one for she knows it is her sister that Jacob wants, but she was used to the fact that a woman could be married off by her menfolk, and would accept her lot. She knew she could have done a lot worse. What grieved both her and Rachel was the particular way in which it was carried out so that neither of them received any financial benefit. Only a handmaid each. They felt that Laban had withheld from them some of their rights (see for this Gen. 31:14–16).*³⁷⁸

Clyde Francisco: *The trick of Laban when he substituted Leah for Rachel could not have been possible without Rachel's consent. Evidently she did not fear any competition from her less-favored sister, and welcomed the thought of her company back to Canaan.*³⁷⁹

James Burton Coffman adds to this: *The possibility of such a thing has led to all kinds of suppositions about how Rachel was deceived, persuaded to join the deceit, or physically restrained on the wedding night, etc., but the brief, powerful story stands unadorned with many of the details that would have satisfied our curiosity, and would have contributed nothing to all to what God revealed here.*

Coffman continues: *What happened to Jacob here was as mean and despicable a fraud as was ever perpetrated by one human being against another. One may only wonder if Jacob remembered the fraud that he and his mother had committed against Isaac. Did the remembrance of it lead to his rather meek acceptance of what Laban did to him? This time, "the heel-catcher" (the meaning of the name Jacob) was himself taken by the heel, the deceiver was deceived. Laban also, in turn, would learn the solemn truth that "as men sow, so shall they reap." Something else - it appears that for seven years, Jacob had lived above the devices of fraud and deception, but in the action here, Laban aroused the passion in Jacob's heart to return to the old ways, and would eventually find out that he had more than met his match in Jacob! Laban might have been doing fairly well, until he tricked Jacob! Within the span of two decades, Jacob would move out of Laban's territory, taking with him both of Laban's daughters as his wives, and all their children, who were doubtless dear to Laban, and the vast wealth which he had taken away from Laban. In this, Laban might have been able to read his "just recompense of reward."*³⁸⁰

Laban will always be remembered for this wicked scheme.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 29:28 [Jacob therefore fulfilled the agreement to celebrate his wedding over the next seven days; and Laban gave Jacob Rachel as his wife.](#)

Opinions on Jacob Marrying More than One Wife (Many Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *The taking of a second wife is well witnessed elsewhere, as is the later taking of slave-wives. But for the main wives there would be legal stipulations in the marriage contract, either written or oral and made in the presence of witnesses, preserving their position and relative freedom. The marrying by one man of two sisters was, however, later forbidden (Lev. 18:18).*³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁷⁹ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017. Burton cites The Teacher's Bible Commentary, p. 37.

³⁸⁰ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

³⁸¹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:26–27.

Opinions on Jacob Marrying More than One Wife (Many Commentators)

Matthew Henry: *The polygamy of the patriarchs was, in some measure, excusable in them, because, though there was a reason against it as ancient as Adam's marriage (Mal. 2:15), yet there was no express command against it; it was in them a sin of ignorance. It was not the product of any sinful lust, but for the building up of Israel, which was the good that Providence brought out of it; but it will by no means justify the like practice now, when God's will is plainly made known, that one man and one woman only must be joined together (1Cor. 7:2).*³⁸²

Keil and Delitzsch: *This bigamy of Jacob must not be judged directly by the Mosaic law, which prohibits marriage with two sisters at the same time (Lev. 18:18), or set down as incest (Calvin, etc.), since there was no positive law on the point in existence then. At the same time, it is not to be justified on the ground, that the blessing of God made it the means of the fulfilment of His promise, viz., the multiplication of the seed of Abraham into a great nation. Just as it had arisen from Laban's deception and Jacob's love, which regarded outward beauty alone, and therefore from sinful infirmities, so did it become in its results a true school of affliction to Jacob, in which God showed to him, by many a humiliation, that such conduct as his was quite unfitted to accomplish the divine counsels, and thus condemned the ungodliness of such a marriage, and prepared the way for the subsequent prohibition in the law.*³⁸³

Matthew Poole: *It was not so strange that Laban should give, as that Jacob should take, not only two wives, but two sisters to wife, which seems to be against the law of nature, and was expressly forbidden by God afterward, Lev. 18:18; though it be also true that God might dispense with his own institution, or permit such things in the patriarchs upon special reasons, which are not to be drawn into example.*³⁸⁴

Clarke: *Connections of this kind are now called incestuous; but it appears they were allowable in those ancient times. In taking both sisters, it does not appear that any blame attached to Jacob, though in consequence of it he was vexed by their jealousies. It was probably because of this that the law was made, Thou shalt not take a wife to her sister, to vex her, besides the other in her life-time. After this, all such marriages were strictly forbidden.*³⁸⁵

Gill: *The marrying of two sisters was forbidden by the law of Moses, Lev. 18:18; and polygamy was not allowed of in later times, and yet both were dispensed with in times preceding; and there seems to be an overruling Providence in this affair, which oftentimes brings good out of evil, since the Messiah was to spring from Leah, and not Rachel.*³⁸⁶

From Bible Query:

Q: In Gen 29:28, why did Jacob marry two sisters, since Lev 18:18 forbids marrying two sisters while both are alive?

A: Leviticus 18:18 was a part of the Mosaic Law, which was given over 400 years after Jacob married his wives. Certainly one could not demand Jacob obey a law he had not heard, and God had not commanded them yet.³⁸⁷

³⁸² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30. I replaced Henry's words *the church* with *Israel*.

³⁸³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:27–30.

³⁸⁴ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁸⁵ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁸⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

³⁸⁷ *Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:28.

Commentators, over the years, have gotten pretty nutty on this topic. Matthew Henry gives this example: *Dr. Lightfoot makes Leah and Rachel to be figures of the two churches, the Jews under the law and the Gentiles under the gospel: the younger the more beautiful, and more in the thoughts of Christ when he came in the form of a servant; but he other, like Leah, first embraced: yet in this the allegory does not hold, that the Gentiles, the younger, were more fruitful (Gal. 4:27).*³⁸⁸ There were never two churches; there was Israel and now we have the church universal. These a separate entities.

It ought to be noted that, genetically speaking, those coming from Jacob would be of a stronger stock given that he will have, in all, 4 wives (2 wives and 2 surrogates). Furthermore, there was nothing which prevented women from outside the Jacobian bloodline to marry into the Jewish family.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

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

Most of the time, when we have a narrative with wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, we have a series of actions which are consecutive. However, these actions can also be coterminous. How can we tell?

V. 28 has 3 wâw consecutives (and wâw consecutive is literally translated *and so*) and 3 imperfect verbs. The first is the verb *to do*; the second is the verb *to fulfill*. These are essentially the same action, but viewed in a different way. So Jacob *does* what Laban required and Jacob *fulfills* the conditions necessary to marry Rachel. Since these actions are coterminous, then Laban giving Rachel to him as his wife is not necessarily done *after* the requirements are fulfilled. Rachel can be given to him as his wife *while* Jacob begins to fulfill the requirements of their marriage in working for Laban. Imperfect verbs can be used to describe actions which are coterminous. BDB allows for the wâw consecutive to be translated *when* on occasion.

Laban knows that Rachel is more beautiful than Leah (this is an assumption many make). And Jacob, from the start, was in love with Rachel. So Laban has to figure out how does he marry off both daughters and get the maximum amount of work from this man. He can get 7 years of work easily for Rachel. But he cannot get this for Leah. However, he cannot vary these terms for a deal later on. What Laban does not want is a daughter who will live with him for the rest of his life—another dependant. Laban wants to collect on his daughters; he does not want to lose money on one daughter and gain money on the other daughter. That is not good business.

Therefore, Laban's ideal solution is to cheat Jacob, collect the bed sheets so that he is trapped in the marriage, and then to propose a second marriage (the collection of the bed sheets is a supposition on my part, but a practice of that era).

Chiseler Jacob has been out-chiseled by his smarter and more devious Uncle Laban. Laban blind-sided him. Jacob was so much in love that he was blind to what Laban might do to him. He just assumed that they had made a deal and that Laban would stick to it. It never occurs to Jacob that his own uncle would con him—but he did.

Do you see this poetic justice? All of his life, Jacob has been cheating others in order to get what he wants, and he learned this from his mother. But here, he gets schooled by his mother's brother, who is every bit the con-man that Jacob is, and more so.

Stephen Armstrong: *Jacob fooled himself into thinking he was in control of his own destiny and that's Jacob's essential problem...a willingness to trust in flesh rather than rest in God's promises.*³⁸⁹

³⁸⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:15–30.

³⁸⁹ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

We learn things the easy way and the hard way. Learning Bible doctrine and allowing that to guide us through life—that's the easy way. Butting heads with people and situations that reveal to us our own moral failings is the hard way.

And so gives Laban to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his maid to her for a maid. Genesis 29:29 **Laban also gave Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his maid, to her for a maid.**

(Laban also gave Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his maid, to her for a maid.)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so gives Laban to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his maid to her for a maid.
Targum of Onkelos	And Laban gave to Rahel his daughter Bilhah, <u>whom his concubine bare him</u> , and he delivered her unto her to be her handmaid.
Latin Vulgate	To whom her father gave Bala, for her servant.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban gave Bilhah his maid to Rachel his daughter to be her maid.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter as a maid to her.

Significant differences: The Latin is missing a great deal of text. There is additional text in the targum.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban gave Rachel his servant-girl Bilhah to be her waiting-woman.
Easy English	(Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be Rachel's maid.)
Good News Bible (TEV)	(Laban gave his slave woman Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid.)

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Laban had given his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her servant.
New Life Bible	Laban also took Bilhah, a woman who served him, and gave her to his daughter Rachel, to serve her.
Translation for Translators	Laban gave his slave girl, Bilhah, to Rachel to be her maid/servant.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Laban gave his servant BalLa to be his daughter's handmaid.
International Standard V	Laban also gave his woman servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maidservant.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	To this Jacob agreed, and when the week was over he made Rachel his wife; the waiting-maid her father gave to Rachel was called Bala. V. 28 is included for context.
Today's NIV	Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	Laban gave his daughter Rachel his handmaid Bilhah to be her maid.
NIV – UK	Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his slave girl, to be her female slave.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011) Laban assigned his maidservant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maidservant.
 New Jerusalem Bible (Laban gave his slave-girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her slave.)

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Kaplan Translation To his daughter Rachel, Laban gave his servant Bilhah [Some say that she was Zilpah's sister (Yov'loth 28:9; Tzavaath Naphtali 1:11). Others say that both Bilhah and Zilpah were also Laban's daughters (Targum Yonathan on 29:24,29; Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer 36).] as a handmaid.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Lavan gave to his bat Rachel Bilhah his shifchah to be her shifchah.
 The Scriptures 1998 And Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Raḥēl as a female servant.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible (Laban gave his slave girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her ·servant [L'slave girl].)

Kretzmann's Commentary And Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter, Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her maid. This fact is also expressly stated on account of later developments.

NET Bible® (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant [Heb "and Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his female servant, for her for a servant."].)

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Lavan ^[White] gave Rahhel ^[Ewe], his daughter, Bilhah ^[Wear out] his maid to her for a maid,...

Concordant Literal Version And giving is Laban Bilhah, his maid, to Rachel, his daughter, for her maid.

English Standard Version (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)

Green's Literal Translation And Laban gave his slave-girl Bilhah to his daughter Rachel, to her for a slave-girl.

World English Bible Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his handmaid, to be her handmaid.

Young's Updated LT And Laban gives to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his maid-servant, for a maid-servant to her.

The gist of this verse: Laban also gave Rachel a personal servant.

Genesis 29:29

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nāthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
Lābân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
lāmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 29:29			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Bil ^h hâh (בִּלְהָא) [pronounced bihl-HAW]	<i>terror, dread, destruction; troubled; timid; transliterated Bilhah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1090 BDB #117
Wenstrom and Constable suggest that her name means <i>carefree</i> . ³⁹⁰ Smith says <i>timid, bashful</i> . ³⁹¹ Easton suggests: <i>faltering; bashful</i> . ³⁹²			
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced shif-KHAW]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced shif-KHAW]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046

Translation: Laban also gave Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his maid, to her for a maid. Laban also gave a maid to his daughter Rachel. One of the reasons that this is so important is, Bilhah will be the mother to several tribes of Israelites (as will Rachel, Leah and Leah's maid).

This appears to be Laban's wedding present. Notice that he uses and gives people. They are not given land, sheep, or other sorts of things (at least, not that we are told about).

Bilhah will stand in as a surrogate mother on behalf of Rachel later on in their marriage. Rachel will have no children, so she will call upon Bilhah to receive the seed of Jacob on her behalf. Two sons will be born to Bilhah, the surrogate mother: Dan and Naphtali (Gen. 30:3–8). Also, later on, there will be an illicit relationship between Bilhah and Reuben (Gen. 35:22).

³⁹⁰ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 457) accessed August 10, 2017. Constable from <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

³⁹¹ Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Bilhah.

³⁹² M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: Bilhah.

There Heritage Bible: *Jacob means Heel Catcher or Supplanter. Israel means He Will Rule As God. Leah means Weary. Rachel means A Good Traveler. Zilpah, Fragrant Trickling. Bilhah, Timid.*³⁹³

Barnes: *Laban gives a handmaid to each of his daughters. To Rebekah his sister had been given more than one [in] Gen. 24:61.*³⁹⁴

Keil and Delitzsch: *To each of these Laban gave one maid-servant to wait upon her; less, therefore, than Bethuel gave to his daughter (Gen. 24:61).*³⁹⁵

Genesis 29:29 And Laban gave Bilhah his slave woman to his daughter Rachel, to be her handmaid.

The wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs continue now from vv. 28–32a. Since we have reason to believe that these are concurrent actions rather than consecutive from the beginning of this set of verbs, we may consider the rest in a similar way.

If Jacob recorded that he worked for 7 years for Rachel, but it only seemed like a few days to him (which he did), then logically, he records everything else here. He is upset, and when you are upset, you mix everything together. What happened over the next 7 years was more of a blur. Jacob just throws it all together. This is how a person who is upset remembers things; they are all mixed together.

You will note how everything is made equal. 7 years for one daughter; 7 years for another. Leah gets a handmaid (personal servant girl) so Rachel also gets a handmaid.

And so he goes in also unto Rachel and so he loves Rachel from Leah. And so he serves with him yet seven years another.

Genesis
29:30

He goes in unto Rachel and he loves Rachel more than Leah. Therefore, he served with him yet another seven years.

Jacob then had relations with Rachel and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He served Laban yet another seven years for Rachel.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he goes in also unto Rachel and so he loves Rachel from Leah. And so he serves with him yet seven years another.
Targum of Onkelos	And he went in also unto Rahel; and he loved Rahel also more than Leah. And he served with him <u>for her</u> yet seven other years.
Latin Vulgate	<u>And having at length obtained the marriage he wished for, he preferred the love of the latter before the former,</u> and served with him other seven years.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he went in unto Rachel also, and he loved Rachel also more than Leah, and served with Laban another seven years.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he went in to Rachel; and he loved Rachel more than Leah; and he served him seven other years.

Significant differences: The first two phrases in the Latin are quite weird. The targum adds some words in the third and final phrase.

³⁹³ From [The Heritage Bible \(web archive\)](#) (footnote) accessed November 14, 2014.

³⁹⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:25–30.

³⁹⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:27–30.

The Hebrew word translated *from* can also be translated *more than*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob took Rachel as his wife, and his love for her was greater than his love for Leah; and he went on working for Laban for another seven years.
Easy English	So Jacob had sex with Rachel too. He loved Rachel more than he loved Leah. And he worked for Laban for 7 more years.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Jacob had sexual relations with Rachel also. And Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.
God's Word™	Jacob slept with Rachel too. He loved Rachel more than Leah. So he worked for Laban another seven years.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob had intercourse with Rachel also, and he loved her more than Leah. Then he worked for Laban another seven years.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob slept with Rachel too. He loved Rachel more than Leah. So he worked for Laban another seven years.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

New Berkeley Version	Jacob went in to Rachel, too [It seems that Rachel was given him at the start rather than at the close of that second contract], and he loved Rachel more than Leah; so he worked for him seven more years.
New Century Version	So Jacob had sexual relations with Rachel also, and Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.
New Living Translation	So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years.
Translation for Translators	Jacob had sex [EUP] with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than he loved Leah. And Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Thereafter, [Jacob had sex with] Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. that's why [he had been willing] to serve him for seven more years.
International Standard V	Jacob [Lit. he] also married Rachel, since he loved her. He served Laban another full seven years' work for Rachel.
Names of God Bible	Jacob slept with Rachel too. He loved Rachel more than Leah. So he worked for Laban another seven years.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	So, at last, he won the bride he had longed for, and loved her better than he had loved her sister; meanwhile, he spent another seven years in Laban's service.
Today's NIV	Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	He also came into Rachel. He also loved Rachel <i>over</i> Leah, and served with him still another seven years.
Conservapedia	Jacob also came to Rachel, and also loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for seven more years.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	He therefore went to Rachel, and he loved Rachel completely, and served to him other seven years afterwards.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah and served with him yet another seven years.
NIV – UK	Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Unlocked Literal Bible	So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, but he loved Rachel more than Leah. So Jacob served Laban for seven more years.
Urim-Thummim Version	And he sexually possessed Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah and worked with him for another seven years.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he came to Rachel too, and he loved Rachel over Leah; and he worked alongside him again, for an additional seven years.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	Jacob then consummated his marriage with Rachel also, and he loved her more than Leah. Thus he remained in Laban's service another seven years.
New American Bible (2011)	Jacob then consummated his marriage with Rachel also, and he loved her more than Leah. Thus he served Laban another seven years. Dt 21:15-17.
New Jerusalem Bible	So Jacob slept with Rachel too, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked for Laban for another seven years.
New RSV	So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He served Laban [Heb <i>him</i>] for another seven years.
Revised English Bible	Jacob lay with Rachel also; he loved her rather than Leah, and he worked for Laban for a further seven years.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	So not only did Ya'akov go in and sleep with Rachel, but he also loved Rachel more than Le'ah. Then he served Lavan another seven years.
The Complete Tanach	And he came also to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah; and he worked with him yet another seven years.

yet another seven years: (Gen. Rabbah 70:20) Scripture compares the other ones to the first ones. Just as [he worked for him during] the first ones faithfully, so [did he work for him during] the other ones faithfully, although he (Laban) had dealt with him deceitfully.

Kaplan Translation	[Jacob] thus also married Rachel, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He worked for [Laban] another seven years.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served him yet sheva shanim acherot.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Jacob lived with Rachel also as his wife, and he loved Rachel more than Leah and served [Laban] another seven years [for her].
The Expanded Bible	So Jacob had sexual relations with [went to] Rachel also, and Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. That bigamy, polygamy, is a perversion of God's original order, since marriage is to be a monogamy, the union of one man and one woman, appears even here, for it was impossible for Jacob to distribute his affections with impartiality. In spite of the fact, therefore, that the blessing of God upon Abraham made use also of these means to make of the descendants of Abraham a great nation, it is clear, nevertheless, that much of the subsequent trouble was due to this unnatural arrangement.
NET Bible®	Jacob [Heb "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] had marital relations [Heb "went in also to Rachel." The expression "went in to" in this context refers to sexual intercourse, i.e., the consummation of the marriage.] with Rachel as well. He loved Rachel more than Leah, so he worked for

Laban [Heb "him"; the referent (Laban) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] **for seven more years** [Heb "and he loved also Rachel, more than Leah, and he served with him still seven other years."].

The Voice

Then Jacob also slept with Rachel, and he clearly loved Rachel more than Leah. As agreed, he served Laban for another seven years.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and he also came to Rahhel ^[Ewe] and he also loved Rahhel ^[Ewe] rather than Le'ah ^[Weary] and he served with him yet again another seven years,...
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is he, moreover, to Rachel, and, moreover, loving is he Rachel more than Leah. And serving is he with him further another seven years.
Context Group Version	And he went in also to Rachel, and he also gave allegiance to Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet another seven years.
Green’s Literal Translation	And he also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with him yet another seven years.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	So lay he by Rahel also, and loved Rahel more than Lea, and served him yet seven years more.
NASB	So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel [Gen 29:17, 18] more than Leah, and he served with Laban [Lit him] for another seven years [Gen 31:41].
New King James Version	Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.
Young’s Updated LT	And he goes in also unto Rachel, and he also loves Rachel more than Leah; and he serves with him yet seven other years.

The gist of this verse: Jacob had served an additional 7 years to take Rachel as his bride.

Many times in a narrative, when there are wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, a series of consecutive actions are occurring.

Jacob took Rachel as his wife before working the additional seven years for Laban.

Genesis 29:30a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
bôw’ (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #935 BDB #97
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover	adverb	Strong’s #1571 BDB #168
’el (אֶל) [pronounced eh/]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong’s #413 BDB #39
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	ewe and is transliterated Rachel	feminine proper noun	Strong’s #7354 BDB #932

Translation: *He goes in unto Rachel...* Here, Jacob consummates his marriage with Rachel. It is not clear when this occurs. Although we would expect this to occur *after* he works an additional 7 years, that is not be the case. In the order of the narrative, Jacob consummates his marriage to Rachel before working the additional 7 years for Laban.

Genesis 29:30b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âhêb (אָהַב) [pronounced <i>aw-HAYV^B</i>]	<i>to desire, to breathe after; to love; to delight in; human love [for another] [familial, sexual]; human love [desire, appetite] for [food, drink, sleep, wisdom]; human love [for, to God]; God's love [toward men, people of Israel, righteousness]; to like</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #157 BDB #12
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521

Translation: *...and he loves Rachel more than Leah.* Throughout this entire situation, Jacob has loved Rachel and not Leah. Here, there is at least a suggestion that he had some feelings for Leah. It does not tell us that he *loved Rachel and hated Leah*. Logically, based upon this verse, Jacob loved both women; but he clearly preferred Rachel.

If Jacob has any empathy at all, he may recognize that Leah is just a much a victim of Laban's scheme as he is (although she participated in it). The girls were simply obeying their father.

Although Jacob was clearly in love with Rachel, he discovers in time—even if he has given Leah the benefit of the doubt—that she is really not the woman for him. He continues to prefer Rachel.

J. Vernon McGee: *You may be thinking, Well, since this is in the Bible, God must approve of polygamy. No, God does not approve of everything that is in the Bible — that may startle you. For instance, God didn't approve of the devil's lie. God didn't approve of David's sin, and He judged him*

for it. But the record of both events is inspired — literally, God-breathed. In other words, God said through the writer, Moses, exactly what He wanted to say. The thing that is inspired is the record of the words God gave to Moses to write down in this Book we call the Bible. In Genesis 29 God gave an accurate record: Jacob did have two wives, and it tells us the way it came about. That is where inspiration comes in. It does not mean that God approved of everything that is recorded in the Bible. Certainly God disapproved of Jacob's having more than one wife.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁶ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Gen. 29); accessed August 13, 2017.

Leah & Rachel & Jacob (Bible Journaling); from [Blog spot](#); accessed August 11, 2017.



GENESIS 29:28

The Story of

LEAH & RACHEL

So many takeaways

God selects what man rejects. He chooses the lunchosen.

Rejection - is often a Redirection.

Being beautiful on the outside doesn't mean it's fruitful on the inside.

Pastor Steve Furtick
Elevation Church
#deathtosefie
Sermon 4

28 Jacob did so, and completed her week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29 (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) 30 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

Jacob's Children

31 When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. 32 And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, 1 for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." 33 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. 2 34 Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. 4 Then she ceased bearing.

30 When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" 2 Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" 3 Then she said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf; that even I may have children 6 through her." 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife and Jacob went in to her. 5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. 7 7 Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings 8 I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali. 9

9 When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 And Leah said, "Good fortune has come!" so she called his name Gad. 10 12 Leah's servant Zilpah bore

1 Reuben means See, a son 2 Simeon sounds like the Hebrew for heard on my knees 6 Hebrew be built up, which sounds like the Hebrew for wages, or hire 13 Zebulun sounds like the Hebrew for honor 14 Joseph

The Real Housewives of Haran (Bible Journaling); from [Pining](#); accessed August 20, 2017.



It is possible for this to occur *after* or *coterminous with* the previous section of this verse.

Genesis 29:30c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
‘âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>ġaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>ġeem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
‘ôwd (וְעוֹד) [pronounced <i>ġohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
sheba‘ (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>she^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>seven</i>	numeral masculine construct	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
shânîym (שָׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>shaw-NEEM</i>]	<i>years</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040
‘achêr (אַחֵר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHEHR</i>]	<i>another, following, next; other as well as foreign, alien, strange</i>	feminine plural adjective/substantive	Strong's #312 BDB #29
This repeats a portion of v. 27.			

Translation: *Therefore, he served with him yet another seven years.* Jacob, upset over what has happened, takes Rachel as his wife—which means that he has marital relations with her—and then works the seven years to take her.

Genesis 29:30 *And he also went in to Rachel. He also loved Rachel more than Leah, and served with him still seven more years.*

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob plants his seed in both women as custom required, but his heart was with Rachel. And it needed to be for he had to serve another seven years for her.*³⁹⁷

Sailhamer: *Jacob was getting what he deserved. In this light the seven extra years that Jacob had to serve Laban appear as a repayment for his treatment of Esau. By calling such situations to the attention of the reader, the writer begins to draw an important lesson from these narratives. Jacob's deceptive schemes for obtaining the blessing did not meet with divine approval. Through Jacob's*

³⁹⁷ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:30.

*plans God's will had been accomplished; but the writer is intent on pointing out, as well, that the schemes and tricks were not of God's design.*³⁹⁸

Again, we have a series of wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs, in the order that you see them above. So, if taken as consecutive actions, Jacob consummates his marriage to Rachel; he loves Rachel more than Leah; and Jacob then serves Laban for another 7 years.

I am assuming, because of this verse and some others, that Laban figured out that he ought to give Rachel to Jacob almost immediately. He did not want Jacob to suddenly disappear, taking Rachel with him, leaving him with a daughter he could not get rid of. And he figured that Jacob, if he promised to work for Rachel, that he would keep to this promise.

Furthermore, Laban is not paying Jacob for this work. Jacob is working for the daughters. He receives room and board; but Jacob has limited means by which to run off. Until the second 7 years are complete, Jacob will have no money or negotiable wealth put aside.

However, given that both Jacob and Rachel were cheated on this deal, who knows if they might plan something together, and take much of Laban's property (his flock) with them.

Therefore, I have made the assumption here that Laban gave Rachel to Jacob in marriage early, as he believed that would cause the fewest problems. That would likely keep Jacob on the ranch, working off his debt to Laban.

Because Jacob has not made any money yet, he is hardly in a position to make a run for it, with or without Rachel. Depending upon Jacob's personal character—which was actually superior to Laban's—Laban was fairly certain that Jacob would not desert Leah. So, there is no concern by Laban that any of this would blow up in his face. Laban is depending upon Jacob's honor and integrity at this point.

We have studied many Biblical narratives where there is key information which is missing. Laban deceives Jacob and Jacob ends up marrying both sisters, Leah and Rachel. What the Bible does not tell us is, *what were Leah and Rachel's roles in this deception?*

This is the speculative conclusion I have come to, after spending several years with this chapter (I began writing this in 2014 and will complete the chapter in 2017). I have already alluded to this series of events; and this is the entire doctrine. Insofar as I know, this is a unique approach.

The Kukis Theory on the Steps to Jacob's Marriage to Two Sisters

1. We are clearly told that Jacob was deceived; and that Laban did the deceiving. That is a simple fact.
2. The real question is, how involved were Leah and Rachel in this process?
3. No doubt, there is the possibility that Laban misled his daughters as well.
 - 1) He could have told Leah that Jacob wanted to marry her.
 - 2) He could have told Rachel that Jacob had changed his mind and wanted Leah.
 - 3) Laban could have restricted Jacob's contact with his two daughters until the wedding (which he probably did).
 - 4) The big problem here is, if Leah said anything on their wedding night, it would stand to reason that Jacob would recognize her voice; or, at bare minimum, recognize that she is not Rachel.
 - 5) This is only one possible way that Laban could have deceived his own daughters.
4. There are several problems with Laban deceiving his own daughters:
 - 1) The biggest problem is, Rachel would spend much of the rest of her life resenting her father and resenting Leah if she married Jacob and found out that she had been lied to.
 - 2) In some circumstances, Rachel may have borne a very longtime anger towards her sister, to say nothing of jealousy, which would have been nuclear (the example of Sarah and Hagar comes to

³⁹⁸ From <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017. Constable cites Sailhamer, "Genesis," p199.

The Kukis Theory on the Steps to Jacob's Marriage to Two Sisters

- mind).
- 3) If Laban deceives Rachel, Leah and Jacob, there is a lot of moving parts to keep under control; even if he restricted their contact, he would be risking (1) that they would make contact and figure out what he was doing; and/or (2) that Jacob and Rachel would just run off together, not trusting Laban at all.
 5. Rachel and Leah will exhibit some normal jealousy and resentment towards one another in this polygamous arrangement. We would expect that; polygamy is not the best arrangement for any 3 people. However, at the end of 20 years, they seem to be functioning as a team, actually as a unified trio.
 6. Therefore, given that Laban tells Jacob, "It is the custom of this land that the older daughter marry first;" I think we should accept that custom at face value—that it is real and Laban is not making it up.
 7. If that is a real custom, then Laban can take his daughters aside and say, "No matter what, Leah must be married before Rachel; and you both know that." He could have told this to his daughters in year one of Jacob's labor.
 8. Each year as the marriage grows closer, Laban would remind his daughters, "I cannot allow this marriage unless Leah is married first." Laban knows the obvious solutions:
 - 1) Leah must find a man to be married to before Rachel's marriage.
 - 2) Or, Leah and Rachel must both marry Jacob.
 9. Laban, who probably knew all of these configurations from the very beginning, had 7 years for his daughters to come up with a solution. Since Leah did not marry anyone during that time, that left the only possibility that Jacob marry both women.
 10. Laban is a brilliant man. He does not even have to suggest that one of those two options occur. He can simply state, "Leah must be married first. What solutions can either of you offer?" They will have 6 or 7 years to think about this; and both women will come up with only those two alternatives.
 11. So, the easiest solution, with the least number of moving parts (that is, the least number of people deceived), is for Leah and/or Rachel to suggest, "If Leah is not married by 7 years, then we will both marry Jacob."
 12. Laban would get what he wanted; and the only person he needed to keep in the dark was Jacob. His own daughters would be a party to this deception.
 13. This would have been a brilliant plan; particularly because, this approach would provide for the most stable polygamous marriage. If Leah and/or Rachel had been deceived, that in itself could cause a great rift in their marriage—and Laban does not want that. He wants both women being supported by another man; and he wants 14 years of service.
 14. Even though Jacob suggests himself 7 years of service for marriage; it is possibly (in fact, likely, in my opinion) that he did not just snatch the figure 7 years out of the air. He worked for Laban a month; Laban figured out what Jacob wanted from the beginning; and it would not have been difficult for Laban to broadcast that 7 year figure to Jacob. That figure could have come from an employee (s) of Laban's (who were told to suggest such a figure to Jacob if he asked). Even Rachel could have suggested it.

After reading the commentary of no fewer than 50 scholars, I think that this best explains what went on, which is not a part of the Biblical record.

Even though a portion of this is based on the Biblical text and a portion is speculative; I simply have the kind of mind that wants to work through some of the unwritten details. The idea is, find a reasonable explanation which stands up and supports this and subsequent chapters which reference this marriage.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

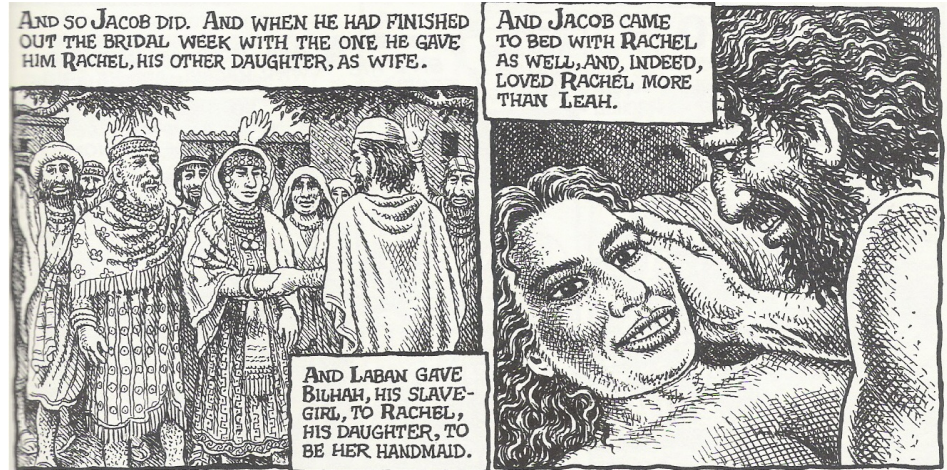
Stephen Armstrong: God never endorses multiple marriages. The results of multiple marriages is always portrayed as a negative influence in the family and not something God desires. In fact later in the Law in Leviticus, marriages to sisters is specifically prohibited. Yet these marriages are considered legitimate and binding. The fact that they are not to God's liking and they bring negative

consequences doesn't mean they aren't real. Every time these men make a marriage commitment, they are bound by that commitment, even though it brings negative consequences.³⁹⁹

Let me add to Armstrong's comments that, a polygamous marriage did not violate any stated laws by God up to this point in time. Quite obviously, since God brought one man and one woman together at the very beginning, a polygamous marriage was not God's best.

Genesis 29:28–30 (an R. Crumb cartoon); from SavageMinds.org; accessed August 12, 2017.

These circumstances put Jacob into a difficult position. He loves Rachel; he finds himself married to Leah, by deception. Laban quickly offers Rachel to him on credit. Jacob accepts his offer.



Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Ron Snider takes the approach that this custom was something that Laban made up.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 29:26–30 **But Laban said, "it is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the first-born. 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." And Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. So he went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with laban for another seven years.**

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:26–30

1. Laban offers a weak and pitiful excuse for his actions, claiming that this was the custom of the region, and he must comply.
2. If this was the custom of the region, isn't it a little strange that Jacob had not heard of it during his seven years with Laban?
3. Even if this was true, which it obviously was not, the time to inform Jacob would have been before now.
4. This was clearly an act of malicious deception, and Laban now attempts to justify his actions by blaming society.
5. Laban is well aware of Jacob's love for Rachel, and he knows that Jacob is at his mercy.
6. He brazenly suggests that Jacob poses as husband and wife with Leah and fulfill the customary wedding week with her.
7. At the end of the week Laban graciously states that he will give Jacob his daughter Rachel.
8. He takes advantage of the situation and wrangles another seven years service out of Jacob, who Laban knows is desperately in love with Rachel.
9. This is precisely what Jacob had done to Esau, when he had him at a disadvantage.
10. He pressed his advantage when he had Esau in a moment of weakness, and Laban does the same thing.
11. Jacob certainly knew that if he rejected Leah, which was certainly his prerogative, she would be publicly

³⁹⁹ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:26–30

- humiliated.
12. He likely knew that Laban could withhold Rachel, and so he consents to this despicable plan.
 13. He receives his second wife eight days after the first.
 14. He consummates his marriage immediately with Rachel, and now is a bigamist, although unwillingly.
 15. Moses includes the note here that Rachel was given a female servant just as Leah had been in vs 24.
 16. vs 30 states what one should already be able to figure out, the fact that Jacob was not nearly as interested in Leah as in Rachel.
 17. Jacob, in spite of the present state of affairs, fulfills his word and works for Laban another seven years.
 18. Like the events of chap 27, none involved here can be deemed guiltless.
 19. Laban was obviously a despicable man who was far more concerned about money than his daughters happiness.
 20. Leah was fearful of not finding her RM and so consented to this underhanded scheme.
 21. Jacob agrees to stay married to Leah and become a bigamist due to his fear of losing Rachel.
 22. Rachel is so in love with Jacob that she wanted him at all costs, including having to share him.
 23. The seeds of Jacob's past actions are beginning to bear their awful fruit.

I normally don't disagree with Ron Snider. However, when it comes to Jacob's marriage to Leah, I don't think he had a choice. He could suddenly leave, and leave Leah behind—but that was his only real choice regarding Leah at this time. And he would be leaving behind a male child. So, even that choice was not really a choice.

Jacob chooses to be a bigamist. He could certainly have decided not to marry Rachel. Given Jacob's love for her, obviously, he would not have made the choice to be married to Leah only.

I personally believe that Rachel was aware of all that was happening. However, she accepted it on two conditions: (1) custom dictated the Leah must be married first; (2) she was submitting to the authority of her father. On this point of disagreement, it is based on speculation alone.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 29:21–30 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her."

Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her. Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah!

And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?"

But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. 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."

Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:21–30: Jacob Gets Two Wives

1. In this scene we have the wedding of Jacob at the end of the seven years of service as per the arrangement between him and Laban.
2. At the conclusion of the specified time of service Jacob demands his wage in an abrupt fashion (v.21).

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:21–30: Jacob Gets Two Wives

3. Maybe over the seven years he gained some insight into Laban's dealings with others and his love of monetary gain.
4. He had no inkling that he was about to fall victim to Laban's machinations.
5. For seven years Jacob had contemplated this moment when he could have Rachel as bride and wife.
6. Jacob had spent his life chaste and he had waited longer than most and he was consumed with the idea of enjoying Rachel sexually (e.g., "that I may go in to her").
7. Laban's response was to immediately sponsor a wedding feast and celebration (v. 22).
8. A number of guests were invited.
9. Laban for his part had planned something very sinister and cold hearted.
10. Not only was his sin against Jacob it was directed at his two daughters as well.
11. We do not know how he manipulated his two daughters to be party to his evil scheme.
12. Perhaps they were told that Jacob would be denied his prize if they did not cooperate.
13. If Leah was unattractive he could have told her that this was her best chance of getting a husband.
14. Rachel was told that this was her only chance of getting Jacob.
15. So the two daughters were denied their rights by a father who put gain above love for his children.
16. We do not know what kind of a ceremony was customary.
17. Normally there was a reading of a marriage contract.
18. The bride was probably veiled.
19. The brevity of the account of the wedding proper leads us to suspect that there was nothing but a feast with the idea that the bride would be delivered to the bridal chamber by the father of the bride.
20. The substitute bride was Leah who was taken to Jacob's tent under cover of the darkness of night (v. 23).
21. Jacob then arrived expectantly at the place of the bridal chamber (e.g. "and he went in to her").
22. Jacob did so with zero expectations that anything was amiss.
23. The bridal gift given by the bride's father in this instance was Laban's maid one Zilpah the narrator tells us in v. 24.
24. The main subject of the narrative resumes with the shocking revelation that the woman in Jacob's bed "was Leah!" (v. 25).
25. After all those years of expectation Jacob discovers that the woman in his bed is the unattractive older sister and not his heart's desire, Rachel (v. 25a).
26. Jacob experiences for the first time what it felt like to be horribly deceived.
27. He confronts his uncle with the trickery asking his three interrelated questions (v. 25b).
28. The first question simply draws attention to the evil deed: "What is this you have done to me?"
29. The second question reminds Laban of their agreement: "Was it not for Rachel that I served you?"
30. The third question demands an answer: "Why then have you deceived me?"
31. "Why" is accusatory (cf. 3:13 God to Eve; 12:18, Pharaoh to Abraham; 26:10, Abimelech to Isaac).
32. Jacob accuses Laban of the sin of deceit, something Jacob had inflicted upon his blind father for gain.
33. Laban does not respond to Jacob's anguished query, but rather offers a lame rationale for the substitution (v. 26).
34. Appealing to a local custom is morally indefensible.
35. So was Jacob's scheming to gain the patriarchal blessing of succession.
36. What goes around comes around is the poetic justice that befell Jacob.
37. Laban's language about the younger and the firstborn must have aroused in Jacob a memory that was about seven years ago.
38. Laban had been planning this scheme for some time as the time for Jacob's marriage drew near.
39. Laban's intent was to get rid of the unattractive daughter and trap Jacob into another seven years of free labor (v. 27).
40. He knew how much Jacob wanted Rachel and he played on that for all it was worth.
41. To lessen the pain of the arrangement he told Jacob that he could have his wage in advance (v. 27).
42. No second seven year service and no Rachel was the spot Laban put Jacob in.
43. The offer of Rachel in advance was as generous as Laban could muster.
44. Jacob was unwilling to opt out of the deal as he dearly wanted Rachel as his wife.
45. Jacob had no support from others and he had no visible means of support so he was trapped.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 29:21–30: Jacob Gets Two Wives

46. Laban's additional demands was that Jacob must "complete the week of this one" meaning he must fulfill the honeymoon with Leah!
47. That must have been a blessed event for the two of them!
48. However distasteful it was Jacob overtly "completed her week" and then he was given the woman he loved (v. 28).
49. Jacob got what he wanted but the circumstances were far less than they could have been.
50. God did not protect Jacob for this miserable experience as it was part of the plan to bring Jacob along spiritually.
51. As with Leah, Laban gives his younger daughter a personal maid, one Bilhah (v. 29).
52. The love story of Jacob and Rachel had a reasonably good start but it did not end in "happily ever after."
53. V. 30 hints at the underlying misery that clouded new family life.
54. "[Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah](#)" tells us that he overtly demonstrated who his favorite was.
55. There is no indication that Jacob was mean or cruel to Leah.
56. Jacob initial interest in Rachel was based on her great beauty.
57. So much was he taken by her that the first seven years "seemed like but a few days."
58. The second seven years were not so rosy, due to the strife and misery in the household.
59. This marriage, needless to say, did not have a good start.
60. The divine discipline that fell on Jacob for his equally reprehensible sins will work for his positive good as he was a positive believer (Heb. 12:5-6; Prov. 3:12).
61. Through all the bad experiences of this patriarch God's purposes were advanced.
62. The stage was set for the coming on the scene of the 12 patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel.
63. Jacob's sojourn in Mesopotamia was not a happy experience but it all worked together for Jacob's good and advanced the promises made to him in the dream at Bethel.

Let me insert here, the marriage feast was both customary and it provided Laban with numerous witnesses against Jacob.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen29.htm> accessed August 7, 2017.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

An Experiential Exegesis of Our Modern Family Irregularity (a graphic); from [Slideshare.net](#); accessed August 11, 2017.

An Experiential Exegesis of Our Modern Family Irregularity

The Bible presents both the real and the ideal. God's will for mankind is a nuclear family based upon the marriage of one man and one woman, right man/right woman. To this configuration is often added a number of children. This does not mean that every marriage or relationship that we come across fits into that mold, even among the greatest of the saints.

1. We are long past the day when everybody grew up in a **nuclear** family
2. Many singles in our society are settling for **irregular** relationships
3. Many of the families in the **Bible** were actually irregular relationships

Abraham is one of the great figures of the Old Testament, and the father of the Jewish race. Although he clearly married his right woman, things got somewhat messy when his wife convinced him to have relations with Hagar in order to produce a child (the one they had hoped was the promised child).

Moses, the father of the Jewish nation, had a marriage that was off and on; and he got along better with his father-in-law than he did with his wife. The point being, even though there is clearly an ideal presented in the Bible, the words of God clearly apply to all men and women in all circumstances.

The Sons of Jacob and Leah

Leupold: *The last five verses of chapter 29 plainly belong to the subject matter of chapter 30.*⁴⁰⁰

This section of Gen. 29 is not completely separate from what has come before. However, it is logically placed with the birth of Jacob's other children in the chapter which follows.

Jacob is married to both sisters; but his clear preference is for Rachel. He no doubt has some resentment towards Laban; and it is unclear whether that carries over towards Leah. In any case, Jacob performs the duties of a husband towards both women. Based upon upcoming chapters, the sisters appear to adjust to being married to the same man. There is some natural jealousy and playing for Jacob's affections, but there does not appear to be the animosity which Sarah (Abraham's wife) had for Hagar (her servant, whom she gave to Abraham as a surrogate to bear children).

Our God is a God of grace.

Whereas, Abraham fathered many children, only one of whom was in the line of promise; and Isaac had twin sons, only one of whom was *Jewish*; every child of Jacob's will become Israel. His sons will become the 12 tribes of Israel (actually, 13⁴⁰¹).

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. on God's view of children: *As a backdrop to this we need to understand the divine viewpoint understanding of children. Psalm 127:4–5, "As arrows are in the hand of a warrior; so are children of one's youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them ..." What the Bible is teaching is that it is a blessing to have children. The emphasis in Scripture is to responsibly have children. They are a blessing from the Lord, and the analogy here is to a warrior with a quiver full of arrows. A warrior is going into battle and is defeating the enemy through his weapons, his arrows. So the backdrop to understanding Psalm 127:5 is spiritual warfare, and the way that we can impact the world, the cosmic system of the devil, is by having children and training them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, teaching them doctrine so that as they grow and mature they live their lives on the basis of the divine viewpoint frame of reference. Then parents are sending them out of the home into the world to have that invisible impact on the world system around us. So there is this positive view all through Scripture of how valuable it is to have children and what a blessing it is. Both Rachel and Leah understand this and God blesses Leah and she has children. God takes note of her situation and He opens her womb. Psalm 9:9, "The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." Psalm 10:17–18, "LORD, you have heard the desire of the humble: you will prepare their heart, you will cause your ear to hear: to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress." In other words, God is going to be the one to vindicate Leah, even though Jacob has given all this attention to Rachel. Just because he is married to two women doesn't mean that he should ignore one over the other. Psalm 146:9 states this same principle but its application is towards orphans and towards widows. "The LORD watches over the strangers; he relieves the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turns upside down." God is the one who protects those who do not have the protection of a husband or a father. He gives four sons to Leah in rapid succession.*⁴⁰² Dean uses the NASB.

At this point, Jacob begins to have many sons by Leah.

⁴⁰⁰ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

⁴⁰¹ This will be explained when we get to the end of the book of Genesis.

⁴⁰² From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

Pay attention to the meanings of their names. God will allow Leah to have 4 children, but He will stop her after that for a time, because these 4 children make a complete statement.

And so sees Y^ehowah that hated is Leah and so He opens her womb; and Rachel [was] barren.

Genesis
29:31

Y^ehowah observed that Leah is hated, so He opened up her womb, while Rachel [was] barren.

Jehovah observed that Leah was hated, so He allowed her to conceive, while Rachel remained barren.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sees Y ^e howah that hated is Leah and so He opens her womb; and Rachel [was] barren.
Targum of Onkelos	And it was revealed before the Lord that Leah was <u>not loved in the sight of Jakob;</u> and <u>He said in His Word that sons should be given her,</u> and that Rachel should be barren.
Latin Vulgate	And the Lord seeing that he despised Lia, opened her womb, but her sister remained barren.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.
Septuagint (Greek)	And when the Lord God saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.

Significant differences: The targum adds additional text and does not speak of opening up Leah's womb. Also, the targum has *not loved* rather than *hated*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Now the Lord, seeing that Leah was not loved, gave her a child; while Rachel had no children.
Easy English	The *Lord saw that Jacob did not love Leah. So then he made Leah able to have children. But Rachel was *barren.
Easy-to-Read Version	The Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. So the Lord made it possible for Leah to have children. But Rachel did not have any children.
God's Word™	When the LORD saw Leah was unloved, he made it possible for her to have children, but Rachel had none.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When the LORD saw that Leah was loved less than Rachel, he made it possible for her to have children, but Rachel remained childless.
NIRV	Jacob Becomes the Father of Many Children The Lord saw that Jacob didn't love Leah as much as he loved Rachel. So he let Leah have children. But Rachel wasn't able to have children.
New Simplified Bible	Jehovah saw that Leah was loved less, so he made it possible for her to have children. But Rachel had none.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	The LORD knew that Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah, and so he gave children to Leah, but not to Rachel.
New Berkeley Version	Seeing that Leah was slighted, the LORD gave her fertility, while Rachel was sterile.
New Century Version	Jacob's Family Grows When the Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, he made it possible for Leah to have children, but not Rachel.

New Life Bible	When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, He made her able to give birth. But Rachel could not give birth.
New Living Translation	Jacob's Many Children When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to have children, but Rachel could not conceive.
Translation for Translators	Leah gave birth to four sons When Yahweh saw that Jacob did not love Leah very much, he enabled her to become pregnant. But Rachel was not able to become pregnant.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And when Jehovah God saw that LeAh wasn't attractive [to Jacob], he opened her womb. However, RachEl was sterile.
Beck's American Translation	Jacob's 11 Children When the LORD saw Leah wasn't loved, he let her have children while Rachel had none.
International Standard V	Leah's Children Later, the LORD noticed that Leah was being neglected [Lit. hated], so he made her fertile, while Rachel remained childless.
Names of God Bible	Leah and Rachel Compete for Jacob's Love When Yahweh saw Leah was unloved, he made it possible for her to have children, but Rachel had none.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	And now, seeing Lia thus despised, the Lord gave her issue, while Rachel must remain barren.
Today's NIV	Jacob's Children When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Conservapedia	When the LORD saw that Leah was being treated as if she were nothing [The verb rendered "to hate" actually means "to treat as a nonentity," not "to treat as an enemy."], He opened her womb. Rachel, on the other hand, remained barren.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But the EVER-LIVING saw that he hated Leah, so he opened her womb, but Rachel was childless.
NIV – UK	Jacob's children When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless.
Unlocked Literal Bible	Yahweh saw that Leah was not loved, so he opened her womb, but Rachel was childless.
Urim-Thummim Version	And when YHWH saw that Leah was hated he opened her womb, but Rachel remained sterile.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011)	Jacob's Children. When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he made her fruitful, while Rachel was barren. [29:31-30:24] The note of strife, first sounded between Jacob and Esau in chaps. 25-27, continues between the two wives, since Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah (29:30). Jacob's neglect of Leah moves God to make her fruitful (29:31). Leah's fertility provokes Rachel. Leah bears Jacob four sons (Reuben, Levi, Simeon, and Judah) and her maidservant Zilpah, two (Gad and Asher). Rachel's
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maidservant Bilhah bears two (Dan and Naphtali). After the mandrakes (30:14-17), Leah bears Issachar and Zebulun and a daughter Dinah. Rachel then bears Joseph and, later in the land of Canaan, Benjamin (35:18).

Revised English Bible [When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he granted her a child, but Rachel remained childless.](#)

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible [ADONAI saw that Le'ah was unloved, so he made her fertile, while Rachel remained childless.](#)

exeGesés companion Bible [And when Yah Veh sees that Leah is hated, he opens her womb: and Rachel is sterile:...](#)

Kaplan Translation [God saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb. Rachel remained barren.](#)

Orthodox Jewish Bible [And when Hashem saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb but Rachel was barren.](#)

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible [And when the Lord saw that Leah was despised, He made her able to bear children, but Rachel was barren.](#)

The Expanded Bible [Jacob's Family Grows
When the Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah \[^LLeah was unloved/hated\], he made it possible for Leah to have children \[^Lopened up her womb\], but not Rachel \[^LRachel was barren\].](#)

Kretzmann's Commentary [The First Sons of Leah
And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, that is, that she was loved less than Rachel, he opened her womb and thus prepared her for bearing children, which are His blessing. But Rachel was barren, also by God's dispensation.](#)

Lexham English Bible [Jacob's Children
When Yahweh saw that Leah \[was\] unloved he opened her womb, but Rachel \[was\] barren.](#)

NET Bible® [The Family of Jacob
When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to become pregnant \[Heb "he opened up her womb."\] while Rachel remained childless.](#)

The Pulpit Commentary [And when the Lord saw—literally, and Jehovah saw. As Eve's son was obtained from Jehovah \(Gen. 4:1\), and Jehovah visited Sarah \(Gen. 21:1\), and was entreated for Rebekah \(Gen. 25:21\), so here he again interposes in connection with the onward development of the holy seed by giving children to Jacob's wives. The present section \(Gen. 29:31–35\) is by Davidson, Kalisch, and others assigned to the Jehovist, by Tuch left undetermined, and by Colenso in several parts ascribed to the Elohist. Kalisch thinks the contents of this section must have found a place in the earlier of the two documents—that Leah was hated,—i.e. less loved \(cf. Mal. 1:3\)—he opened her womb \(cf. 1Sam. 1:5, 1Sam. 1:6; Psalm 127:3\): but Rachel was barren—as Sarai \(Gen. 11:30\) and Rebekah \(Gen. 25:21\) had been. The fruitfulness of Leah and the sterility of Rachel were designed not so much to equalize the conditions of the sisters, the one having beauty and the other children \(Lange\), or to punish Jacob for his partiality \(Keil\), or to discourage the admiration of mere beauty \(Kalisch\), but to prove that "the origin of Israel was to be a work not of nature, but of grace" \(Keil\).](#)

Syndein/Thieme [And when Jehovah/God saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb . . . {she had children with Jacob from the beginning} but Rachel was barren {initially no children came of the union}.](#)

The Voice When the Eternal One saw how Leah was unloved, He made her fertile, but Rachel remained barren.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and YHWH ^[He Exists] saw that Le'ah ^[Weary] was hated and he opened her bowels and Rahhel ^[Ewe] was sterile,...
Concordant Literal Version	And seeing is Yahweh that Leah is hated, and opening is He her womb. Yet Rachel is barren.
Context Group Version	And YHWH saw that Leah was spurned, and he opened her womb. But Rachel was barren.
English Standard V. – UK	Jacob's Children When the Lord saw that Leah was hated [Deut. 21:15], he opened her womb [Genesis 30:22], but Rachel was barren.
The Geneva Bible	And when the LORD saw that Leah [was] hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel [was] barren. This declares that often they who are despised by men are favoured by God.
Green's Literal Translation	And Jehovah saw that Leah was hated. And He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	When the Lord saw that Lea was despised, he made her fruitful: but Rahel was barren.
New King James Version	The Children of Jacob When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.
Webster's Bible Translation	And when the LORD saw that Leah [was] hated, he made her fruitful: but Rachel [was] barren.
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah sees that Leah is the hated one, and He opens her womb, and Rachel is barren.

The gist of this verse: Because of Jacob's reduced love for Leah, God gives her children; and leaves Rachel temporarily barren.

Genesis 29:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (הָאָרָ) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Genesis 29:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sânê' (שָׂנֵא) [pronounced saw-NAY]	<i>to hate</i> ; in the participle, it is <i>the ones hating</i> ; in the passive: <i>those being hated by</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #8130 BDB #971
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary</i> ; transliterated <i>Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521

Translation: *Y^ehowah observed that Leah is hated,...* God's personal name is not found until this point in the chapter. This is such a great contrast with Gen. 24, when Abraham sent his most trusted servant to find a wife for Isaac. God was on the servant's mind constantly. Jacob, who a month or two ago, actually saw God in a night vision—and yet has said nothing about God.

A New Approach to the Recording of the Book of Genesis: At this point in the narrative—which I generally attribute to Jacob—we will observe the births of Leah's children and how *her* focus was upon God. Let me suggest that, the patriarch of the family, Jacob, would recite the book of Genesis from memory (up to a point); and he would also tell the family history to his children. I think that it is possible that, at this point, Jacob looks over to Leah, and Leah tells her children their order of birth and what she was thinking at the times of their births. Leah's mind was on the Revealed God; she understood that God did observe her and He did bless her. Therefore, it is natural that, when speaking of the first 4 sons, she mentions God's name 4 times.

I see the composition of the book of Genesis, in some parts, as very much a family effort and very organic in origin. That is, I don't believe that Jacob sat down one day and thought, *I should record my history as a part of the Word of God*. I think he recited the book of Genesis up to the time of Abraham (probably to his sons); and then, he also recited his family history from Abraham and forward. From time to time, another family member would speak up, and add a few thoughts here and there (for instance, Leah would then proceed to tell her sons about their births). At some point, their words became fixed and that narrative became a part of the Word of God.

I came to this point of view when studying and writing about the final chapters of Genesis, where we follow Joseph for a portion of time, and then, suddenly, the focus is on the other sons of Jacob and their return to Canaan. It is as if there were a camera, and for awhile this camera follows Joseph around, and later, it follows his brothers when they leave Egypt. The easiest, most natural explanation for this is, Joseph recounts his life and family history, but then comes to the point where his brothers are ready to leave Egypt with their grain, and then, Judah (I suppose) stands up and tells about their trip back to Canaan and what they said to their father. When families recall their history, this is often how they do it. There is no reason to think that the composition process of the history of the patriarchs was formal or stilted. It began naturally, organically, and then, with the telling and retelling of these same stories, the memories became a fixed text.

This does not exclude God the Holy Spirit from the process, because Scripture is the result of man's composition and God's inspiration, so that the final form is written 100% by man and 100% by God the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 29:31a *Y^ehowah observed that Leah is hated,...* Although we have the word *hated* here; this does not mean that Jacob absolutely despised her in every way. She will become impregnated several times by him. However, in comparison to Rachel, she was hated. Jacob loved Rachel; and all other women did not compare to her. We might understand this to mean that Jacob resented Leah.

Genesis 29:31a *Y^ehowah observed that Leah is hated,...*

Leah was hated (the Opinions of Commentators)

The NET Bible: Heb "hated." The rhetorical device of overstatement is used (note v. 30, which says simply that Jacob loved Rachel more than he did Leah) to emphasize that Rachel, as Jacob's true love and the primary object of his affections, had an advantage over Leah.⁴⁰³

Utle: "unloved" This is a Hebrew idiom which is, literally, "hated" (BDB 971, KB 1338, Qal PASSIVE PARTICIPLE, cf. Gen. 29:33), but because of its use in Deut. 21:15; Mal. 1:2–3; John 12:25 and Luke 14:26, we know that it is simply an idiom of comparison which should be translated "unloved," not "hated." It speaks of priority. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.⁴⁰⁴

The Cambridge Bible: By this is meant that Jacob had less affection for Leah than for Rachel.⁴⁰⁵

Gill: *And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated,....* Not properly and simply hated by Jacob, as appears by his doing the duty of an husband to her, but comparatively; she was less loved than Rachel: and there are many things to be said for it; she was not beautiful as Rachel was; she was not Jacob's choice, as she was but imposed upon him through deceit, and he was forced to marry her, or he could not have Rachel his beloved wife: but the Lord had pity on her, and that she might have a share in her husband's affections.

Clarke: From this and the preceding verse we get the genuine meaning of the word *שנא* *sane*, to hate, in certain disputed places in the Scriptures. The word simply signifies a less degree of love; so it is said, Gen. 29:30: "Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah," i.e., he loved Leah less than Rachel; and this is called hating in Gen. 29:31: When the Lord saw that Leah was hated – that she had less affection shown to her than was her due, as one of the legitimate wives of Jacob, he opened her womb – he blessed her with children.

Clarke continues: Now the frequent intercourse of Jacob with Leah (see the following verses) sufficiently proves that he did not hate her in the sense in which this term is used among us; but he felt and showed less affection for her than for her sister. So Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated, simply means, I have shown a greater degree of affection for Jacob and his posterity than I have done for Esau and his descendants, by giving the former a better earthly portion than I have given to the latter, and by choosing the family of Jacob to be the progenitors of the Messiah. But not one word of all this relates to the eternal states of either of the two nations. Those who endeavor to support certain peculiarities of their creed by such scriptures as these, do greatly err, not knowing the Scripture, and not properly considering either the sovereignty or the mercy of God.⁴⁰⁶

E. W. Bullinger: Hated is a figure of speech known as Metonymy (of Cause), by which love and hate are put for the esteem or neglect, caused by love and hate = less loved, Deut. 21:15 ("If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved,..."). Matt. 6:24 ("No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.").⁴⁰⁷

Matthew Henry points out that we find the same sort of thing in Luke 14:26, where Jesus tells those listening to Him to hate their mother and father, or else they cannot be His disciples. Jesus was not encouraging hatred of one's own family here; He was setting up priorities, where He was to be prioritized over family.

Bullinger: A *met-o'-ny-my*; or, Change of Noun is when one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation. Of the Cause. When the cause is put for the effect (Gen. 23:8. Luke 16:29).⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen29.htm> (footnote) accessed November 16, 2014.

⁴⁰⁴ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:31.

⁴⁰⁵ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:31.

⁴⁰⁶ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31.

⁴⁰⁷ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31 (edited).

⁴⁰⁸ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, appendix 6 (edited).

Leah was hated (the Opinions of Commentators)

Quite frankly, I understand the overall concept of a metonymy, where one word is substituted for another (*hate* is used rather than *less liked*). I do not grasp a *metonymy of cause*.

Dr. Peter Pett: *The word regularly means 'hated' but the previous verse suggests that although Jacob preferred Rachel he still had some love for Leah. Thus the translation 'unloved' is more likely. There is no suggestion that he treated her badly (contrast his words to his beloved Rachel in 30:2).*⁴⁰⁹

Wesley: *That is, loved less than Rachel, in which sense it is required that we hate father and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luke 14:26.*⁴¹⁰

James Burton Coffman: *The word "hate" in its various tenses has in this usage of it, a meaning of "to love less." So, similarly, Jesus commanded those who would follow him to "hate" father and mother (Luke 14:26). Nothing of the usual meaning of the word clings to what is meant in such usage. It simply means that Jacob continued to love Rachel MORE THAN he loved Leah.*⁴¹¹

I think that Keil had the wrong approach, when he stated: *Jacob's sinful weakness appears also in his marriage state, because he loved Rachel more than Leah, and the divine reproof appears, because the hated one was blessed with children but Rachel remained barren for a long time.*⁴¹² Jacob's preference of Rachel over Leah is quite natural; and Rachel's concern over her barrenness (Gen. 30:1) was her problem, which, of course, she placed upon Jacob. Could Jacob have handled this situation differently? Of course. But he lacked the spiritual assets to give him guidance. Furthermore, God's plan is based upon what people actually choose to do, as opposed to, making the ideal set of choices.

Regarding Keil's quote, Lange writes: *All we can say is, it was God's pleasure to show in this way the movements of his providence over the thoughts of men, and to equalize the incongruity between these women.*⁴¹³

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Leah was "hated" (Gen. 29:31), i.e., she was loved less than Rachel. By becoming a party to a heartless fraud she lost her husband's affections. And Rachel, the beloved wife was denied the blessing of children, so coveted by the ancient Hebrew mothers (Gen. 29:31). Both had trials, though of a different kind.*⁴¹⁴

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[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Leah will eventually have 6 sons by Jacob. Just in case you are wondering, *how can Jacob hate (resent) Leah and still have relations with her?*

David Guzik: *A 1995 survey asked the following question: "Have you ever had sex with a woman you have actively disliked?" 58% of men answered "yes."*⁴¹⁵

So there is no misunderstanding, I do not believe that Jacob actually hated Leah; he just preferred Rachel.

⁴⁰⁹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:31.

⁴¹⁰ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:31.

⁴¹¹ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

⁴¹² The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Gen. 29:31–35 (Exegetical and Critical).

⁴¹³ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Gen. 29:31–35 (Exegetical and Critical).

⁴¹⁴ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:29–35 (Homiletics).

⁴¹⁵ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Gen. 29:33.

A list of passages on *hate*, *hatred* being used to not literally mean *hate*, *hatred*: Gen. 29:30, Gen. 27:41, Deut. 21:15 22:13 Mal. 1:3 Matt. 6:24 10:37 Luke 14:26 John 12:25.⁴¹⁶ These could be made into a doctrine. So Jacob did not hate Leah; he just preferred Rachel.

No doubt, Jacob would have preferred to have his line carried on through Rachel, but even that seemed to work against him. When he eventually has a son by Rachel (Joseph), it is clear that he takes time with that son and does everything to raise him right. This excellent training (which should have been also given to his other sons) sustained Joseph under some great difficulties. But, no matter how Jacob feels about the matter or about his two wives, God already has in mind the sons that He will honor.

Genesis 29:31 **Jehovah observed that Leah was hated, so He allowed her to conceive, while Rachel remained barren.**

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on Jacob's Preference of Rachel

"Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah." That Leah was not hated in the sense of being regarded with aversion, the numerous family she bore to Jacob proves; that she occupied a lower place than Rachel in her husband's affections is explicitly declared. This preference of Rachel to Leah was—

1. Natural in Jacob. Rachel had been his heart's choice from the first, while Leah had been thrust upon him against his inclination. But even had this been otherwise, as no man can serve two masters, so can no husband love two wives equally—an argument against polygamy.
2. Painful to Leah. Had Leah loved Jacob less than she manifestly did, it is doubtful if the undue regard shown to Rachel would not have inflicted a grievous wound upon her wifely heart; but, entertaining towards him an affection strong and tender, she yearned for a larger share of his esteem, and at each successive child's birth gave utterance to a hope that he would yet be joined to her. No heavier blow can be dealt by a husband to the tender heart of a loving wife than to withdraw from her his love, or even to be cold and indifferent in its expression.
3. Sinful in the sight of God. Though not so beautiful as Rachel, Leah was yet entitled to an equal share with her in Jacob's affection. Equally with Rachel she was Jacob's wife. It was Jacob's sin that he had married her at all when he did not either love or desire her. On detecting the fraud he should have instantly repudiated the engagement. But having publicly ratified the contract with Leah by fulfilling her week, he owed to Leah a full share of his affection as a husband. Nay, though not the wife his inclination had selected, there is reason for believing that Leah, rather than Rachel, was the bride God had chosen (Leah was the ancestress of the Savior); hence doubly was Jacob bound to love Leah equally with Rachel.

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:31–35 (Homiletics).

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Leah and Rachel's participation in Laban's Deception: Genesis 29:31a **Y^ehowah observed that Leah is hated,...** Clearly Jacob was deceived and Laban deceived him. Scripture does not tell us exactly what part Leah and Rachel played in all of this. It is my opinion, based upon the narrative here and the relationship of the sisters in the future, that both Leah and Rachel knew what was going on and agreed to participate in Laban's ruse (Rachel does not appear to bear a lifelong resentment of her sister for what has happened). Let me suggest that Laban told Rachel, "Listen, you know that I cannot give you in marriage to Jacob until Leah is married—and how long do you think it will be until she gets married?" Let me suggest that Laban told Leah, "Listen, this is the only chance you will have to be married. And, if you do not do this, then your sister Rachel cannot be married." Now, did he lie to either of them about Jacob's feelings on the matter? Did Laban say, "Jacob has agreed to all of this"? I don't think that he had to.

⁴¹⁶ Passages from *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:31.

I believe that this is why Leah was careful to be silent when going to the marriage bed; this explains why Rachel is not angry for years with her sister over this turn of events.

If Leah and Rachel were both involved in the deception, this would have been another parallel between the deception of this chapter and Jacob's deception of his father. Remember, Rebekah participated in the deception (she actually organized the whole thing), but Isaac was unaware of it. Here, Leah and Rachel may have both been a part of the deception, and Jacob was unaware of it.

Interestingly enough, all deception aside, Leah's first 4 sons and Rachel's first son will make up the most important tribes of Israel (Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; and Joseph, whose 2 sons will become individual tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh).

There is always the game that we can play, *what if they did it right?* For instance, here; *what if Jacob just did not marry Rachel? Would that have been the right thing to do?* Now and again, admittedly, I play that game. However, God's plan is designed to work on a planet just covered with sin natures. Jacob has been using trickery and deception all of his life in order to obtain an advantage over his twin brother. Laban is Jacob's perfect foil, because he is just as deceptive and manipulative. How does Jacob learn *what you sow is what you reap?* Furthermore, we learn the same thing from studying this narrative. So, even though we can certain speculate and use the approach "Let's just say that Jacob and Laban played it straight and honest..." That is not the world we live in. That would not be Laban and Jacob. The reason that Jesus Christ has come and died for our sins is precisely because we are fallen men in a fallen world. It is God's plan which is able to rescue us from our lives of sin. God's plan takes us as who we are, despite anything that we have done, and intervenes to save our lives and our souls.

Genesis 29:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâthâh (פָּתַח) [pronounced <i>paw-THAW</i>]	<i>to spread out, to open; to be open; to be open and ingenuous in mind [like children and young people]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6601 BDB #834
There also appears to be a homonym for pâthâh, which means <i>to entice, to beguile, to deceive, to delude</i> . There may be a connection here, where the idea is, your mind is so open, that you are deceived or beguiled. This could also be a slightly different form of the verb pâthach (Strong's #6605 BDB #834 & #836), which can also mean <i>to open</i> , but it has a host of additional meanings as well. BDB lists these as separate verbs; Gesenius lists the meanings under the same verb, but in two sets of meanings (which overlap, to make things more confusing).			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
rechem (רֶחֶם) [pronounced <i>REH-khem</i>]	<i>womb; inner parts; poetically used to mean a girl, a woman</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7358 (and #7356) BDB #933

Translation: ...so He opened up her womb,... We do not know if this was a result of the consummation of their marriage. This all fits together quite nicely if we understand Jacob to take Rachel before the end of the second 7 years.

In any case, Leah becomes pregnant; and we know of at least one time when she had relations with Jacob.

Genesis 29:31 Jehovah observed that Leah was hated, so He allowed her to conceive, while Rachel remained barren.

God Balances Out the Contempt Held for Leah (Many Commentators on Gen. 29:31)

John Wesley: [T]he Lord granted her a child, which was a rebuke to Jacob for making so great a difference between those he was equally related to; a check to Rachel, who, perhaps insulted over her sister upon that account; and a comfort to Leah, that she might not be overwhelmed with the contempt put upon her.⁴¹⁷

Matthew Henry: Observe, that Leah, who was less beloved, was blessed with children, when Rachel was denied that blessing, Gen. 29:31. See how Providence, in dispensing its gifts, observes a proportion, to keep the balance even, setting crosses and comforts one over-against another, that none may be either too much elevated or too much depressed. Rachel wants children, but she is blessed with her husband's love; Leah wants that, but she is fruitful.⁴¹⁸

Barnes: [God] recompenses her for the lack of her husband's affections by giving her children, while Rachel was barren.⁴¹⁹

T. H. Leale (from the Bible Illustrator): Leah was blessed with children, which compensated her for the loss of her husband's love.⁴²⁰

Bishop Hall: Rachel whom he loved is barren; Leah, which was despised, is fruitful. How wisely God weighs out to us our favours and crosses in an equal balance; so tempering our sorrows that we may not oppress, and our joys that they may not transport us; each one hath some matter of envy to others, and of grief to himself.⁴²¹

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Genesis 29:31c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Râchêl (לְרַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
'âqâr (רַקֵּעַ) [pronounced <i>gaw-KAWR</i>]	<i>barren, sterile</i>	feminine singular, adjective	Strong's #6135 BDB #785

⁴¹⁷ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:31.

⁴¹⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35 (slightly edited).

⁴¹⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35.

⁴²⁰ *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Gen. 29:29–35.

⁴²¹ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:29–31.

Translation: ...while Rachel [was] barren. Rachel remains barren while her sister conceives.

Although Jacob will have 6 sons in total by Leah, the number of times that they cohabited was probably not a great deal more than that. We will later see that his wife Rachel will tell Jacob to go to Leah. I would suspect, based upon Jacob's love for Rachel resulted in a great deal more intimacy with her.

Barrenness has occurred 3 times in the marriages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but they all seem to be for different reasons. Abraham is promised a son, who would be the son of promise; and God waited until Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of having children; and then God made it happen. When God told Abraham that he would impregnate his wife, Sarah was listening off in the background and began to quietly laugh, because having a child at their respective ages seemed ridiculous to her (he was 100 and she was 90 or 91). When she was impregnated by Abraham, all of it seemed impossible. As an aside, Abraham was not potent for just one evening; he remained potent for most of the rest of his life.

When it came to Isaac and Rebekah, they were married for 20 years, without a child. When they petitioned God, they appeared to become pregnant quite soon thereafter. Rebekah suffered such pain that she could not understand what was happening, and God told her that there were two nations within her womb fighting one another. Then Esau and Jacob were born.

With Leah and Rachel, God is also involved, but in a different way. Leah is having children, one right after the other; and Rachel is not having any. What appears to be the case is, Rachel has some physical problems, and dies when giving birth to her second child. This suggests that God did not give her a child (1) to compensate for the additional love that Jacob felt towards her and (2) to preserve her life as long as possible.

Genesis 29:31 Jehovah observed that Leah was hated, so He allowed her to conceive, while Rachel remained barren.

Jacob's Preference of Rachel; Rachel's Barrenness (Opinions of Commentators)

Benson: *[T]he Lord granted Leah a child, which was a rebuke to Jacob for making so great a difference between those he was equally related to; a check to Rachel, who, perhaps, insulted over her sister upon that account; and a comfort to Leah, that she might not be overwhelmed with the contempt put upon her.*⁴²²

Utey: *To bear a son was a great honor. Leah was certain Jacob would be pleased and acknowledge her with more attention.*⁴²³

Dr. Peter Pett: *The bearing of a son was of vital importance in Jacob's day for such a son or sons would inherit the family tribe and wealth and maintain the family name. A man felt he lived on in his sons. They would also eventually strengthen Jacob's position. Thus Leah is delighted when she bears not one but four sons. But Rachel, who was barren was devastated.*⁴²⁴

T. H. Leale (from the Bible Illustrator): *[Rachel] continued barren. But she was compensated by her beauty, and by the thought that she was first in her husband's affections. Thus with the evils which fall to the lot of individuals, there are compensations.*⁴²⁵

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Genesis 29:31 And when Jehovah saw that Leah was hated, even He opened her womb. But Rachel was barren.

⁴²² Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31 (slightly edited).

⁴²³ Dr. Bob Utey, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:32.

⁴²⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:31.

⁴²⁵ *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Gen. 29:29–35.

This is the 3rd time we have had the situation where a woman was barren, and all 3 of these women are wives in the patriarch line of the Jews.

Robert Dean's Take on Barrenness

- 1) The significance of barrenness is not some sin on the part of the woman. None of the women in the Old Testament were barren because of sin in their life, it was because of something that God was teaching through their barrenness.
- 2) These were the women who are said to be barren in Scripture: Sarai, the wife of Abram; Rebecca, the wife of Isaac; and Rachel, the wife of Jacob. It is interesting that the wives of the three patriarchs of Israel are all barren women—at least barren for a time. That should be the first clue that there is something going on here related to God's development of the nation Israel. There is also barrenness associated with the mother of Samson; Hannah; Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist in Luke chapter one.
- 3) Exodus 23:26 gives an insight. The absence of barren women would indicate that Israel was spiritual, indicating Israel's positive spirituality and divine blessing. But the presence of barren women in Israel indicated Israel's carnality and divine judgment. It was a sign. **"There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days."** (Ex. 23:26; NASB)
- 4) Thus we see that the barren womb in these women picture the emptiness and lifelessness of mankind apart from God and apart from Jesus Christ. The fact that they were barren was a picture of spiritual barrenness. It was also a picture of spiritual death. What is it that distinguishes Abram from the culture around him? He is a Gentile, like everybody else, from Ur of the Chaldees but he is a believer in the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ and is regenerate. He is going to have a couple of boys, Ishmael and Isaac, and what distinguishes them is regeneration. God is illustrating this life from death in the womb of the patriarchs of Israel. That is what sets them apart, that the foundation of this nation of people is miraculous. There is a 90-year-old woman who is going to give birth. It is a picture of how God gives life where there is no life.
- 5) There is a right time for a child to be born, just as there was an exact right time for Jesus to be born. Even though He had been promised to the woman after she and Adam had sinned, the final fulfillment of this promise would not come until thousands of years had passed.
- 6) In each case God miraculously brings forth life where there is death or there is no life. This is a picture of regeneration. The point is that only God can solve the problem of spiritual death by providing spiritual birth. And all of the six women are foreshadowing one individual: the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7) The barren womb is also a **type** of the virgin womb of Mary, and there the solution to the barren womb is the new life in the incarnation of the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

From Robbie Dean's [Genesis-092b](#) Hagar: The Human Solution is a Defective Solution. Genesis 16 05/24/05. Edited.

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God on barrenness and the opening up of particular wombs: Gen. 11:30 16:1 20:17–18 21:1–2 25:21 30:1–2, 22, 23 Judges 13:2–3 Ruth 4:13 1Sam. 1:5, 20, 27 2:21 Psalm 127:3 Luke 1:7.⁴²⁶ These passages certainly could be woven into a doctrine on those topics.

Reviewing Genesis 29:21–31:

Gen 29:21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."

Gen 29:22–25 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah

⁴²⁶ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:31.

to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"

Gen 29:26–27 Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."

Gen 29:28–29 Jacob did so, and completed her week. And Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)

Gen 29:30–31 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Remember, the barren womb is an illustration. God will give life where there is no life. This describes regeneration for the believer. We are dead in our trespasses and sins; we are born with a sin nature that separates us from God. So, before God, we are dead; but God gives us life where there was no life.

Jacob now has two wives, the sisters, Leah and Rachel. All of this came about as a result of his dishonest uncle deceiving Jacob, much the way Jacob deceived his own father.

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge estimates this date to be 1752 B.C.⁴²⁷

When it comes to naming the first 4 boys, Skinner has the weirdest take on it: *The popular etymologies attached to the names are here extremely forced and sometimes unintelligible.*⁴²⁸ This is a weird view for two reasons: (1) Leah gives an explanation for why she names each child and that explanation essentially tells us the meaning of her boys' names; and (2) taken together, the meanings of the names of these first 4 boys is significant. We will sum that up at the end.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Every one of the names of the children is a play on words in order to bring out a certain point and they tell us something about the divine viewpoint orientation of Leah. There is a progression here in these names that tells us a lot about her mindset. Then when we look at Rachel, and her maid Bilhah starts having children, those name reflect something.*⁴²⁹

And so conceives Leah and so she bears a son and so she calls his name Reuben for she had said, "Because has seen Y^ehowah in my affliction, for now loves me my man."

Genesis
29:32

Leah conceived and bore a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "Y^ehowah has seen my humiliation; indeed my husband will love me [because I bore him this son]."

Leah conceived and bore a son whom she named Reuben. She explained, "Jehovah has looked upon my humiliation and has given me a child so that my husband will love me."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so conceives Leah and so she bears a son and so she calls his name Reuben for she had said, "Because has seen Y^ehowah in my affliction, for now loves me my man."

⁴²⁷ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:32.

⁴²⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

⁴²⁹ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

Targum of Onkelos	And Leah conceived and bare a son, and called his name Reuben: for she said, My affliction was manifest before the Lord, therefore now will my husband love me; <u>for my affliction hath been manifested before the Lord as will be the affliction of my children before the Lord when they shall be enslaved in the land of the Mizraee.</u>
Latin Vulgate	And she conceived and bore a son, and called his name Ruben, saying: The Lord saw my affliction: now my husband will love me.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Leah conceived, and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, Because the LORD has seen my affliction, now therefore my husband will love me.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Leah conceived and bore a son to Jacob; and she called his name Reuben, saying, Because the Lord has looked on my humiliation, and has given me a son, now then my husband will love me.

Significant differences: The targum adds a bunch of additional text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Leah was with child, and gave birth to a son to whom she gave the name Reuben: for she said, The Lord has seen my sorrow; now my husband will have love for me.
Easy English	Leah became *pregnant and she had a baby son. She called him Reuben. She said, `The *Lord has seen that I was unhappy. Now therefore my husband will love me.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Leah gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [This is like the word meaning "Look, a son."]. Leah named him this because she said, "The Lord has seen my troubles. My husband doesn't love me. So now maybe my husband will love me."
God's Word™	Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [Here's My Son], because she said, "Certainly, the LORD has seen my misery; now my husband will love me!"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, "The LORD has seen my trouble, and now my husband will love me"; so she named him Reuben
The Message	Leah became pregnant and had a son. She named him Reuben (Look-It's-a-Boy!). "This is a sign," she said, "that GOD has seen my misery; and a sign that now my husband will love me."
NIRV	Leah became pregnant. She had a son. She named him Reuben. She said, "The Lord has seen me suffer. Certainly my husband will love me now."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [Or see, a son] because she said, "The Lord saw my harsh treatment, and now my husband will love me."
Contemporary English V.	Leah gave birth to a son and named him Reuben, because she said, "The LORD has taken away my sorrow. Now my husband will love me more than he does Rachel."
New Berkeley Version	Leah conceived and bore a son whom she named Reuben [Reuben — "See, a son!"; Simeon — "Hearing"; Levi — "Attachment"; Judah — "Object of Praise."], for she said, "Because the LORD has noticed my trouble, for now my husband will love me."
New Century Version	Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [Reuben This name sounds like the Hebrew word for "he has seen my troubles."], because she said, "The Lord has seen my troubles. Surely now my husband will love me."
New Living Translation	So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [<i>Reuben</i> means "Look, a son!" It also sounds like the Hebrew for "He has seen my

misery.'], for she said, "The Lord has noticed my misery, and now my husband will love me."

Translation for Translators Leah gave birth to a son, whom she named Reuben, which sounds like the Hebrew words that mean 'look, a son!' She said, "Yahweh has seen that I was miserable, and because of that he has given me a son. Now, surely my husband will love me for giving birth to a son for him."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible So Leah got pregnant and bore a son to Jacob, whom she named Reuben (See, a Son!). For she said, 'Jehovah has seen my humiliation and given me a son, so now my man will love me.'

Beck's American Translation Leah had a baby boy, and she called him Reuben. "The LORD has seen my misery," she said. "Now my husband will love me."

International Standard V Leah conceived, bore a son, and named him Reuben [The Heb. name Reuben means See, a son], because she was saying, "The LORD had looked on my torture, so now my husband will love me."

Names of God Bible Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [Here's My Son], because she said, "Certainly, **Yahweh** has seen my misery; now my husband will love me!"

New Advent (Knox)Bible So she conceived and bore a son, whom she called Ruben, as if she would say, the Lord has looked on my lowliness, Raa-beoni. Now, she thought, my husband will love me.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear Leah conceived and begot a son and called his name Reuben (*see a son*), saying, "Now, my *man* will love me, for Yahweh saw my humiliation."

Conservapedia Leah fell pregnant, and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, saying, "The LORD has seen my humiliation, and now my husband will love me."

Ferar-Fenton Bible So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, that "The EVER-LIVING has looked on my sorrow, so that now my husband may love me."

NIV – UK Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [Reuben sounds like the Hebrew for he has seen my misery; the name means see, a son.], for she said, 'It is because the Lord has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now.'

Urim-Thummim Version And Leah became pregnant and gendered a son and she called his name Reuben, for she said, certainly YHWH has looked on my misery so now will my husband show me love.

Wikipedia Bible Project And she conceived and bore a son, and called him Re-uben (Reuben), because she said: "That Yahweh has seen (Ra-ah) my suffering, that from now on, my husband will love me".

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002) Leah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben; for she said, "It means, 'The LORD saw my misery; now my husband will love me.'" **Reuben**: the literal meaning of the Hebrew name is "look, a son!" But in this case, as also with the names of all the other sons of Jacob, a symbolic rather than an etymological interpretation of the name is given, because the name and the persons were regarded as closely interrelated. The symbolic interpretation of Reuben's name, according to the Yahwist source, is based on the similar-sounding raa beonyi, "he

	saw my misery." In the Elohist source, the name is explained by the similar-sounding yeehabani, "he will love me."
New American Bible (2011)	Leah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben; for she said, "It means, 'The LORD saw my misery; surely now my husband will love me.'" Gen. 49:3. Reuben: the literal meaning of the Hebrew name is disputed. One interpretation is re'u ben, "look, a son!", but here in Genesis (as also with the names of all the other sons of Jacob), it is given a symbolic rather than an etymological interpretation. Name and person were regarded as closely interrelated. The symbolic interpretation of Reuben's name, according to the Yahwist source, is based on the similar-sounding ra'a be`onyi, "he saw my misery." In the Elohist source, the name is explained by the similar-sounding ye'ehabani, "he will love me."
Revised English Bible	Leah conceived and gave birth to a son; and she called him Reuben, for she said, "The LORD has seen my humiliation, but now my husband will love me."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Le'ah conceived and gave birth to a son, whom she named Re'uven [see, a son!], for she said, "It is because ADONAI has seen how humiliated I have been, but now my husband will love me."
The Complete Tanach	And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the Lord has seen my affliction, for now my husband will love me."

and she named him Reuben: (Ber. 7b) Our Sages explained: She said, "Look at the difference between my son and the son of my father-in-law, who sold the birthright to Jacob (above 25:33). This one (Reuben) did not sell it to Joseph, but he nevertheless did not contend against him but sought to take him out of the pit."

exeGeseges companion Bible	...and Leah conceives and births a son and she calls his name Reu Ben: for, she says, For this cause Yah Veh sees my humiliation; for this cause my man loves me.
Kaplan Translation	Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [<i>Reuven</i> in Hebrew. The name can be broken into reu ben, 'see a son,' or 'a son of seeing.' It may also be short for ra'ah be-onyi - '[God] saw my troubles.']. 'God has seen my troubles,' she said. 'Now my husband will love me.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Leah conceived, and bore a ben, and she called shmo Reuven: for she said, Surely Hashem hath looked upon my misery; now therefore my ish will love me.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Lě'ah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Re' ubĕn, for she said, "For הוה has looked on my affliction, because now my husband is going to love me."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Leah became pregnant and bore a son and named him Reuben [See, a son!]; for she said, Because the Lord has seen my humiliation and affliction; now my husband will love me.
The Expanded Bible	Leah ·became pregnant [conceived] and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [^c sounds like "seen my troubles" in Hebrew], because she said, "The Lord has seen my ·troubles [distress]. Surely now my husband will love me."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben (Behold, a son!); for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now, therefore, my husband will love me. Since children were so particularly desirable at the time of the patriarchs, Leah, whose love for Jacob was so deep and strong that she had

even consented to Laban's deception, hoped to have her husband's affection turn to her also.

Lexham English Bible	Then Leah conceived and gave birth to a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because Yahweh has noticed my misery, that I [am] unloved. Now my husband will love me."
NET Bible®	So Leah became pregnant [Or "Leah conceived" (also in vv. 33, 34, 35).] and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben [The name Reuben (רְעוּבֵן, rē'ūven) means "look, a son."], for she said, "The Lord has looked with pity on my oppressed condition [Heb "looked on my affliction."]. Surely my husband will love me now."
The Pulpit Commentary	And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben (literally, reuben, Behold a Son! an expression of joyful surprise at the Divine compassion): for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction. Though not directly contained in the term Reuben, the sense of these words is implied (Kalisch). As Leah's child was an intimation that she had been an object of Jehovah's compassion, so did she expect it to be a means of drawing towards herself Jacob's affection. Now therefore (literally, for now) my husband will love me. She was confident in the first flush of maternal joy that Jacob's heart would turn towards her; she believed that God had sent her child to effect this conversion of her husband's affections; and she regarded the birth of Reuben as a signal proof of the Divine pity.
Syndein/Thieme	{Jacob/Israel's Firstborn - Reuben (Mother - Leah (1 st))} And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben {name means 'behold a son'} for she said, "Surely Jehovah/God has looked upon my affliction. Now therefore my husband will love me."
The Voice	Leah conceived and gave birth to a son, and she named him Reuben. Leah: Because the Eternal One has been compassionate to me in my painful predicament, <i>allowing me to bear this child</i> , surely now my husband will love me.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Le'ah ^[Weary] conceived and she brought forth a son and she called out his title Re'uven ^[See a son] given that she said, given that YHWH ^[He Exists] saw in my affliction, given that now my man will love me,...
Concordant Literal Version	And pregnant is Leah and is bearing a son for Jacob. And calling is she his name Reuben for she says, "For see does Yahweh my humiliation and gives me a son, for now my husband will love me.
Context Group Version	And Leah became pregnant, and gave birth to a son, and she named him Reuben. For she said, Because YHWH has looked on my affliction. For now my man { or husband } will give allegiance to me.
English Standard Version	And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me."
The Geneva Bible	And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction [By this it appears that she had sought help from God in her affliction.]; now therefore my husband will love [For children are a great cause of mutual love between man and wife.] me.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Lea conceived and bare a son, and called his name Ruben, for she said: the Lord has looked upon my tribulation. And now my husband will love me.
New King James Version	So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben [Literally See, a Son]; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."
Third Millennium Bible	And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben [that is, See a son]; for she said, "Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction. Now therefore my husband will love me."

World English Bible

Leah conceived, and bore a son, and she named him Reuben. For she said, "Because Yahweh has looked at my affliction. For now my husband will love me." And Leah conceives, and bears a son, and calls his name Reuben, for she said, "Because Jehovah has looked on my affliction; because now does my husband love me."

Young's Updated LT

The gist of this verse:

Leah becomes pregnant, names the boy *Reuben*, and believes that God gave her this son because God had seen her misery. She believes her husband will now love her.

Genesis 29:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521

Translation: *Leah conceived...* We know of at least one time when Leah and Jacob had relations; this was on the night that Jacob believed he was consummating his marriage with Rachel. However, this will not be the only son that Jacob will have by Leah.

Genesis 29:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *...and bore a son...* Leah has a son; the eldest son of the sons of Israel.

This is a bold and grand announcement. The firstborn son is considered specifically the heir of the father; the one to carry on the father's name. The firstborn son is given the double portion and the leadership position. Leah likes this, of course, because she is the mother in a very complicated marriage (in a marriage which is about to get much more complicated). She shares in the exaltation of her son, since she is in a polygamous marriage.

Genesis 29:32c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שָׁם) [pronounced shame]	name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
R ^e ûwbên (רְאוּבֵן) [pronounced roo-BANE]	behold a son; transliterated Reuben	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7205 BDB #910

Translation: ...and she named him Reuben,... Literally, and so she calls his name Reuben.

Genesis 29:32 Leah conceived and bore a son whom she named Reuben. She explained, "Jehovah has looked upon my humiliation and has given me a child so that my husband will love me."

Reuben's Name (Many Commentators)

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Reuben (the Hebrew form) sounds like the another phrase in the Hebrew, so it is a reminder of this other principle: that God is the one who has looked on her affliction. Leah's orientation is to God. She is grace-oriented, dependent upon God, and she knows that God is the one who is going to vindicate her, not herself. She is not involved in any kind of manipulation on her part in order to try to get the upper hand. When she names Reuben she is making a doctrinal affirmation recognizing that her blessing comes from the Lord.*⁴³⁰

Stephen Armstrong: *[I]t's notable that Leah named the boy and not Jacob. Normally the patriarch would name the child, and the fact that he doesn't tell us how disengaged he. Jacob doesn't seem to take any interest in Leah's child. The second thing is the name itself: Reuben. Leah names the child Reuben to make a point to Jacob. She says to Jacob, "See, I gave you a son".*⁴³¹

Leupold: *[These] expressions wrought into the form of proper names, expressing the sentiments or the hopes associated With the birth of these sons. So someone or even the mother may have remarked at the birth of the first-born, "Look, a son," Re'û-bhen. Result, the proper name "Reuben." What is there "forced" or "unintelligible" about such a name? The added explanation as to what further thoughts Leah associated with this name "Reuben" do, indeed, not grow out of the words, "look, a son," but they lay bare the inmost thoughts of her heart. Leah knows God as "Yahweh," an index of fine spiritual understanding and faith, and ascribes to him her fertility. She sees that Yahweh delights in being compassionate toward them...and hers was a state of affliction; and she anticipates that her husband will love her more.*⁴³²

⁴³⁰ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

⁴³¹ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

⁴³² From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Reuben's Name (Many Commentators)

Clarke: *She called his name Reuben - רְבּוּאֵר reuben, literally, see ye or behold a son; for Jehovah hath looked upon, רָאָה raah, beheld, my affliction; behold then the consequence, I have got a son!*⁴³³

Dr. Peter Pett: *"Reuben". As vocalised in the text it means 'behold, a son'. But Leah also, by a play on words, reads a more bitter meaning into it.*⁴³⁴

Gill: *That is, "see the son", as if she by this name called upon her husband, her friends, and all about her, to look at him, and view him; perhaps hoping and imagining he might be the famous son, the promised seed, the Messiah that was to spring to Abraham, in the line of Jacob; but if she so thought, she was greatly mistaken; for this son of hers proved unstable, and did not excel; or rather God hath seen or provided a son.*⁴³⁵

Whedon: *Rather, Jehovah looked in my affliction; that is, in my sorrow arising from love withheld, Jehovah looked; therefore will I name my first born Look ye — a son! Fondly she hopes now for more of her husband's love.*⁴³⁶

The Cambridge Bible presents the contrarian view: *The name is evidently here assumed to consist of two words, re'û = "behold ye," ben = "a son."...Heb. râ'ah be'oniyi. The sound of these two words forms some kind of a play on the name Reuben, and represents a popular and unscientific etymology. In some MSS. of LXX and the Syriac, and in Josephus, the name appears as "Reubel," which has been compared with the Arabic Ri'bal, meaning "a lion"; or it may be compounded with the name of the god Bel or Baal. The tribe Reuben settled between the Jabbok and the Arnon. See Judges 5:15–16.*⁴³⁷

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Genesis 29:32d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

⁴³³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:32.

⁴³⁴ Dr. Peter Pett, *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

⁴³⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:32.

⁴³⁶ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:32.

⁴³⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:32.

Genesis 29:32d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'ăṣîy (עָנָה) [pronounced gon-EE]	<i>affliction, poverty, humility, humiliation</i>	masculine singular substantive with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6040 BDB #777

Translation: ...for she said, “Y^ehowah has seen my humiliation;... These young ladies know very little about men and about marriage; and Laban uses them in order to get 14 years of free and generally enthusiastic labor out of Jacob.

The Geneva Bible: *By this it appears that she had sought help from God in her affliction.*⁴³⁸

Therefore, Leah expects in this marriage—probably as told her from her father (and possibly by her mother)—that Jacob would learn to love her. He did not, of course; and resented her all the more because she had been a part of this deception.

However, this does not mean that Leah cannot have a normal reaction. That is, despite all that happened, Leah still expect Jacob to love her; and he was clearly upset over all that happened. So, she feels afflicted and humiliated.

It is also possible that Rachel is living with them or having an affair with Jacob. That would account for her feeling humiliated.

Leah uses the personal name of God here, suggesting that she believes in Him. She will relate the names of 3 of her first 4 sons to God.

Genesis 29:32e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'attâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced gaht-TAWH]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773

⁴³⁸ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:32.

Genesis 29:32e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, kîy ʿattâh (יִכְהֵתָע) [pronounced <i>kee-gaht-TAWH</i>] mean <i>and now, but now; for in this case, for then; and after a protasis, surely then, indeed, indeed now.</i>			
ʾâhêb (אָהֵב) [pronounced <i>aw-HAYV^B</i>]	<i>to desire, to breathe after; to love; to delight in; human love [for another] [familial, sexual]; human love [desire, appetite] for [food, drink, sleep, wisdom]; human love [for, to God]; God's love [toward men, people of Israel, righteousness]; to like</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #157 BDB #12
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: *...indeed now my husband will love me [because I bore him this son].*” As many women in the past have thought, if I bear a son for this man, then he will love me. A woman can love her own child so much that she naturally expects the father to follow suit. In this case, she expected Jacob to both love Reuben and herself as well.

The Geneva Bible: *[C]hildren are a great cause of mutual love between man and wife.*⁴³⁹

Most women (not all) develop a quick bond with a child that they have given birth to and will protect and guard that child against all evil. I am reminded of a house cat gone bad who occasionally lives around my house. She had two kittens, and this cat was not going to allow anyone near her kittens. She moves them from place to place pretty much daily, to avoid being detected. I have come to a standoff with this cat on my porch, where the kittens were nearby, and the cat was not going to move off my porch in front of me (and abandon her kittens).

With a normal woman, you don't want to say much else other than, “That is a beautiful baby,” despite the fact that it probably is not.

The man's feelings toward the woman can often be tied to his feelings toward a new child. A man who has been made a father without his consent is likely not to feel strong feelings toward the child, considering his resentment. This is not always the case; but rarely does the father have the same strong material feelings as does the mother.

In other words, because of the way that Leah became Jacob's wife—and she had to be in on this scheme (on their wedding night, at any time, Leah could have said, “Listen, I am not Rachel.”)—her children would never change Jacob's feelings toward her. Furthermore, Jacob, as a con man, does not like being conned. This is distinctly unappealing to him. He does not look to Laban and to his unexpected expectant wife Leah and have great admiration because they put one over on him. He probably resents that dramatically (although, we are simply informed that he preferred Rachel over Leah—[Gen. 29:30](#)).

James Burton Coffman was one of the few commentators who stated that he believed both Leah and Rachel to be in on this: *One is left to wonder about the reason for Leah's distress. Did she not consent to the deception that placed her in the bed that by right of seven years of slavery had been won for*

⁴³⁹ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Gen. 29:32.

Rachel by Jacob? Could she have been unaware that the wrong done to her sister was a very unlikely aid in winning the affections of Jacob? Was that deception, in which Leah was certainly an accomplice, the thing which provoked the resentment and hatred of Jacob? The fact is that the various evils which inherently belonged to that which Laban and his family did to Jacob set up and established an environment for Jacob's home in which happiness, in any ultimate sense, would forever be a stranger.⁴⁴⁰

Genesis 29:32 And Leah conceived and bore a son. And she called his name Reuben [= *behold, a son!*], for she said, "Surely Jehovah has looked upon my afflictions. Now therefore my husband will love me."

Leah is somewhat caught in the middle of all this; and Jacob should have been able to recognize that. After all, when Jacob deceived his father for the blessing, this was at the encouragement of his mother. Leah has essentially done the same thing to him, but as a result of the encouragement of her father. She is responsible for her actions; but it is her father who orchestrated all of this. She is probably much younger than Jacob and acting in part out of obedience to her father. Jacob, on the other hand, was a 40 year-old man when his mother convinced him to deceive his father.

We do not even know if Laban has deceived both of his daughters, as the negotiations for Rachel to be married to Jacob took place between Laban and Jacob. However, if Leah entered into this based upon deception, she still did not talk on her wedding night, which suggests that she was in on the deception. What woman would be absolutely silent on her wedding night? If she spoke, Jacob would have known who she was.

Leah, like many women, believes that giving her husband a son will change his affections toward her. In the names which she gives her children, it is clear that Leah is desirous of Jacob's friendship, respect and affection.

She bears Jacob his first son. The name *Reuben* means, *look, a son; check it out, a son; behold, a son*. This is exactly what is in her thinking. "Look at this, I produced a son for you!" Her hope is for Jacob to think of her in a more positive light.

Reuben, as the firstborn, ought to receive all the blessings of the firstborn—a double portion and the like. However, Reuben, in at least two future situations, will show himself not to be a leader. As the firstborn, Reuben was to provide leadership for his younger brothers; but he failed in doing this. He will be bypassed as the principle tribe to come from Jacob.

Scriptures on Reuben: Gen. 35:22 37:21–22, 29 42:22, 27 46:8–9 49:3–4 1Chron. 5:1.⁴⁴¹

The College Press Bible Study makes some excellent observations about the thinking and interpretation of these names over the years: "*On the etymology of the proper names of this and of the next chapter it has been remarked: 'the popular etymologies attached to the names are here extremely forced and sometimes unintelligible' (Skinner). Such a statement is the result of the critic's confusion. He acts on the assumption that these etymologies are to be scholarly efforts based on a careful analysis of Hebrew roots according to the Hebrew lexicon. Whereas, in reality, these are not etymologies at all but expressions wrought into the form of proper names, expressing the sentiments or the hopes associated with the birth of these sons, So someone or even the mother may have remarked at the birth of the first-born, 'Look, a son,' Reu-bhen.' What is there 'forced' or 'unintelligible' about such a name? The added explanation as to what further thoughts Leah associated with this name 'Reuben' do, indeed, not grow out of the words, 'look, a son,' but they lay bare the inmost thoughts of her heart.⁴⁴²*

⁴⁴⁰ From <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-29.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

⁴⁴¹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:32.

⁴⁴² *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:31–30:24.

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge estimates this date to be 1751 B.C.⁴⁴³

And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she says, “For has heard Y^ehowah that hated [am] I. And so he gives to me also this [son]” And so she calls his name Simeon.

Genesis
29:33

She conceived again and bore [another] son, saying, “Because Y^ehowah has heard that I am hated, He also gives me this [son].” And she named him Simeon.

She conceived again and bore another son, whom she named Simeon. She remarked, “Jehovah has heard that I am hated; and He therefore gave me this son.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she says, “For has heard Y ^e howah that hated [am] I. And so he gives to me also this [son]” And so she calls his name Simeon.
Targum of Onkelos	And she conceived again, and bare a son. And she said, Because it was heard before the Lord that I was hated, and He gave me this also: and so will be heard before Him the voice of my children when they shall be enslaved in Mizraim. And she called his name Shimeon.
Latin Vulgate	And again she conceived and bore a son, and said: Because the Lord heard that I was despised, he hath given this also to me: and she called his name Simeon.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she conceived again, and bore a son; and said, Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has therefore given me this <u>son</u> also; so she called his name Simeon.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she conceived again, and bore a second son to Jacob; and she said, Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, He has given to me this one also; and she called his name Simeon.
Significant differences:	<i>Son</i> is not found in the original Hebrew; but it is understood. The Syriac apparently includes this word.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then she became with child again, and gave birth to a son; and said, Because it has come to the Lord's ears that I am not loved, he has given me this son in addition: and she gave him the name Simeon.
Easy English	Leah became *pregnant again and she had a baby son. She said, `The *Lord has heard that Jacob did not love me. And so the *Lord has given me another son.' She called that son Simeon.
Easy-to-Read Version	Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named this son Simeon [This is like the word meaning "He hears."]. Leah said, “The Lord has heard that I am not loved, so he gave me this son.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "The LORD has given me this son also, because he heard that I was not loved"; so she named him Simeon.
<i>The Message</i>	She became pregnant again and had another son. "GOD heard," she said, "that I was unloved and so he gave me this son also." She named this one Simeon (GOD-Heard).

⁴⁴³ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:33.

NIRV	She became pregnant again. She had a son. Then she said, "The Lord heard that Jacob doesn't love me very much. That's why the Lord gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.
New Simplified Bible	She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said: »Certainly, Jehovah has heard that I am unloved. He has also given me this son.« She named him Simeon.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	She had a second son and named him Simeon, because she said, "The LORD has heard that my husband doesn't love me."
New Berkeley Version	Again she conceived and bore a son; she said, "Because the LORD has heard that I was slighted, He has given me this one also," so she named him Simeon.
New Century Version	Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She named him Simeon [Simeon This name sounds like the Hebrew word for "has heard."] and said, "The Lord has heard that I am not loved, so he has given me this son."
New Life Bible	Then she was going to have another child and she gave birth to a son. She said, "The Lord has given me this son also, because He has heard that I am not loved." So she gave him the name Simeon.
Translation for Translators	Later she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "Because Yahweh has heard that my husband doesn't love me, he has given me this son, too." So she named him Simeon, which means 'someone who hears.'

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then she got pregnant again and bore a second son to Jacob. [This time] she said: 'Because Jehovah has heard that I'm hated, He has also given me this one.' So she named him SimeOn (He Has Heard).
International Standard V	Later, she conceived again, bore a son, and declared, "Because the LORD heard that I'm neglected, he gave me this one, too." So she named him Simeon. The Heb. name <i>Simeon</i> means <i>heard</i>
Names of God Bible	She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "Certainly, Yahweh has heard that I'm unloved, and he also has given me this son." So she named him Simeon [Hearing].
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then she conceived again, and again bore a son; Fresh gift, said she, is fresh proof the Lord has come to hear of the despite done me; so she called him Simeon, Hearing.
Today's NIV	She 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.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	She conceived again and begot a son, saying, "When Yahweh heard of the hatred to me, he gave me this also", and called his name Simeon (<i>hear</i>).
Conservapedia	She fell pregnant again, and gave birth to a son, and said, "The LORD has heard that I was hated, and has therefore given me this one as well." And she named him Simeon.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, " Now the EVER-LIVING has heard that he hates me, so He has given to me also this;" and she called his name Simeon.
NIV – UK	She 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. <i>Simeon</i> probably means <i>one who hears</i> .

Urim-Thummim Version	Then she became pregnant again and gendered a son and said, because YHWH has heard that I was hated he has therefore given me this son also, and she called his name Simeon.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And she conceived again and bore a son, and said "because Yahweh has heard (Shama') that I am hated, and he also gave me this one, and she called him Shim'on (Simon).

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	She gave birth to another son and said, "Yahweh saw that I was neglected and has given me this son as well"; and she called him Simeon.
The Heritage Bible	And she conceived again, and bore a son; and said, Because Jehovah has heard that I was hated, he has therefore given me this son also; and she called his name Simeon.
New American Bible (2011)	She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "It means, 'The LORD heard that I was unloved,' and therefore he has given me this one also"; so she named him Simeon. Simeon : in popular etymology, related to shama', "he heard."
New Jerusalem Bible	Conceiving again, she gave birth to a son and said, 'Yahweh heard that I was unloved, and so he has given me this one too'; and she named him Simeon.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	She conceived again, gave birth to a son and said, "It is because ADONAI has heard that I am unloved; therefore he has given me this son also." So she named him Shim'on [hearing].
exeGesés companion Bible	And she conceives again and births a son; and says, Because Yah Veh hears I am hated, he also gives me this. - and she calls his name Shimon.
Kaplan Translation	She became pregnant again and had a son. 'God has heard (shama) that I was unloved,' she said, 'and He also gave me this son.' She named the child Simeon (Shim'on).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she conceived again, and bore ben; and said, Because Hashem hath heard I was hated, He hath therefore given me this also; and she called shmo Shimon.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[Leah] became pregnant again and bore a son and said, Because the Lord heard that I am despised, He has given me this son also; and she named him Simeon [God hears].
The Expanded Bible	Leah ·became pregnant [conceived] again and gave birth to another son. She named him Simeon [^C sounds like "has heard" in Hebrew] and said, "The Lord has heard that I am ·not loved [or hated], so he has given me this son."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also; and she called his name Simeon (hearing). God had heard her prayer for another son, and she believed this to be a guarantee that her husband would eventually love her also.
Lexham English Bible	And she conceived again and gave birth to a son. And she said, "[It is] because Yahweh has heard that I [am] unloved that he gave me this [son] also." And she called his name Simeon.
NET Bible®	She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, "Because the Lord heard that I was unloved [Heb "hated." See the note on the word "unloved" in v. 31.], he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon [The name Simeon (שמעון, shim'on) is derived from the verbal root שמע (shama') and means "hearing."]

The Pulpit Commentary	The name is appropriate since it is reminder that the Lord “heard” about Leah’s unloved condition and responded with pity. <i>And she conceived again, and bare a son</i> (probably the following year); <i>and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated</i> (the birth of Reuben had obviously not answered Leah’s expectations in increasing Jacob’s love), <i>he hath therefore given me this son also</i> (She faith and piety of Leah are as conspicuous as her affection for Jacob); <i>and she called his name Simeon</i> —i.e. Hearing, because God had heard that she was hated (ut supra).
The Voice	<i>In time, she conceived again and gave birth to another son.</i> Leah: Because the Eternal One has heard I am unloved, He has given me this son too.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and she conceived yet again and she brought forth a son and she said, given that YHWH ^[He Exists] heard, given that I am hated and he also gave to me this and she called out his title Shimon ^[Heard] ,...
Context Group Version	And she became pregnant again, and gave birth to a son: and said, Because YHWH has heard that I am spurned, he has therefore given me this [son] also. And she named him Simeon.
Green’s Literal Translation	And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, Surely Jehovah has heard that I am hated and has given this one to me also. And she called his name Simeon.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And she conceived again and bare a son, and said: the Lord has heard that I am despised, and has therefore given me this son also, and she called him Simeon.
New King James Version	Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon [Literally <i>Heard</i>].
Third Millennium Bible	And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon [that is, Hearing].
World English Bible	She conceived again, and bare a son, and said, "Because Yahweh has heard that I am hated, he has therefore given me this son also." She named him Simeon.
Young’s Updated LT	And she conceives again, and bears a son, and says, "Because Jehovah has heard that I am the hated one, He also gives to me even this one ;" and she calls his name Simeon.

The gist of this verse: Leah announces that, because God knows that she is not loved by her husband, she names her second child *Simeon*, which means *he hears*.

Genesis 29:33a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #2029 BDB #247

Genesis 29:33a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿōwd (ועד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728

Translation: *She conceived again...* Leah conceives again. Therefore, despite the circumstances, she was attractive enough to Jacob to cause him to have marital relations with her.

As previously discussed, it does appear that Jacob also has Rachel living with him at this time; obviously it is clear that Jacob and Leah are having marital relations. No matter how Jacob may feel about that; he certainly has some attraction to her.

Genesis 29:33b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (ולד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *...and bore [another] son,...* There will be an abundance of sons born to the women of Jacob.

Genesis 29:33c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Genesis 29:33c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
sânê ['] (שנא) [pronounced <i>saw-NAY</i>]	<i>to hate; in the participle, it is the ones hating; in the passive: those being hated by</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #8130 BDB #971
'ânôkîy (אניכי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59

Translation: ...saying, "Because Y^ehowah has heard that I am hated,... With the previous son, Y^ehowah saw her humiliation; here, God *hears* that she is hated.

Jacob has been deceived. Normally, he is the one doing the deceiving; so he is less than happy about Laban pulling the wool over his eyes. Certainly, he holds that against Leah as well.

On the other hand, when it comes to actual hatred, I don't believe that is occurring, because Jacob and Leah are producing children.

Matthew Poole: *The Lord has heard, i.e. perceived or understood; hearing being oft put for understanding.*⁴⁴⁴

Genesis 29:33d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

⁴⁴⁴ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:33 (slightly edited).

Genesis 29:33d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gam (גם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Translation: ...He also gives me this [son]." Leah draws the conclusion that God has given her a son because He knows that she is hated.

Genesis 29:33e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Shim ^e ôwn (שִׁמְעוֹן) [pronounced <i>shim^e-GOHN</i>]	<i>hearing, one who hears and is transliterated Simeon</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #8095 BDB #1035

Translation: And she named him Simeon. We first read what Leah was thinking and how she processed the event of bearing this son; and then she gives his name.

Genesis 29:33 She conceived again and bore another son, whom she named Simeon. She remarked, "Jehovah has heard that I am hated; and He therefore gave me this son."

On Simeon (Various Commentators)

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: Then she has another son, Simeon: "because the LORD has heard that I was unloved."⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁵ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

On Simeon (Various Commentators)

Stephen Armstrong: *Still, God shows more mercy. Leah and gives her a second son, whom she calls Simeon. The name means hearing, and Leah chooses this name to honor the Lord for hearing her sorrow at being unloved. This name is also important for two reasons. First, it tells us that Reuben didn't change Jacob's view of Leah. He remains in love with Rachel and has no feelings for Leah. Poor Leah is still hated. Secondly, it tells us that Leah was God fearing, a believer as we say today. She is conscious of God's work in her life and credits God for receiving two sons. Leah understands the truth, that the Lord is working to bring her husband back to her.*⁴⁴⁶

Dr. Peter Pett: *'Shimeon' means 'heard', that is 'God has heard.'* It initially celebrates the fact that Yahweh has heard in the giving of a son, but again Leah interprets it somewhat bitterly.⁴⁴⁷

Leupold: *Yahweh "heard" (shama'), so she calls him "hearing" (shim'on). So in Hebrew the idea becomes more readily apparent. Leah implies that she had asked for this child in prayer. Again she ascribes the son to the graciousness of "Yahweh." She must have been a woman of faith.*⁴⁴⁸

Clarke: *She called his name Simeon - שמעון shimon, hearing; i.e., God had blessed her with another son, because he had heard that she was hated - loved less than Rachel was.*⁴⁴⁹

E. W. Bullinger: *heard. Hebrew. sham'a (heard). Simeon. Hebrew. Shime'on (hearing). Figure of speech Paronomasia.*⁴⁵⁰

Gill: *...and she called his name Simeon: which signifies "hearing", and answers to the reason of her having him as she concluded.*⁴⁵¹

Whedon: *Simeon — Which means a hearing. Jehovah first looked; then he heard. Still she feels bitterly the lack of a husband's love. Her use of the word hated in this verse illustrates the peculiar meaning of that term. Comp. Gen. 29:30.*⁴⁵²

Arthur W. Pink: *The second son was also borne by Leah and was named Simeon, and her reason for thus naming him was as follows, "Because the Lord has heard that I was hated" (Gen. 29:33). The striking resemblance between these two utterances and what is recorded in Exodus in connection with the sufferings of Israel in Egypt is at once apparent. First, we read that "God looked upon the Children of Israel" (Ex. 2:25). Then, unto Moses He said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt" (Ex. 3:7). Then, corresponding with the words of Leah when Simeon was born, He adds, "And have heard their cry" (Ex. 3:7). It is surely something more than a mere coincidence that at the birth of Israel's first two sons their mother should have spoken of "affliction," which she said the Lord hath "looked upon" and "heard," and that these identical words should be found in the passage which describes the first stage in the national history of the Children of Israel who were then "hated" and "afflicted" by the cruel Egyptians. When the Lord told Moses He had seen the "affliction" of His people Israel and had "heard" their cry, did He not have in mind the very words which Leah had uttered long years before!*⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁶ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

⁴⁴⁷ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

⁴⁴⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

⁴⁴⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁵⁰ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁵¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁵² *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁵³ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_31.htm accessed August 13, 2017 (slightly edited).

On Simeon (Various Commentators)

The College Press Bible Study: *As for the second son Simeon, "Yahweh heard (shama), so she calls him 'hearing.'" "So in Hebrew the idea becomes more readily apparent. Leah implies that she has asked for this child in prayer. Again she ascribes the son to the graciousness of 'Yahweh.' She must have been a woman of faith."*⁴⁵⁴

The Cambridge Bible takes the odd-man-out position: *The meaning of this name is very likely that of an animal, "the hyaena"; cf. the Arabic sim', the hybrid offspring of the hyaena and the female wolf.*⁴⁵⁵

Regarding this, Leupold writes: *If after the simple and convincing explanation given, "Simeon" is by some deduced from the Arabic root—which signifies a beast which is a cross between a wolf and a hyena, we can but marvel and let such an explanation pass as an instance of critical arbitrariness.*⁴⁵⁶

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 29:33 And she [Leah] conceived again, and bore a son, and said, "Because Jehovah has heard that I was hated, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon [= *hearing, one who hears*].

Quite obviously, Leah is not hated. There are two women living under their roof (at least, on the same property), and it is clear that Jacob prefers Rachel. However, Leah cannot have children apart from Jacob's participation. Therefore, Jacob *hates Leah* only in comparison to Rachel. In a sense, this is an anthropopathism, where Jacob is assigned emotions which he does not actually have. He obviously has some affection for her; hence his fathering her children. However, just as obviously, his affection toward her is limited and she knows this.

Based upon things which will happen later, it is possible that Rachel even encourages Jacob, from time to time, to impregnate her sister (she does later on; we don't know about this time).

Simeon's name is built upon the verb *to hear*. God has heard that Jacob hates her, and therefore she names her second son, *hearing, one who hears*. With each child, Leah has a theme in her mind—and this theme is often related to her relationship to Jacob. No doubt, she has made her concerns known to Jacob (perhaps she said, "You never listen to me, but God hears you and He hears me.")

Simeon, ought to be there to take over in case Reuben is not quite up to the job; but he will overreact when his sister Dinah is raped (I know that it seems incongruous that a brother can overreact at the rape of his sister, but he does, and he will kill many innocent people).

When all of the brothers decide to sell Joseph, their youngest brother into slavery, it is Reuben who saves Joseph from being killed, but not from being sold into slavery. Simeon's name is not mentioned in this incident. It would be likely that he was a strong voice for killing Joseph; and then for selling him into slavery. When Joseph kept one of his brothers back in jail, he did not choose Reuben, the oldest; he chose Simeon. This suggests that he heard what Simeon was saying.

Eventually, the tribe of Simeon will appear to be subsumed by the tribe of Judah (who will be Leah's fourth-born).

⁴⁵⁴ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Gen. 29:31–30:24.

⁴⁵⁵ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁵⁶ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Many of the Simeon passages: Gen. 34:25, 30 35:23 42:24 46:10 49:5–6 Num. 1:22 Deut. 27:12 Judges 1:3 2Sam. 16:12 Ezek. 48:24.⁴⁵⁷

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge estimates this date to be 1750 B.C.⁴⁵⁸

And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she says, “Now the time is joined my man unto me for I have born to him three of sons.” Upon so was called his name Levi.

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29:34

She conceived again and bore a son and said, “At this time my husband will be joined to me for I have born three sons to him.” Therefore, she named him Levi.

She conceived again and bore Jacob another son, saying, “Now, my husband will be joined to me for I have given him three sons.” Therefore, she named her son Levi.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she says, “Now the time is joined my man unto me for I have born to him three of sons.” Upon so was called his name Levi.
Targum of Onkelos	And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, This time will my husband be united to me, because I have borne him three sons; <u>and thus will it be that my children shall be united to serve before the Lord</u> : therefore she called his name Levi.
Latin Vulgate	And she conceived <u>the third time</u> , and bore another son, and said: Now also my husband will be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons: and therefore she called his name Levi.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she conceived again, and bore a son; and said, Now this time my husband will surely <u>love</u> me, because I have born him three sons therefore she called his name Levi.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she conceived yet again, and bore a son, and said, In the present time my husband <u>will be with</u> me, for I have born him three sons; therefore she called his name Levi.
Significant differences:	The Latin has <i>the third time</i> rather than <i>again</i> . Instead of <i>joined to</i> , the Syriac has <i>loved</i> ; the Greek has <i>to be</i> . The targum has a lot of additional text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And she was with child again, and gave birth to a son; and said, Now at last my husband will be united to me, because I have given him three sons: so he was named Levi.
Easy English	Leah became *pregnant again and she had a baby son. And she said, ‘Now my husband will want me because I have had three sons for him.’ So Leah called that son Levi.
Easy-to-Read Version	Leah became pregnant again and had another son. She named the son Levi [This is like the word meaning “accompany,” “be joined together,” or “become close.”]. Leah said, “Now, surely my husband will love me. I have given him three sons.”

⁴⁵⁷ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁵⁸ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:34.

God's Word™	She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me because I've given him three sons." So she named him Levi [Attached].
Good News Bible (TEV)	Once again she became pregnant and gave birth to another son. She said, "Now my husband will be bound more tightly to me, because I have borne him three sons"; so she named him Levi.
The Message	She became pregnant yet again--another son. She said, "Now maybe my husband will connect with me--I've given him three sons!" That's why she named him Levi (Connect).
NIRV	She became pregnant again. She had a son. Then she said, "Now at last my husband will want me. I have had three sons by him." So the boy was named Levi.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	She became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She said, "Now, this time my husband will embrace me [Or <i>be connected to me</i>], since I have given birth to three sons for him." So she named him Levi [Sounds like the Heb verb <i>embrace</i> , or <i>connect</i>].
Contemporary English V.	When Leah's third son was born, she said, "Now my husband will hold me close." So this son was named Levi.
New Berkeley Version	She conceived again and bore a son; she said, "This time my husband will grow attached to me, for I have borne him three sons"; therefore he was named Levi.
New Life Bible	She was going to have another child and she gave birth to a son. She said, "Now this time my husband will be joined to me because I have given birth to his three sons." So she gave him the name Levi.
New Living Translation	Then she became pregnant a third time and gave birth to another son. He was named Levi [<i>Levi</i> sounds like a Hebrew term that means "being attached" or "feeling affection for."], for she said, "Surely this time my husband will feel affection for me, since I have given him three sons!"
Translation for Translators	Later she became pregnant again, and gave birth to another son. She said, "Now, finally, my husband will hold me close to him." So she named him Levi, which means 'hold close.'

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then she got pregnant a third time and bore a son, and said: 'Now my man will stay with me, because I've born three sons to him.' So she named him Levi (He Is Mine).
Beck's American Translation	When she had another baby boy, she said, "This time my husband will feel found to me because he and I have three sons." So she called him Levi [Joined].
International Standard V	Later, she conceived again and said, "This time my husband will become attached to me, now that I've borne him three sons." So he named him Levi. The Heb. name <i>Levi</i> means <i>joined</i>
Names of God Bible	She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me because I've given him three sons." So she named him Levi [Attached].
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then she conceived a third time, and bore another son; This time, she thought, my husband will be closely knit to me, now that I have borne him three sons, and she called him Levi, Knit together.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	She conceived again and begot a son, saying, "Now my man <i>will</i> escort me for a time, for I begat three sons to him", and so called the name over him Levi (<i>escort</i>).
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Conservapedia	She fell pregnant yet again, and gave birth to a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be obligated to me, because I have given birth to three sons for him." So he was named Levi.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, " Now certainly my husband will cling to me, for I have borne him three sons ; " therefore she called his name Levi.
NIV – UK	Again 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. <i>Levi</i> sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for <i>attached</i> .
Urim-Thummim Version	And she became pregnant again and gendered a son and said, now this time will my husband make love with me, because I have gendered him three sons, therefore was his name called Levi.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And she conceived again, and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will accompany (yelaweh) me, because I have born him three sons"; and for this reason called him Lewi (Levi).

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Again she gave birth to a son and said, "This time my husband will be united to me because I have borne him three sons." That is why he was called Levi.
New American Bible (2011)	Again she conceived and bore a son, and she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, since I have now borne him three sons"; that is why she named him Levi. Levi : related to yillaweh, "he will become attached."
New Jerusalem Bible	Again she conceived and gave birth to a son, and said, 'This time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.' Accordingly, she named him Levi.
Revised English Bible	She conceived again and had a son and said, "Now that I have borne him three sons my husband will surely be attached to me." So she called him Levi.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Once more she conceived and had a son; and she said, "Now this time my husband will be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore she named him Levi [joining].
The Complete Tanach	And she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, for I have borne him three sons; therefore, He named him Levi.

this time my husband will be attached: Heb. וְהָיָה לִי. Since the Matriarchs were prophetesses, they knew that twelve tribes would emanate from Jacob, and that he would marry four wives, she said, "From now on, he will find no fault with me for I have contributed my share in (producing) sons." - [from Bereishith Rabbathi, attributed to Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan, Midrash Aggadah] [i.e., three sons were thought to be each wife's share of the twelve.]

therefore: Whoever is referred to with the expression וְהָיָה לִי had a large population, except Levi, because the Ark destroyed many of them. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71:4]

He named him Levi: [I wondered why] it is written concerning this one, "and he named," while concerning all [the others], it is written, "and she named." There is an aggadic midrash in Deuteronomy Rabbah, [which relates] how the Holy One, blessed be He, sent Gabriel and he brought him (Levi) before Him, and He gave him this name, and He gave him the twenty-four priestly gifts; and because he accompanied him (וְהָיָה לִי) with gifts, he named him Levi.

exeGesés companion Bible	And she conceives again and births a son;
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and says,
Now this time my man joins me
because I birthed him three sons:
so his name is called Levi.

Hebrew Names Version	She conceived again, and bare a son. Said, "Now this time will my husband be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore was his name called Levi.
Kaplan Translation	She became pregnant again and had a son. 'Now my husband will become attached [Or 'indebted' (Hirsch).] (lavah) to me,' she said, 'because I have given him three sons.' [Jacob] therefore named the child Levi.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she conceived again, and bore ben; and said, Now this time will my ish yillaveh (become attached) unto me, because I have born him shloshah banim: therefore was shmo called Levi.
Restored Names Version	She conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Laywiy.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband is joined to me, because I have borne him three sons." So his name was called Lēwi.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And she became pregnant again and bore a son and said, Now this time will my husband be a companion to me, for I have borne him three sons. Therefore he was named Levi [companion].
The Expanded Bible	Leah ·became pregnant [conceived] again ·and gave birth to another son. She named him Levi [°sounds like "be close to" in Hebrew] and said, "Now, surely my husband will ·be close [bind/attach himself] to me, because I have given him three sons."
John Gill	And she conceived again, and bare a son,.... A third time, as soon as she well could after the former birth: and said, now this time will my husband be joined to me; in greater affection and stronger ties of love, and cleave unto her: because I have born him three sons; which she considered as a threefold cord, binding his affections to her, which could not be easily broke: and therefore was his name called Levi; which signifies "joined"; from him the Levites sprung, and had their name.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons; therefore was his name called Levi (attachment). From her earlier hope of gaining the full love of her husband and of being on an equality with Rachel before him she now drew back to the hope that he would at least remain attached to her in constant affection.
NET Bible®	She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, "Now this time my husband will show me affection [Heb "will be joined to me."], because I have given birth to three sons for him." That is why he was named Levi [The name Levi (לֵוִי, levi), the precise meaning of which is debated, was appropriate because it sounds like the verb הָוּל (lavah, "to join"), used in the statement recorded earlier in the verse].
The Pulpit Commentary	And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me,—הָוּל, to join, is the root from which comes לֵוִי. (Levi), her son's name—because I have borne him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi—Associated, or Joined.
Syndein/Thieme	{Jacob/Israel's Third born - Levi (Mother - Leah (3 rd)) And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons . . . therefore was his name called Levi {name means 'joined to'}."
The Voice	Then she conceived <i>for the third time</i> and gave birth to her <i>third</i> son.

Leah: Surely now my husband will be more attached to me, because I have given him three sons.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and she conceived yet again and she brought forth a son and she said, now this time my man will be joined to me given that I brought forth to him three sons therefore, she called out his title Lewi ^[Joined] ,...
	<u>Footnote:</u> - The word "he~did~call.out" is probably an error for "she~did~call.out" as Le'ah called out the names of the other three children (see 29:32, 29:33 and 29:35).
Concordant Literal Version	And pregnant is she again and is bearing a son. And saying is she, "Now once more will my husband be obligated to me, for I bear for him three sons. Therefore calling is she his name Levi.
Context Group Version	And she became pregnant again, and gave birth to a son. And said, Now this time will my man { or husband } be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons. Therefore he named him Levi.
English Standard Version	Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And she conceived yet, and bare a son, and said: now this once will my husband keep me company, because I have borne him three sons: and therefore she called his name Levi.
Modern KJV	And she conceived again, and bore a son, and said, Now this time my husband will return to me, because I have borne him three sons. Therefore his name was called Levi.
Third Millennium Bible	And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore was his name called Levi [that is, Joined].
Webster's Bible Translation	And she conceived again, and bore a son; and said, Now this time will my husband adhere to me, because I have borne him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.
World English Bible	She conceived again, and bare a son. Said, "Now this time will my husband be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore was his name called Levi.
Young's Updated LT	And she conceives again, and bears a son, and says, "Now <i>is</i> the time, my husband is joined unto me, because I have born to him three sons," therefore has <i>one</i> called his name Levi.

The gist of this verse: Leah gives birth to a 3rd son she names Levi, because it means *joined, attached*. She expected this third son would draw Jacob closer to her.

Genesis 29:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 29:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
ʿôwd (וְעַד) [pronounced gôhd]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *She conceived again and bore a son...* For a third time she conceives and bears another son to Jacob. At this same time, Rachel has not produced any children.

Genesis 29:34b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾattâh (אֲתָּהּ) [pronounced gâht-TAWH]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
paʿam (פַּעַם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]	<i>beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps; the connotation is the passage of time</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6471 BDB #821
lâvâh (לָוָה) [pronounced law-VAW]	<i>to join oneself to, to be joined to</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3867 BDB #530

Genesis 29:34b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
sh ^e lôshâh (שְׁלוֹשָׁה) [pronounced shiloh-SHAW]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
bânîym (בָּנָיִם) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...and said, “At this time my husband will be joined to me for I have born three sons to him.” Leah has hope eternal for her marriage to be better than it is.

Application: You cannot trick a man into loving you; and you cannot always make a marriage based upon manipulation good.

The actions of Leah, her expectations (as voiced here), and the relationship between Leah and Rachel really seems to give credence to the idea that Laban and his two daughters were all in agreement concerning this polygamous relationship with Jacob.

Genesis 29:34c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Genesis 29:34c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, 'al kên (לְעַן כֵּן) mean so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason. Literally, these words would be translated upon so, upon therefore, upon then.			
qârâ' (אָרַךְ) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
This is actually a masculine singular in the Hebrew; but Owens believes it should be a feminine singular.			
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Lêvîy (לֵוִי) [pronounced lay-VEE]	joined to transliterated Levi	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3878 BDB #532

Translation: Therefore, she named him Levi. Levi means *joined to*; and all of the times Leah names a child, a brief explanation is given first.

Genesis 29:34 She conceived again and bore Jacob another son, saying, "Now, my husband will be joined to me for I have given him three sons." Therefore, she named her son Levi.

On Levi (Various Commentators)

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Then the third son: "Now this time will my husband become attached to me." Because I am the one who can provide him with sons he will become more attached to me, so she names him Levi, which sounds like the Hebrew word meaning to join or to be attached. So there is this longing that is being expressed in her soul that her husband will love her and give his attention and affection to her.*⁴⁵⁹

Stephen Armstrong: *But Leah hasn't given up hope yet, so when she has a third son, she names him Levi. The name Levi means joined, because Leah is hopeful that a third son will finally be enough to join her to her husband. Interestingly, the Levites are the tribe who later join the nation. f Israel to the Lord in His temple. So the name prophetic in that it points to the role. f the priesthood which comes from Levi.*⁴⁶⁰

Dr. Peter Pett: *The name Levi is associated with the verb 'lavah', to be joined. Possibly it indicated that Leah now felt joined with her husband's God, Yahweh, but again she gives it her own bitter interpretation. Note the reference to Yahweh. She now worships her husband's God, for Yahweh can be worshipped anywhere.*⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

⁴⁶⁰ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

⁴⁶¹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

On Levi (Various Commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *joined*] From the root lavah, "to join." In Num. 18:2, 4, this word lavah is especially used of the attachment of the sons of Levi to the service of Jehovah, as the priestly tribe. According to many scholars, the name denotes the tribe par excellence of the Leah group; which, owing to some great disaster, was broken up, and the name survived only in the guild of Priests and their assistants. See on chap. 34 and Gen. 49:5–7.⁴⁶²

Clarke: *Therefore was his name called Levi* - לוי levi, joined; because she supposed that, in consequence of all these children, Jacob would become joined to her in as strong affection, at least, as he was to Rachel. From Levi sprang the tribe of Levites, who instead of the first-born, were joined unto the priests in the service of the sanctuary.⁴⁶³

E. W. Bullinger: *joined*. Hebrew. yillaveh (*joined*). Was his name called. Hebrew she called his name, with Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint. Error due to neglected abbreviation in primitive Hebrew text...Levi. Hebrew. Levi (*joiner*).⁴⁶⁴

Poole: *This time will my husband be joined unto me* in more sincere and fervent affection.⁴⁶⁵

Trapp: *And she conceived again.*] So, what she wanted in beauty, she had in fecundity or fruitfulness: and this redounded to God's greater glory, by Leah's thankfulness.⁴⁶⁶

Arthur W. Pink: *Jacob's third son was named Levi, and at his birth his mother said, "This time will my husband be joined to me"* (Gen. 29:34). Again these words of the mother point us forward to the beginning of Israel's national history. When was it that Jehovah was "joined" to Israel, and became her "husband"? It was on the eve of their leaving Egypt on the night of the Passover when the lamb was slain and its blood shed and sprinkled. Then it was Jehovah was "joined" to His people- just as now God is joined to us and becomes one with us only in Christ: it is in the Lamb slain, now glorified, that God and the believing sinner meet. And then it was that Jehovah entered into covenant relationship with the chosen Nation, and became their "Husband." Note how this very word is used in Jeremiah, and mark how this reference points back to the Passover night: *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: Not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they break, although I was an Husband unto them, says the Lord"* (Jer. 31:31, 32).⁴⁶⁷

Whedon: *Levi* — Which means a joining. Fondly now does she hope for a deeper and truer heart union with her husband.⁴⁶⁸

Leupold: *Here the play on words centres upon the root lavah which in the passive signifies "grow attached to."* How poor Leah must have thirsted for the love that was denied her. Leah now stands on pretty firm ground: any man would be grateful for three healthy sons; especially are men in the Orient minded thus.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶² *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁶³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁶⁴ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁶⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁶⁶ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁶⁷ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_31.htm accessed August 13, 2017 (slightly edited).

⁴⁶⁸ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁶⁹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:34 And she conceived again, and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will return to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore his name was called Levi [= *joined to*].

There is a certain psychology to all of this. Leah did marry Jacob first, even though it involved some duplicity. She believes that his feelings for her should be strongest or at least equal to his feelings for Rachel. You will notice that with every name Leah gives to each son, she is thinking about Jacob and her relationship to him. So, for her, despite how their marriage came about, it is still a marriage.

She names her third son *Levi*. The name *Levi* means *joined to*. So, like the previous two names, his name relates directly to her relationship (or lack of same) with Jacob. She did not feel *joined to* her husband; but this is what she desires. She wants to feel joined to her husband. Perhaps a 3rd son will cause them to be better joined to one another.

3 children into this marriage—even if Rachel is also married to Jacob—makes Leah think that there ought to be a greater connection between her husband and herself.

Levi, like Simeon, will overreact to their sister being raped, and many innocent men will die as a result. So he will not be a leader in this family.

It ought to be noted that these 12 patriarchs (the sons of Jacob, 4 of whom have been born) are not great spiritual giants (with the exception of Joseph, the youngest). We have already seen how Jacob has his own shortcomings, to say the least; his sons will also be deficient in many ways. The Jewish race is based upon God’s grace and God’s promises; it is not based upon the patriarchs being great people. God made promises to Abraham; He reiterated those promises to Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, His promises will be fulfilled.

The tribe of Levi will have the spiritual inheritance; but they will not inherit any specific plot of land.

In considering the first 3 sons, Dr. Peter Pett writes: *It is possible that we are to see these three sons as triplets, born at the same time. This would explain why they are treated together and help to explain how Jacob had so many sons in seven years. But if so it is not made clear in the text. (‘Conceived and bore’ three times in succession does not exclude the possibility. Chronology was only secondary in Hebrew tenses). More probably we may see Simeon and Levi as twins. Note how they are coupled in Jacob’s blessing (Gen. 49:5).⁴⁷⁰ Although an interesting pair of theories, I do not find any real supporting evidence, including the text cited.*

Texts on Levi: Gen. 34:25 35:23 46:11 49:5–7 Ex. 2:1 32:26–29 Deut. 33:8–10 1Chron. 6:38, 47 Rev. 7:7.⁴⁷¹

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge estimates this date to be 1749 B.C.⁴⁷²

And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she says, “The time I praise Y^ehowah.” Upon so she called his name Judah. And so she ceases from bearing.

Genesis
29:35

She conceived again and bore [another] son. Then she said, “This time I will praise Y^ehowah.” Therefore, she named him Judah. Then she [temporarily] ceased from bearing [children].

⁴⁷⁰ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

⁴⁷¹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁷² *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:35.

She conceived again and bore a fourth son. Then she said, "This time, I will praise Jehovah." Therefore, she named him Judah. After that, she ceased bearing children.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she says, "The time I praise Y ^e howah." Upon so she called his name Judah. And so she ceases from bearing.
Targum of Onkelos	And she conceived again, and bare a son, and said, This time will I give praise <u>before the Lord; for from this my son kings shall come forth, and from him shall spring Davids the king, who shall offer praise before the Lord</u> ; therefore she called his name Jehudah. And she ceased to bear.
Latin Vulgate	The <u>fourth time</u> she conceived and bore a son, and said: Now will I praise the Lord: and for this she called him Juda. And she left bearing.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she conceived again, and bore a son; and she said, This time I will praise the LORD; therefore she called his name Judah; and then she ceased bearing.
Septuagint (Greek)	And having conceived yet again, she bore a son, and said, Now yet again this time will I give thanks to the Lord; therefore she called his name, Judah; and ceased bearing.
Significant differences:	The Latin throws in <i>the fourth time</i> . The targum adds a great deal of text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And she was with child again, and gave birth to a son: and she said, This time I will give praise to the Lord: so he was named Judah; after this she had no more children for a time.
Easy English	Leah became *pregnant again and she had another baby son. She said, `This time I will praise the *Lord.' Therefore she called that son Judah. Then she stopped. She did not have any more children.
God's Word™	She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah [Praise]. Then she stopped having children.
The Message	She became pregnant a final time and had a fourth son. She said, "This time I'll praise GOD." So she named him Judah (Praise-GOD). Then she stopped having children.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	She became pregnant again and gave birth to a son. She said, "This time I will praise the Lord." So she named him Judah [Sounds like the Heb verb <i>praise</i>]. Then she stopped bearing children.
Contemporary English V.	She had one more son and named him Judah, because she said, "I'll praise the LORD!"
New Berkeley Version	Once more she conceived and bore a son; she said, "This time I will praise the LORD," so she named him Judah. Then she ceased bearing.
New Life Bible	She was going to have another child and she gave birth to a son. And she said, "This time I will praise the Lord." So she gave him the name of Judah. Then she stopped giving birth.
New Living Translation	Once again Leah became pregnant and gave birth to another son. She named him Judah [<i>Judah</i> is related to the Hebrew term for "praise."], for she said, "Now I will praise the Lord!" And then she stopped having children.

Translation for Translators Later she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "«This time/Now» I will praise Yahweh." So she called his name Judah, which sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'praise.' After that, she did not give birth to any more children.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Thereafter she got pregnant again and bore a [fourth] son. And she said: 'I give thanks to Jehovah once more.' So, she named him Judah (Praised). And after that, she didn't have any more children.

Beck's American Translation When she ad another baby boy, she said, "Now I will praise the LORD." So she called him Judah ["Praised"]. Then she stopped having children.

International Standard V Then she conceived yet again, bore a son, and said, "This time I'll praise the LORD." So she named him Judah [The Heb. name *Judah* means *praise*]. Then she stopped bearing children.

Names of God Bible She became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She said, "This time I will praise **Yahweh**." So she named him Judah [Praise]. Then she stopped having children.

New Advent (Knox)Bible And when she conceived a fourth time, and bore a son, she said, Now I may praise the Lord, and she called him Juda, Praise. Then, for a while, she had no more children.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear She conceived again, and begot a son, saying, "*This* time I acknowledge Yahweh." So she called the name over him Judah (*acknowledge*), and quit begetting.

Conservapedia She fell pregnant a fourth time, and gave birth to a son. She said, "Now I will acclaim the LORD." So she named him Judah. Then she stopped giving birth.

Ferar-Fenton Bible She also conceived again and bore a son, and she said "This time I will praise the Lord," so she called his name Judah. Then she ceased to bear children.

Urim-Thummim Version And she became pregnant again and gendered a son and she said, now will I praise YHWH, so she called his name Judah, and ceased bearing children.

Wikipedia Bible Project And she conceived again, and bore a son, and said: "This time I will thank (Odeh) Yahweh", so she called him Yehuda (Judah); and stopped bearing children.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002) Once more she conceived and bore a son, and she said, "This time I will give grateful praise to the LORD"; therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing children. Judah: related to odeh, "I will give grateful praise."

New American Bible (2011) Once more she conceived and bore a son, and she said, "This time I will give thanks to the LORD"; therefore she named him Judah [**Judah**: related to 'odeh, "I will give thanks, praise."]. Then she stopped bearing children. Mt 1:2; Lk 3:33.

New Jerusalem Bible Again she conceived and gave birth to a son, and said, 'Now I shall praise Yahweh!' Accordingly, she named him Judah. Then she had no more children.

Revised English Bible Once more she conceived and had a son, and said, "Now I shall praise the LORD"; therefore she named him Judah. Then for a while she bore no more children.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible She conceived yet again, had a son and said, "This time I will praise ADONAI"; therefore she named him Y'hudah [praise]. Then she stopped having children.

The Complete Tanach And she conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "This time, I will thank the Lord! Therefore, she named him Judah, and [then] she stopped bearing.

This time, I will thank: since I have taken more than my share. Consequently, I must offer up thanks. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71:4]

exeGesés companion Bible	And she conceives again and births a son: and she says, At this time I spread hands to Yah Veh: so she calls his name Yah Hudah; and stays from birthing.
Kaplan Translation	She became pregnant again and had a son. She said, 'This time let me praise (odeh) God,' and named the child Judah (Yehudah). She then stopped having children.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she conceived again, and bore ben; and she said, Now will odeh (I praise) Hashem; therefore she called shmo Yehudah; and stopped giving birth.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Again she conceived and bore a son, and she said, Now will I praise the Lord! So she called his name Judah [praise]; then [for a time] she ceased bearing.
The Expanded Bible	Then Leah gave birth to another son. She named him Judah [^c sounds like "praise" in Hebrew], because she said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Then Leah stopped having children.
John Gill	And she conceived again, and bare a son,.... A fourth son, a son in whose line, and from whose tribe, the Messiah was to spring: and she said, now will I praise the Lord; she had praised him before for looking on her affliction, and hearing her cries, and giving her one son after another; but now she determines to praise him more than ever, having a fresh instance of his goodness to her: the Targum of Jonathan adds this as a reason, "because from this my son shall come forth kings, and from him shall come forth David the king, who shall praise the Lord." And why may it not be as well supposed that she had knowledge of the Messiah springing from him, which would greatly heighten and increase her joy and praise? and therefore she called his name Judah; which signifies "praise". A further improvement is made of this name, and the signification of it, in Gen. 49:8. According to the Jewish writers (y), these four sons of Jacob were born, Reuben on the fourteenth day of Chisleu, or November, and lived one hundred and twenty four years; Simeon on the twenty first of Tebeth, or December, and lived one hundred and twenty years; Levi on the sixteenth of Nisan, or March, and lived one hundred and thirty seven years; and Judah on the fifteenth of Sivan, or May, and lived one hundred and nineteen years. And all these names being of the Hebrew language, and derived from words in it, show that this language, or what was much the same with it, was spoken in Laban's family, and had been continued from Nahor, as it had been in Isaac's family from Abraham: and left bearing; that is, for a while, for after this she bore two sons and a daughter; see Gen. 30:17.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she said, Now will I praise the Lord; therefore she called his name Judah (praise of God, one for whom one praises God); and left bearing. Leah now turned entirely away from herself to Jehovah, who now also stopped her bearing for a time, lest she begin to trust in herself. The lesson that all good gifts come down from God and are given by His merciful goodness cannot be learned too well.
NET Bible®	She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, "This time I will praise the Lord." That is why she named him Judah [The name Judah (יְהוּדָה, yĕhūdāh) means "he will be praised" and reflects the sentiment Leah expresses in the statement recorded earlier in the verse. For further discussion see W. F. Albright, "The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah' with an Excursus on the Etymology of Todah and

The Pulpit Commentary Torah," JBL 46 (1927): 151-85; and A. R. Millard, "The Meaning of the Name Judah," ZAW 86 (1974): 216-18.]. Then she stopped having children. And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord. Well she might; for this was the ancestor of the promised seed (Murphy). There cannot be a doubt that her excellence of character as well as eminence of piety eventually wrought a change upon her husband (vide Gen. 31:4, Gen. 31:14; Gen. 49:31). Therefore she called his name Judah (i.e. Praise); and left bearing. Literally, stood still, i.e. ceased, from bearing. Not altogether (Gen. 30:16); only for a time, "that she might not be unduly lifted up by her good fortune, or attribute to the fruitfulness of her own womb what the faithfulness of Jehovah, the covenant God, had bestowed upon her" (Keil.).

The Voice And once again, she conceived and gave birth to her *fourth* son. **Leah:** This time I will praise the Eternal One! So Leah named this son Judah. After Judah, Leah didn't have any more children for a while.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and she conceived yet again and she brought forth a son and she said, this time I will thank YHWH ^[He Exists] therefore she called out his title Yehudah ^[Praised] and she stood from bringing forth,...

Concordant Literal Version And pregnant is she again, and is bearing a son. And saying is she, "Now once more will I acclaim Yahweh. Therefore calling is she his name Judah. And staying is she from bearing.

Context Group Version And she became pregnant again, and gave birth to a son. And she said, This time I will praise YHWH. Therefore she named him Judah. And she left off bearing..

Darby Translation And she again conceived, and bore a son, and said, This time will I praise Jehovah; therefore she called his name Judah. And she ceased to bear.

English Standard Version And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.

New King James Version And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah [Literally *Praise*]. Then she stopped bearing.

Webster's Bible Translation And she conceived again, and bore a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah, and left bearing.

World English Bible She conceived again, and bare a son. She said, "This time will I praise Yahweh." Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

Young's Updated LT And she conceives again, and bears a son, and says this time, "I praise Jehovah;" therefore has she called his name Judah; and she ceases from bearing.

The gist of this verse: Judah, Leah's 4th son, is born; and she praises the Lord as a result. After that, she stopped bearing children for awhile.

Genesis 29:35a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (I) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 29:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
ʿôwd (וְעַד) [pronounced gôhd]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: She conceived again and bore [another] son. For the fourth time, she bears another son. Again, this means that she and Jacob continued to have relations. Although we are never given much information about polygamous marriages in the Bible, I would guess that Rachel had to agree to this.

Genesis 29:35b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
pa'am (פַּעַם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]	<i>beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps; the connotation is the passage of time</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6471 BDB #821
yâdâh (יָדָה) [pronounced yaw-AWH]	<i>to profess, to confess; to show or point out [with the hand extended]; to give thanks, to praise, to celebrate</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3034 BDB #392

Genesis 29:35b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: Then she said, “This time I will praise Y^ehowah.” She named her previous children based upon her difficult relationship with Jacob. However, this time, she praises God for these children whom she has born. So, Jacob is not a part of this celebration. This is a big change in Leah’s mental attitude. Previously, her mental attitude was dependent upon Jacob; and now she is becoming more dependent upon God.

Genesis 29:35c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah!</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

Together, ‘al kên (עַל כֵּן) mean *so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason*. Literally, these words would be translated *upon so, upon therefore, upon then*.

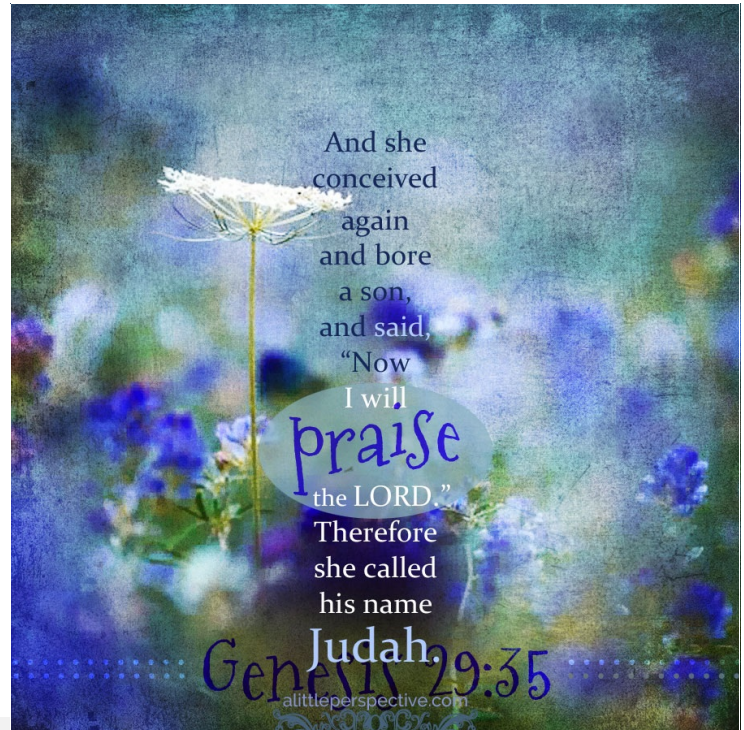
qârâ' (אָרַךְ) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Y ^e hûwdâh (יהודה) [pronounced <i>y^ehoo- DAW</i>]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

Translation: Therefore, she named him Judah. We will need to carefully observe what the Bible tells us about these first 4 sons, because it is Judah who will become preeminent among them.

Genesis 29:35 (a graphic); from **A Little Perspective**; accessed August 11, 2017.

Gen. 29:35a-c She conceived again and bore a fourth son. Then she said, “This time, I will praise Jehovah.” Therefore, she named him Judah. You will recall that Leah’s focus, when giving birth to her previous 3 sons, was on Jacob. This time, her focus is upon God. Now, we do not know how this happened; we do not know from where Leah received spiritual information. Did Jacob recite the book of Genesis to her and to her children? Did she take it to heart?

I maintain that Jacob actually knew the book of Genesis, but he did not always choose to believe it. He knew enough to memorize it and recite it. He added stories about himself. However, Leah heard spiritual information, she took it into her soul and believed it.



Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 29:35a-c She conceived again and bore a fourth son. Then she said, “This time, I will praise Jehovah.” Therefore, she named him Judah.

On Judah (Various Commentators)

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *[F]inally she is going to realize that the only way she is going to have happiness and stability in life is because of God. We see that with the fourth son, Judah. He circumstances haven't changed but she is going to name her fourth son Judah which is based on the Hebrew word meaning to confess or to praise or to give thanks. So she recognizes that she is just going to have to relax and praise God and He is the one who is going to give her happiness and fulfillment and meaning in life.*⁴⁷³

Stephen Armstrong: *Finally, Leah has a fourth son, Judah. The name means praise, as in praise the Lord. She is praising the Lord for having been given four sons in a row, which was quite an honor. So this provides further confirmation that the Lord has selected Leah for Jacob, but he is won't listen.*⁴⁷⁴

Lange: *Signification of the word from which “Judah” is derived: 1 to thank; 2 to commend; 3 to praise; 4 to confess. From this Judah all Jews received their beautiful name.*⁴⁷⁵

Matthew Henry: *This was he, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving. Fresh favours should quicken us to praise God for former favours; Now will I praise the Lord more and better than I have done. All our praises must centre in Christ, both as the matter of them, and as the Mediator of them. He descended after the flesh from him whose name was “Praise,” and He is our praise. Is Christ formed in my heart? Now will I praise the Lord.*⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

⁴⁷⁴ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

⁴⁷⁵ *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

⁴⁷⁶ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35.

On Judah (Various Commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *praise*] From the Heb. *hōdah*. Judah] Heb. *Jehudah*. This is the regular form of the name in the O.T. The origin of the name is uncertain; but its sound resembles that of the word for "praise." On Judah, see notes on chap. 38 and Gen. 49:8–12.⁴⁷⁷

Clarke: She called his name Judah - יהודה *yehudah*, a confessor; one who acknowledges God, and acknowledges that all good comes from his hands, and gives him the praise due to his grace and mercy. From this patriarch the Jews have their name, and could it be now rightly applied to them, it would intimate that they were a people that confess God, acknowledge his bounty, and praise him for his grace.

Clarke continues: *Left bearing* - That is, for a time; for she had several children afterwards. Literally translated, the original תדלמ דמעת *taamod milledeth* - she stood still from bearing, certainly does not convey the same meaning as that in our translation; the one appearing to signify that she ceased entirely from having children; the other, that she only desisted for a time, which was probably occasioned by a temporary suspension of Jacob's company, who appears to have deserted the tent of Leah through the jealous management of Rachel.⁴⁷⁸

Dr. Peter Pett: With three sons her confidence had returned. Everyone would be congratulating her. So when a fourth is born she can express praise to Yahweh. Her husband's God has been good to her and she acknowledges His goodness in the name of her son. The cessation of bearing is temporary (Gen_30:17), although lasting for some fair period, so that she seeks to maintain her position by bearing children through her handmaid.⁴⁷⁹

Whedon: Judah...means, one to be praised. Compare Gen. 49:8.⁴⁸⁰

Leupold: Apparently her hopes are by this time realized; she is no longer disregarded or loved but little. But in a sense of true devoutness she lets all praise be given to Yahweh and here contents herself with pure praise. Without knowing Hebrew one can hardly see the connection between the name and the words spoken. "I praise" — 'ōdheh, a Hifil, active form. The passive, third person, is yūdheh — "he will be praised." This form distends itself into Yehudwhah, a form still having the same meaning.⁴⁸¹

Arthur W. Pink: Jacob's fourth son was Judah, and upon his birth the mother said, "*Now will I praise the Lord*" (Gen. 29:35). As Leah's words at Levi's birth point us back to the Passover, so her words at Judah's birth carry us forward to the crossing of the Red Sea, where Israel celebrated Jehovah's victory over their foes in song and praised the Lord for their wondrous deliverance. Then it was that, for the first time, Israel sang: "*Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*" (Ex. 15:11). Mark, too, that the Psalmist when referring back to this momentous event said, "*And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they His words: they sang His praise*" (Psalm 106:11, 12).⁴⁸²

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

There also seems to be a difference in the way that her children are raised. Judah will become the leading tribe. Reuben, as the firstborn, will not be a natural leader. Neither will Simeon. Levi will become the spiritual tribe (and Moses, from the tribe of Levi, will become the leader of the Jews).

⁴⁷⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen. 29:35.

⁴⁷⁸ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:35.

⁴⁷⁹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:35.

⁴⁸⁰ Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Gen. 29:35.

⁴⁸¹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxx.html> accessed August 12, 2017.

⁴⁸² From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_31.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

Genesis 29:35d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿamad (עמד) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHD</i>]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand; to stop, to cease</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
min (מן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâlad (ילד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

Translation: Then she [temporarily] ceased from bearing [children]. Then, she stops bearing children. This suggests that she and Jacob continued to have relations, but they did not result in conception.

This is an odd place to end. The next chapter picks up with more children being born to Jacob, but by Rachel and by the two personal servants. This continues, with some interesting narrative, to Gen. 30:25, where Rachel has a son, and then Jacob asks his father-in-law/uncle to send him back to the land of Canaan. Gen 30:25 is a pivotal verse: *As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country.* Up until that point, we simply have children being born plus some interesting narrative. However, my point is, it would have made more sense for this chapter to be continued through Gen. 30:24, and a new chapter begun at v. 25.

In any case, Gen. 30 contains two very odd incidents, both of which have caused people to criticize and doubt the veracity of Scriptures.

Further study on Judah can be found here: Gen. 35:26 38:1–30 43:8–9 44:18–34 46:12 49:8–12 Num. 1:26 Deut. 33:7 1Chron. 5:2, Matt. 1:2 Luke 3:33.⁴⁸³

Genesis 29:35 And she conceived again, and bore a son; and she said, "This time I will praise Jehovah." Therefore she called his name Judah [= *praised, to be praised*], and quit bearing.

She names him *Judah*, which means *to praise, to be praised*.

This is a big change for Leah. For the other previous three children, she named them in such a way to indicate that she was concerned about Jacob's feelings for her. Her eyes were focused on the wrong thing. However, with Judah, Leah's focus is changed. She puts her focus upon God. She praises God for this son.

It is a mistake to go through life with your eyes on yourself, on other people or on things. Your eyes ought to be on God (which is *not* some mystical experience; it is knowing Who God is and trusting in His Word, as God *reveals* Himself).

⁴⁸³ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Gen. 29:35.

So, at this point, we have 4 sons: Reuben (*behold, a son!*), Simeon (*to hear*), Levi (*joined to*) and Judah (*praised*); all from Leah. You will note that this portrays the gospel message.⁴⁸⁴ Behold, a son! Hear (or *listen and obey*) [Him]; [with the result that we are] joined [to Him]; [with the result that we may] praise [Him].

We do not know why she stops bearing children. I believe that with these first 4 children, we have the gospel message, which is complete. Therefore, God temporarily ceased blessing their marriage with children. Obviously, if Jacob stopped having relations with her, she would no longer bear children. However, that does not appear to be the reason (which will be made more clear as we continue in this chapter).

Jacob was fooled into consummating marriage with Leah, a woman that he had no interest in marrying in the first place. All of this took place at night, and the proof of her virginity was most certainly collected and taken to Laban to store.

Jacob agreed to 7 more years of labor in exchange for Rachel's hand in marriage; and he was apparently granted her hand in marriage before completing this 7 years of labor. Although this is never carefully laid out, Jacob appears to come to an agreement with Laban where Jacob is given Rachel as his wife in addition to Leah—and he owes Laban 7 years more years of service (which he will faithfully give).

There is a chapter break, at this point; but Gen. 30:1 will continue the topic of Jacob's children. This will continue through v. 13, insert some related narrative after that. Up through v. 24, Jacob will continue to father sons.

These 4 sons, born in this order, actually tell a story.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Names were also significant; and those which Leah gave to her sons were expressive of her varying feelings of thankfulness or joy, or allusive to circumstances in the history of the family. There was piety and wisdom in attaching a signification to names, as it tended to keep the bearer in remembrance of his duty and the claims of God.*⁴⁸⁵

Leah's First 4 Sons (Various Commentators)

Stephen Armstrong: *Look at the progression of Leah's names. First she assumes that a first-born son will be enough to win her husband over, so she names him Reuben. When Reuben fails to have that effect, she names the next son Simeon, because she knows the Lord is taking note of her situation. After he fails to win Jacob, she has a third son she names Levi, assuming a third time is the charm. But now that all three sons have failed to impress Jacob, she seems to have given up hope of winning her hard-hearted husband. The fourth son is a tribute to the Lord, praise to the Lord. Leah's husband is the Lord and she is praising Him for His faithfulness. If you want further proof that the Lord intended Leah for Jacob, consider two of the sons she brings into the world. Levi is the tribe of priests. And Judah is the tribe of kings. More importantly, Leah is in the line to the Messiah, the seed promise, while Rachel isn't.*⁴⁸⁶

Dr. Peter Pett: *The names given by Leah are used to express the pain in her heart by a play on words. She is afflicted, Yahweh has heard that she is unloved, and she feels that her husband is not really one with her. But now that she has borne a full complement of sons - three is the number of completeness - she is confident that he will now regard her. She knows how important sons will be to him and is aware that she has fulfilled her responsibility.*⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Taken from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/gab/view.cgi?bk=4&ch=34> (Arno Gaebelein's Annotated Bible); accessed May 25, 2015.

⁴⁸⁵ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

⁴⁸⁶ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_29c.pdf accessed August 7, 2017 (slightly edited).

⁴⁸⁷ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Gen. 29:32–35.

Leah's First 4 Sons (Various Commentators)

Barnes: *Leah had qualities of heart, if not of outward appearance, which commanded esteem. She had learned to acknowledge the Lord in all her ways. "Simon" - answer. She had prayed to the Lord, and this was her answer. "Levi" - union, the reconciler. Her husband could not, according to the prevailing sentiments of those days, fail to be attached to the mother of three sons. "Judah" - praised. Well may she praise the Lord; for this is the ancestor of the promised seed. It is remarkable that the wife of priority, but not of preference, is the mother of the seed in whom all nations are to be blessed. Levi the reconciler is the father of the priestly tribe. Simon is attached to Judah. Reuben retires into the background.*⁴⁸⁸

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Leah was blessed with children, which compensated her for the loss of her husband's love. The names of the four sons successively born to her were all significant, and betoken that pious habit of mind which recognised the hand of God in all that befel her. She called the firstborn, Reuben, Heb. "see ye a son." The second, Simeon, Heb. "hearing," for God had heard her prayer and seen her affliction. The third was named Levi, Heb. "joined." Now, surely, would the breach be healed and the husband and wife joined together by this threefold cord. The fourth she called Judah, Heb. "praise," as if recording her thankfulness that she had won the affections of her husband by bearing to him so many sons. Rachel, on the other hand, continued barren. But she was compensated by her beauty, and by the thought that she was first in her husband's affections. Thus with the evils which fall to the lot of individuals, there are compensations.*⁴⁸⁹

Matthew Henry: *The names Leah gave her children were expressive of her respectful regards both to God and to her husband.*

Henry continues: (1.) *She appears very ambitious of her husband's love: she reckoned the want of it her affliction (Gen. 29:32); not upbraiding him with it as his fault, nor reproaching him for it, and so making herself uneasy to him, but laying it to heart as her grief, which yet she had reason to bear with the more patience because she herself was consenting to the fraud by which she became his wife; and we may well bear that trouble with patience which we bring upon ourselves by our own sin and folly. She promised herself that the children she bore him would gain her the interest she desired in his affections. She called her first-born Reuben (see a son), with this pleasant thought, Now will my husband love me; and her third son Levi (joined), with this expectation, Now will my husband be joined unto me, Gen. 29:34. Mutual affection is both the duty and comfort of that relation; and yoke-fellows should study to recommend themselves to each other, 1Cor. 7:33, 1Cor. 7:34.*

Henry continues: (2.) *She thankfully acknowledges the kind providence of God in it: The Lord hath looked upon my affliction, Gen. 29:32. "The Lord hath heard, that is, taken notice of it, that I was hated (for our afflictions, as they are before God's eyes, so they have a cry in his ears), he has therefore given me this son." Note, Whatever we have that contributes either to our support and comfort under our afflictions or to our deliverance from them, God must be owned in it, especially his pity and tender mercy. Her fourth she called Judah (praise), saying, Now will I praise the Lord, Gen. 29:35. And this was he of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.*⁴⁹⁰

Keil and Delitzsch: *Leah had four sons in rapid succession, and gave them names which indicated her state of mind: (1) Reuben, "see, a son!" because she regarded his birth as a pledge that Jehovah had graciously looked upon her misery, for now her husband would love her; (2) Simeon, i.e., "hearing," for Jehovah had heard, i.e., observed that she was hated; (3) Levi, i.e., attachment, for she hoped that this time, at least, after she had born three sons, her husband would become attached to her, i.e., show her some affection; (4) Judah (יְהוּדָה, verbal, of the fut. hoph. of יָדָה), i.e., praise, not merely the praised one, but the one for whom Jehovah is praised.*⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35.

⁴⁸⁹ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:29–35 (Homiletics).

⁴⁹⁰ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35 (slightly edited).

⁴⁹¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Gen. 29:31–35.

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The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Leah was blessed with children, which compensated her for the loss of her husband's love. The names of the four sons successively born to her were all significant, and betoken that pious habit of mind which recognised the hand of God in all that befel her. She called the firstborn, Reuben, Heb. "see ye a son." The second, Simeon, Heb. "hearing," for God had heard her prayer and seen her affliction. The third was named Levi, Heb. "joined." Now, surely, would the breach be healed and the husband and wife joined together by this threefold cord. The fourth she called Judah, Heb. "praise," as if recording her thankfulness that she had won the affections of her husband by bearing to him so many sons. Rachel, on the other hand, continued barren. But she was compensated by her beauty, and by the thought that she was first in her husband's affections.*⁴⁹²

Utle: "*Leah conceived and bore him a son and named him Reuben*" Reuben (BDB 910, "behold a son" from the VERB "to see," BDB 909) is the popular etymology for the term "seen" (BDB 906, KB 1157, Qal PERFECT, "to see").⁴⁹³

Utle: "*Then she conceived again and bore a son. . . Simeon*" The word "Simeon" (BDB 1035) is the popular etymology from the Hebrew word "heard" or "the Lord heard" (BDB 1033, KB 1570, Qal PERFECT).⁴⁹⁴

Utle: "*She conceived again and bore a son. . . Levi*" His name (BDB 532 I) is from the popular etymology for "joined" (BDB 530 I, KB 522, Niphal IMPERFECT). Leah longed for a deeper emotional relationship with Jacob.⁴⁹⁵

Utle: Gen. 29:35 "*she conceived again and bore a son. . . Judah*" This one is the son that God chose to fulfill His promise. His name means "praise" (BDB 397), which is a play on "I will praise YHWH" (BDB 392, KB 389, Hiphil IMPERFECT). His name becomes the name of a tribe, then a nation, and then all Jewish people. The three older sons will be rejected because of their improper acts. Again, it is interesting that God chose the woman who was less loved to bring forth the line of the Messiah. This reversal of expected events is common in Genesis and shows YHWH's control and sovereignty.⁴⁹⁶

Matthew Henry: *The names Leah gave her children, expressed her respect and regard, both to God and to her husband. Reuben, or See a son, with this thought, Now will my husband love me; Levi, or joined, expecting, Now will my husband be joined unto me. Mutual affection is both the duty and comfort of the married relation; and yoke-fellows should study to recommend themselves to each other, 1Cor. 7:33, 1Cor. 7:34. She thankfully acknowledges the kind providence of God in hearing her. Whatever supports and comforts us under afflictions, or tends to our deliverance from them, God must be owned in it. Her fourth son she called Judah, or praise, saying, Now will I praise the Lord.*⁴⁹⁷

E. W. Bullinger: *praise. Hebrew. 'odeh (I shall, or. Let me praise); ye hudah (he shall be praised). Compare Gen. 49:8...left: i.e. for a time.*⁴⁹⁸

Arthur W. Pink: *[Herein is] the Gospel and the history of a sinner saved by grace is here found in veiled form.*⁴⁹⁹

Arthur Pink also describes, to some extent, how these first four sons parallel the time of the **exodus**.

⁴⁹² *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:29–35.

⁴⁹³ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:32.

⁴⁹⁴ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:33.

⁴⁹⁵ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 29:34.

⁴⁹⁶ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Gen. 39:35.

⁴⁹⁷ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31–35.

⁴⁹⁸ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:35.

⁴⁹⁹ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_31.htm accessed August 13, 2017.

Arno Gaebelein makes this grand observation: *Interesting are the names of the sons of [the first 4 sons of] Leah. Reuben (behold a Son!); Simeon (hearing); Levi (joined); Judah (praise). It is the order of the gospel.*⁵⁰⁰

To explain Arno Gaebelein: we first have the Son of God, Jesus Christ (*behold, a Son!*). We hear Him; we give a listen to the gospel (*hearing*). In salvation, we are put in union with Jesus Christ and joined to God through Jesus Christ (*joined*). Our proper response to this union is praise, which all believers will have in eternity (*praise*).

Arthur W. Pink: *Reuben, Jacob's first-born, means, "See, a Son!" This is just what God says to us through the Gospel: to the Son of His love we are invited to look- "Behold the lamb of God." Then comes Simeon whose name signifies "Hearing" and this points to the reception of the Gospel by faith, for faith comes by hearing, and the promise is, "Hear, and your soul shall live." Next in order is Levi, and his name means "Joined," telling of the blessed Union by which the Holy Spirit makes us one with the Son through the hearing of the Word. In Judah, which means "Praise," we have manifested the Divine life in the believer, expressed in joyous gratitude for the riches of grace which are now his in Christ.*⁵⁰¹

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

The basic idea for this came from the writings of Arthur W. Pink. The ESV; capitalized is used below.

How the Names of Leah's Sons Parallel the Exodus and the Gospel

Name	Exodus	The Gospel
Reuben	The sons of Jacob are <i>afflicted</i> (Leah remarks that the Lord looks upon her and her situation and sees that she is <i>afflicted</i>). She says, "...the LORD has looked upon my affliction..." God looked upon the sons of Israel and observed that they were afflicted.	Leah speaks of herself as being <i>afflicted</i> (as we are with the curse of the sin nature and our personal sins). God looks upon us as afflicted and as cursed. The solution is the Son of God (Leah names her first son, <i>See a Son!</i>).
Scripture	Exodus 2:25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew. See Ex. 3:9, 16 as well. Exodus 3:16b–17 [God is speaking to the children of Israel:] "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to...a land flowing with milk and honey." See Neh. 9:9 Acts 7:34 as well.	Luke 1:25 "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." Psalm 25:16–18 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted . The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. See Psalm 102:18–21 as well.
Simeon	Leah says, "...the LORD has heard that I am hated ..." God could hear the cries of the sons of Israel coming up to Him from Egypt, enslaved because they were hated. Leah's second son's name means <i>hearing</i> .	God has heard of our situation here on this earth, where we are in the slave market of sin. We do not have the means by which we can buy ourselves. We cannot save ourselves.

⁵⁰⁰ Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1.

⁵⁰¹ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_31.htm accessed August 13, 2017 (slightly edited).

How the Names of Leah's Sons Parallel the Exodus and the Gospel

Name	Exodus	The Gospel
Scripture	<p>Exodus 2:23–24 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.</p> <p>Psalm 107:19–20 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction. See Ex. 3:7–9 Neh. 9:9 Psalm 107:19–20 as well.</p>	<p>Psalm 18:6 In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From His temple He heard my voice, and my cry to Him reached His ears.</p> <p>John 8:34–36 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." See also Psalm 102:18–21 Isa. 19:20 Rom. 6:20 7:14 8:21 1Cor. 6:20 Gal. 3:31</p>
Levi	<p>Leah remarks, "Now this time my husband will be <i>attached</i> [= <i>joined</i>] to me..." The sons of Israel were to join themselves to the Lord and allow Moses and Aaron to lead them out of Egypt.</p>	<p>We are joined to God through Jesus Christ. It is through Him that we have access to God.</p>
	<p>Exodus 13:21–22 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people. God was thus joined to the sons of Israel.</p> <p>Exodus 14:19–20a Then the angel of God who was going before the Host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. The Angel of God was in front of them and behind them; so they were joint to Him.</p>	<p>Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:26–28 ...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.</p> <p>The concept of being <i>in Christ</i> is found throughout Scripture. Eph. 2:6, 10, 20 3:17 5:31–32 Col. 2:9–10, 12 Rom. 6:3, 5 Gal. 4:19 1Cor. 1:30 6:15 12:27 2Cor. 13:5 Philip. 3:8–9.</p> <p>See the Doctrine of Union with Christ.</p>
Judah	<p>With this 4th son, Leah proclaims: "This time I will praise the LORD." When the sons of Israel leave Egypt, they will sing and praise God.</p>	<p>Ideally speaking, once we are saved and in union with Jesus Christ, we are to praise (celebrate) the Lord.</p>
	<p>Both Moses and Miriam sang and led singing in great praises of the Lord in Exodus 15.</p>	<p>Philip. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. This is the Christian life for the mature believer.</p>

We can use this progression of the sons' name either to God's grace to His people in slavery; or God's grace to His people in the slave market of sin.

Clarke on the naming of a son: *The intelligent and pious care of the original inhabitants of the world to call their children by those names which were descriptive of some remarkable event in providence, circumstance of their birth, or domestic occurrence, is worthy, not only of respect, but of imitation. As the name itself continually called to the mind, both of the parents and the child, the circumstance from which it originated, it could not fail to be a lasting blessing to both. How widely different is our custom! Unthinking and ungodly, we impose names upon our offspring as we do upon our cattle; and often the dog, the horse, the monkey, and the parrot, share in common with our children the names which are called Christian! Some of our Christian names, so called, are absurd, others are ridiculous, and a third class impious; these last being taken from the demon gods and goddesses of heathenism. May we hope that the rational and pious custom recommended in the Scriptures shall ever be restored, even among those who profess to believe in, fear, and love God!*⁵⁰² Clarke, I believe, really takes this too far, into the realm of legalism.

4 sons of Leah are listed here; and 2 additional sons are named in Gen. 30:18–20.

The Sons of Leah in the Bible

Lists of the sons of Leah are listed	Scriptural References
The sons of Leah are born to her.	Gen. 29:32–35 30:18–20
The sons of Leah are listed, as Jacob takes residence in the Land of Promise.	Gen. 35:23
The sons of Leah and their children; moving to Egypt.	Gen. 46:8–15
The sons of Leah are blessed by Jacob.	Gen. 49:1–15
The sons of Leah (now tribes of Israel) in Egypt.	Exodus 1:1–3a
The tribes and clans from Leah.	Exodus 6:14–18
The sons of Leah in the genealogies.	1Chron. 2:1

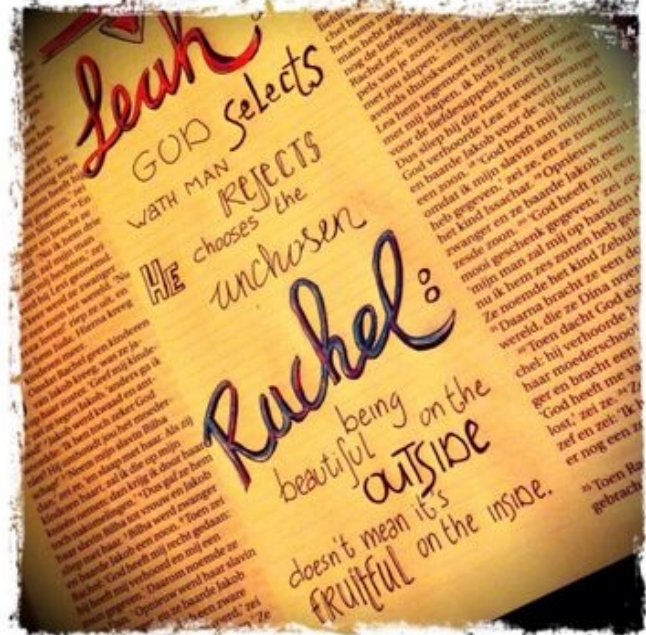
Chronicles could be consulted to explore the lines of these 6 sons. The latter half of the book of Joshua could be consulted for the distribution of land to the various tribes.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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⁵⁰² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:35.

Leah: God Selects What Man Rejects (Bible journaling); from [Pinterest](#); accessed August 11, 2017.



The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on God's Blessing of Leah

LEAH THE FRUITFUL. While Rachel enjoyed the highest place in Jacob's affection, she was "barren"—a grievous affliction to one who might possibly be the mother of the promised Seed. The fruitfulness of Leah was—

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on God's Blessing of Leah

1. Expressly caused by God. The Lord, who had decreed temporary barrenness for Rachel the fair, opened the womb of Leah the despised; neither to compensate Leah for the loss of Jacob's love, nor to punish Jacob for his sinful partiality; but to manifest his power, to show that children are the heritage of the Lord, to vindicate his sovereignty, to attest that God giveth families to whomsoever he will, and to suggest that the line of promise was designed to be not the fruit of nature, but the gift of grace.
2. Thankfully acknowledged by Leah. While cherishing the hope that her children would eventually unite Jacob's heart to her own, she delightedly recognized her exceptional fruitfulness as a special mark of Jehovah's favor, and gave expression to her gratitude in the naming of her sons: Reuben, see, a son! Simeon, hearing; Levi, joined; Judah, praise.
3. Enviously beheld by Rachel. This appears from the opening statement in the ensuing chapter; and this, though perhaps as natural as Leah's sense of pain at Rachel's preference by Jacob, was yet as sinful as Jacob's excessive partiality towards herself.

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Gen. 29:31–35 (Homiletics).

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The marriage arrangement that Jacob had (which will include the personal servants of his wives) is quite unusual; and yet, the entire Jewish race comes from Jacob, two wives and two wife-surrogates (not exactly mistresses). God takes all of the bad decisions made by all of the parties involved, and from that comes the Jewish people. This is one of the many illustrations of Rom. 8:28 in the Old Testament.

The ESV; capitalized will be used throughout. *LORD* is their indication that *Y^ehowah* has been used.

The Use of Y^ehowah and Elohim in Genesis 29–30

E. W. Bullinger makes the interesting observation: *Jehovah used with the five sons (Gen. 29:31–35 and Gen. 30:24). Elohim is used with six (Gen. 30:2, Gen. 30:6, Gen. 30:17, Gen. 30:18, Gen. 30:20, Gen. 30:23). No title used with Benjamin (Gen. 35:16–18).*⁵⁰³

Some suggest that there are different writers for these different sections (the infamous JEPD theory). Let me suggest, instead, that there was a stronger and deeper communion with God when *Y^ehowah* is used.

Let's look at the passages noted; first those where *LORD* is found:

Gen. 29:31–35 *When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son. She called his name Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me." She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.*

Gen. 30:24 *And she called his name Joseph, saying, "May the LORD add to me another son!"*

Now the passages where *Elohim* (God) is found:

Gen. 30:2 *Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"*

⁵⁰³ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:31.

The Use of Y^ehowah and Elohim in Genesis 29–30

Gen. 30:6 Then Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.

Gen. 30:17–18 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.

Gen. 30:20 Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.

Gen. 30:22–23 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. She conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach."

Some would claim that this supports the notion that there was a writer (the Yawist) who used the name Y^ehowah and another, the Elohimist, who used the name *Elohim*. Then these narratives were woven together.

I have already suggested that this family history was recounted, in these passages in particular, by various members of Jacob's family: specifically Jacob, Leah and Rachel. It is the most natural thing in the world, when recounting family history, for Jacob to speak about most of the narrative, but for his wife Leah to speak of her children who are born to her followed by Rachel, who gives her point of view and speaks of her children (some of them born through her surrogate, Bilhah). If this is the case, then it is certainly possible that Leah, when closest to God, uses His personal name, Y^ehowah. Rachel mostly uses the name *Elohim*, but not exclusively.

Furthermore, there is no clear delineation—we find *Elohim* used in Gen. 30:22–23, which leads into v. 24, which is clearly a continuation of vv. 22–23, where Rachel uses God's personal name, Y^ehowah. The name Y^ehowah is also found in Gen. 30:27, 30 31:3, 35, 49; and *Elohim* is found in Gen. 31:5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 24, 29, 42, 50, 53. So, you see that these names are intermingled.

The JEPD theory, which assigns various authors to various portions of Genesis; and who wrote their portions years after; and then someone else is credited with weaving the narratives together—and then, this is somehow sold to the people of Israel hundreds of years later as the Word of God (which, apparently, they did not have before)—well, all of this sounds a bit fantastic, overly complex, and forced. See **Documentary Hypothesis (the JEPD Theory)** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) for more information.

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Ballinger's translation of Genesis 29:31–35 Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me." Then she conceived again and bore 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. She conceived again and bore 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. And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

Ballinger's Analysis of Gen. 29:31–35 Birth of the First Four Patriarchal Ancestors

1. In this final scene the focus is strictly on Leah the unloved one.
2. She does all the speaking.
3. V. 31 is background information which is necessary for her pronouncements in connection with the birth of her four sons.
4. Her statements after the birth of her four sons her isolation and her longing for Jacob's affection.
5. The expression "and the LORD saw" always indicates that He is about to act in a decisive fashion.
6. Here He acts on behalf of the beleaguered wife who suffered soul misery seeing the affection showered on her pretty sister while she at best was treated more like a friend.

Ballinger's Analysis of Gen. 29:31–35 Birth of the First Four Patriarchal Ancestors

7. The verb "was unloved" is literally, "was hated" to poignantly show the disparity of treatment between the two women on the part of the husband.
8. Leah was not a fulfilled wife, and God took this into account and proceeded to act on her behalf.
9. "He opened her womb" so as to bless her with one of the crowning joys of a woman's life in societies that valued motherhood.
10. By contrast "Rachel was barren."
11. Like Sarah and Rebekah before her she was tested in this same way.
12. The stage is set for Leah's testing and Rachel's testing.
13. We will see how these two believers handled their testing.
14. Leah becomes pregnant and gives birth to the first of Jacob's twelve sons.
15. She names him Reuben which sounds like "see a son."
16. This meaning squares with her exuberant "Surely Yahweh has seen my affliction."
17. She was absolutely on point in her attribution of God's watch/care over her.
18. Her perception mirrors the experience of the persecuted Hagar (16:11).
19. The second part of her explanation for the birth of her firstborn is naïve.
20. She sees the birth of Reuben as a way that God will bring her Jacob's love: "Surely now my husband will love me."
21. Her faulty perception elicits compassion from the reader.
22. Human experience tells that this would not rectify the situation.
23. With the birth of her second son, Leah gives a twofold explanation of the name Simeon.
24. Leah was bitterly disappointed that her husband did not come to love her as she imagined he would when Jacob's firstborn came on the scene (v. 34).
25. So in the case of Simeon we have a much more realistic assessment of situation between her and her husband.
26. The name Simeon is based on the Hebrew verb "to hear" (shama).
27. With the birth of her 2nd son she simply acknowledges that God cares for her even if her husband remains indifferent to her plight.
28. She does not appear to be bitter but simply resigned to her situation.
29. Her soliloquy at the birth of the 3rd son has her reverting to the wishful thinking that colored her thinking with the birth of Reuben (v. 34).
30. Levi perhaps means "attached/joined."
31. Her desperate hope that Jacob will love her in the same fashion he loves Rachel is somewhat bolstered by her wish that her husband cannot but help to love her now that she has born him three sons!
32. With the birth of her 4th son we see the transformation in her understanding (v. 35).
33. She names him Judah which means something like "he shall be praised."
34. Leah says nothing in regard to her forlorn love for her husband.
35. She has turned a corner in her thinking.
36. She simply took the occasion to "praise the LORD."
37. There is no bitterness or feelings of self-pity with the birth of her 4th son.
38. She accepts the blessing of this son apart from any wishful thinking.
39. For the moment at least she seems content with things as they stand and praises God.
40. After the birth of Judah Leah "stopped bearing."
41. We are not told why.
42. The narrative does not tell us God closed her womb.
43. It could be that her and her husband stopped having sex.
44. Or it could be due to divine intervention.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen29.htm> accessed August 7, 2017.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 29:31–35 Now the lord saw that Leah was unloved, and he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Since yhw has looked on my Affliction, so that now my husband will love me." Then she conceived again and bore 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. And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he called his name levi. And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise YHWH." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped having children.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:31–35

1. The unsavory situation in which Jacob finds himself will not be resolved or eliminated for the rest of his life.
2. He is here at the urging of his mother and ill equipped to deal with the problems he now faces.
3. He is a bigamist, although unwillingly, stuck with a woman he does not love.
4. Whatever tensions existed between Rachel and Leah in their own home are now transferred to his household.
5. Since he did not have to wait seven years for Rachel it is understandable that he would be quite excited by his marriage to her.
6. It is only to be expected that he would favor Rachel, since she was his choice as a wife in the first place.
7. God takes note of the situation which Leah has gotten herself into.
8. She is by no means guiltless in the deception of Jacob, since she willingly complied with the trickery.
9. Nevertheless, she finds herself in a marriage of convenience, in which little or no love is shared.
10. Her lot is one of neglect and loneliness.
11. God is aware of this and provides for her a child by her husband Jacob.
12. It seems obvious that Jacob, for whatever motives or reasons, occasionally had sex with Leah as well as Rachel.
13. There can be little doubt that this was at best perfunctory. done out of duty with no feeling or indifference
14. Leah is given children, once again demonstrating that the Lord is the one who controls the fortunes of pregnancy and childbirth.
15. Her first son is named Reuben, "look a son" expressing some of her surprise at her good fortune.
16. However, she mistakenly assumes that this will somehow cause Jacob to fall in love with her.
17. Children do not help a marriage in any way, and certainly do not hold a marriage together.
18. Leah does, however, attribute the blessings in her life to YHWH, indicating that she was oriented to certain spiritual realities.
19. She expresses the idea that God has observed her plight, noting the attribute of omniscience.
20. Although this birth does not solve or alleviate her problem, she continues to pray about it and conceives again.
21. The name Simon, reflects the idea of her prayers and God's attention to those prayers.
22. During the third year of the seven Jacob is serving she becomes pregnant again.
23. In all this time Rachel, who has the bulk of Jacob's time and affection is unable to conceive.
24. As we will observe shortly, she did not do so well under her test, but was frustrated and eaten up by mental attitude sins.
25. The third son Leah hopes will cause her husband to become attached to her, a concept less demanding than actual love.
26. Try as she might, Leah will not ever get what she so desperately wants, which is the love of her RM, since Jacob is not her right man.
27. Jacob is aware of all her desire in this matter as expressed in vs 34, where he names Levi.
28. Once again, Leah becomes pregnant and gives birth to a fourth son.
29. The name of this son does reflect that her thinking has changed after the birth of the previous three.
30. She seems to have stopped hoping that she may win her husband's affection through the process of bearing children.
31. This son she names Judah, reflecting her thanksgiving toward the one who has blessed her with

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 29:31–35

children.

- 32. While she may have understood that she could never have Jacob's love, she does not fully give up on this hope. 30:20

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen29.doc> accessed August 10, 2017 (slightly edited).

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A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

Why Genesis 29 is in the Word of God

1. This narrative shows us that a one-shot experience (in this case, seeing and speaking with God) is not automatically the gate to spiritual maturity. Jacob, in the previous chapter, had a vision of God, heard God speak to him; and yet, he has not turned his life around. He lacked truth (Bible doctrine) in his soul.
2. It is clear that God is behind all the events of this chapter, even though Jacob does not acknowledge God as Abraham's servant did.
3. Because of the change of focus of the first 30 verses and the final 5 verses, it appears that Jacob recorded the first 30 (including a very personal verse about Rachel); but that Leah probably spoke the final 5 verses. This, along with other passages, leads us to what I believe is the most accurate view of the authorship of Genesis and how it all came together—very naturally and very organically.
4. We see in this chapter that, whatever a man sows (Jacob deceiving his father), that he also reaps (Jacob being deceived by Laban). A clear parallel is drawn between the two deceptions.
5. Although the custom with bed sheets is not spoken of directly in this chapter, it was probably employed. This is completely explained in this chapter.
6. Leah names her first 4 children. These names parallel both the exodus and the gospel.

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These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

What We Learn from Genesis 29

1. It is clear from this narrative that we are reading Jacob's words, the witness to these events. He goes into great detail on the day's events, which could be easily summed up by a very short verse.
2. This chapter gave us some time to discuss languages of the peoples in these different areas, but we did not come to any clear conclusions.
3. We studied the providence of God in this chapter.

What We Learn from Genesis 29

4. We had reason to reference the Dual Authorship of Scripture doctrine.
5. We discussed Leah's eyes at length, but without coming to a clear conclusion.
6. It is clear that Jacob enters into a polygamous relationship. We use that as a springboard to discuss the various marriage configurations found in the Bible and what they mean. There was a propaganda meme which was both anti-Bible and pro-gay marriage; so we discuss that, and its distortions.
7. There was a great deal of discussion of Jacob marrying 2 women; and the doctrine of Polygamy was referenced.
8. We took the opportunity to reference *Blessing by Association*.
9. I provided a likely narrative which explains the actions of Laban, Rachel and Leah.
10. The doctrine of God's discipline is included (by Wenstrom and by R. Dean).

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Many chapters of the Bible look forward to Jesus Christ in some way or another. A person or situation might foreshadow the Lord or His work on the cross (or His reign over Israel in the Millennium). The chapter may contain a prophecy about the Lord or it may, in some way, lead us toward the Lord (for instance, by means of genealogy).

Jesus Christ in Genesis 29

The line of Jesus Christ is continued in this chapter in Gen. 29:35 *And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.* The line of Jesus Christ would go through Judah. Interestingly enough, the line of Jesus does not go through the favored wife of Jacob, but through the wife that Jacob was tricked into marrying.

The entire gospel of Jesus Christ is **found** in the names of the first 4 sons of Leah.

Interestingly enough, the Jews themselves will be named as a people from the name of *Judah*.

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Although God does not speak to Jacob in this chapter, His pervading Presence is a given.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. Summarizes Genesis 29

- 1) God is present with Jacob during these 20 years. That is what God promised when He appeared to Jacob in chapter 28. For 20 years Jacob has nothing but that promise to rely on, there is no more visitation from God, no more direct revelation. In a sense he is very similar during that period to the church age believer, trusting in a promise of God, waiting for God to bring about that which He has promised. So what we see during this period is this covert operation of God. God is clearly guiding and directing, but we don't see it. It is all behind the scenes. Jacob isn't aware of it until it is over with. There are a lot of similarities between chapter 29 and chapter 23 of Genesis where Abraham sent his faithful servant to go back to the homeland to find a bride for Isaac. But if we do a contrast between these two events, when the faithful servant goes back to Haran he is praying along the way for God to guide and direct him. He is setting it up. But you don't see that with Jacob. It is obviously absent from the text. He is just moving forward and yet God is the one who will bring Rachel to him. So we have these two terms developing, overt and covert. By overt is meant an external operation of God that is open to view, it is readily observable, discernable and clearly recognizable as the work of God in somebody's life. We saw that brought out in the text in Genesis 23 when the faithful servant prays that God would indicate who the right woman was for Isaac because certain things would happen when he came to the well. So we can say that this is definitely the

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. Summarizes Genesis 29

work of God. But on the other hand in many instances in Scripture God works in a covert manner. The word "covert" means concealed or veiled or secret. In other words, we know God works and controls history but He doesn't do it in an overt manner. He is not out there manipulating human leaders, He is not revealing Himself externally to human leaders, He is not giving external orders or direction to human leaders as to what they should do. He is working behind the scenes in and through the volition of human leaders, He controls the thoughts/the heart of the king, Proverbs says, but He does it in a covert manner. The important thing in making this distinction is we have to realize that God ultimately governs His creation, and so we can always say that in some sense everything is the will of God and God was working, but we may not know it or perceive it at the time. We may not come to a decision and God is going to turn a green light one way and a red light another way. But God is going to be working behind the scenes in various people, circumstances and events, so that the options that we have at that point of decision-making are there because God brought them there. God guides and directs in a completely covert manner. Afterward, as we go down the road a bit, we can look back and see how God superintended and managed the circumstances to bring about His will. But too often when we are in those circumstances we don't know, because part of the issue is: are we just going to relax and trust God and use the doctrine in our souls to make decisions? So we have this contrast between the way God works overtly and His covert conclusion.

- 2) God is working out the promises that He has already made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with reference to the Abrahamic covenant. He has promised Abraham the land, seed and blessing. This is reconfirmed to Isaac and reconfirmed to Jacob at Bethel. Despite Jacob's behavior, his conniving, and all of the things that Jacob is doing he still ends up being a blessing to Laban. Ultimately God works to bless Jacob, not because of who Jacob is or what he has done, but because of the Abrahamic covenant, and He is demonstrating His character of unconditional grace through Jacob to those around him. God is also working in Jacob's in the same way He works in our life to teach us various spiritual truths, to drive home these principles related to spiritual life and to prepare him for the next stage. The next stage is to return to Canaan where he is going to be in closer proximity to Esau where he has to go to the next stage which is in relationship to his sons, and eventually there is the Joseph narrative which takes them down to Egypt. Jacob is eventually going to die down in Egypt. But God is working in each stage to prepare him for the next stage. The same thing is happening in our life. God is working certain circumstances right now to give us tests to use and apply doctrine, to prepare us for future test, events, and circumstances, and to prepare us for whatever service or ministry He has for us in the future.
- 3) There is no explicit doctrine taught in these chapters. We don't go to these chapters to learn about justification by faith alone, to develop a theology of prayer, to understand covenant. But what we see here is the outworking of God's providential management of not only human history but our individual lives as He moves us down that path toward spiritual maturity. There are two doctrines that are illustrated in this section that relate to God's work in the sanctification or spiritual growth of the believer. The first is divine discipline. There is an element of divine discipline in what happens to Jacob the conniver. He is the one who tried to manipulate the blessing of God by conniving and outmaneuvering his brother Esau, rather than resting in God's provision. The result was it created all this trauma in the family. Now what is going to happen? He is going to be the victim of Laban's maneuvering, is going to end up with the wrong sister, he ends up married to two women, there is conflict and competition in the family, and all of this plays itself out in a very negative way in the history of the foundation of Israel. And it is all because of the attempts to get God's way our way. God has to discipline Jacob and he is going to reap what he sowed. Just as he has sowed this manipulative methodology he is going to become the victim of that same methodology and is going to reap the negative consequences from it.

From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

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Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does.

B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 29

The rest of this chapter we devote to Jacob's life in Haran (Genesis 29-31:55), a period of twenty years. He enters that country afoot, with nothing but the clothes he had on and the staff in his hand. He comes out an exceedingly rich man, very much married, with twelve children. Another son was born later. The lesson commences with telling how he arrived at Haran and stopped at the well, perhaps the same at which old Eliezer stopped when he went after a bride for Isaac. Here he meets Rachel, the one woman throughout his life he was to love. She was a little girl about ten or twelve years old, or she would not have had charge of the flock by herself. But in Oriental countries a girl of twelve is equal in maturity to a girl of seventeen here. It was a case of love at first sight. He never loved another woman while he lived. After they were made known to each other (v. 11), "And Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept." My first question is, Why did he weep after kissing that girl? I leave that for you to find out. When Brother Truett and his wife were here, looking toward each other just about like Jacob and Rachel, and we were passing over this, I gave that same question. Some of the class answered, "He wept because he had not commenced that work sooner." And one ill-natured young preacher said, "He wept because Rachel had been eating onions." But Brother Truett's wife gave the true answer. See who of you will give it.

The next remark is on the Gen. 29:14 : "And Laban, the father of Rachel, said unto him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him a month of days," i.e. he stayed as a guest for a full month. A guest must not stay too long. So naturally Laban raised the question of something to do, and said to Jacob, "Because thou art my brother," which means kinsman, "shouldst thou, therefore, serve me for nothing? Tell me what shall be thy wages." Laban proposes a business transaction. Look at it. Jacob says, referring to the two girls – Leah, the elder, was not beautiful and her eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and countenance – "I will serve thee seven years for thy younger daughter. It was the custom for the bridegroom to give presents, and in the Orient today a man in a measure purchases his wife. But Jacob had nothing to give, but he was to serve seven years without other wages. Young men of the present day think if they serve for a girl thirty days that it is a great tax on them, and they begin to think how much they have paid for ice cream, streetcar fare, buggy rides, theater tickets, etc., and begin to bring matters to a focus. They have not the love that Jacob had. And his proposition was accepted. Next, Gen. 29:20, "And Jacob served for Rachel seven years, and they were in his eyes but a few days for the love he had for her." There is a remarkable proof of the genuineness of his love. This is one of the most illustrious cases of deep, personal, lifelong attachment that we have any historical account of, and has become proverbial: "Serve seven years for Rachel." At the end of the seven years he claimed the fulfillment of the contract. Now this young man who had practiced the deception upon his old, blind father, has a deception practiced upon him. Laban is very tricky and unscrupulous. All that crowd up there are shrewd traders and sharp bargainers. Whoever deals with them has to keep both eyes open, and not sleep in the day, and not sleep very sound at any time in the night. They are that way till this day. The manner of consummating the marriage, the betrothal of which had lasted seven years, is very simple: In a formal way the father veils the girl and at night turns her over to the bridegroom. That ends the ceremony. I have seen a letter today from a judge who occupies his seat for the first time, and he says one of the first acts of his administration was to marry a couple and he tells of the ceremony, too simple to repeat, but it does not make much difference about the form, the fact that the transfer has been made and accepted establishes the validity.

Here comes a general question, What ill-natured English poet, in order to illustrate what he calls the disillusionments that follow marriage said, "With Rachel we lie down at night; in the morning, behold it is Leah"? I don't agree with him at all. There have been thousands and thousands of marriages where there was not only no disillusion after the marriage was consummated, but an ever-deepening, lifelong attachment. I expect if some woman had written a couplet she would have put it: "With George Washington we lie down at night, and in the morning, lo! it is Benedict Arnold." It sounds smart, but you ought not to have any respect for any man who reflects upon the sanctity of the marriage relation. I knew a couple who married early, the man about twenty-three, and the girl about eighteen. After twenty-five years had passed the man said, "I have not been anywhere in the world that she has not been with me. Even when I go hunting, fishing, traveling, she is with me. And there has never been an hour since I married her that I had not rather be with her than with anybody else in the world." And the woman said the same thing. I think that kind of testimony is much better than the English poet's testimony.

B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 29

Jacob was very indignant at the cheat perpetrated upon him. He did not love Leah, and he did not want her at all. The explanation that Laban made is so thin that it won't hold water. It is not true that in the East you cannot marry the younger until the older is disposed of. Laban then said, "As soon as the week of wedding festivities is over, I will let you have Rachel, provided you will serve seven more years. You can take her at the end of the week, but you take her on a credit until you have served the seven years." Jacob made that trade. Fourteen years of hard work! I want you to think of that whenever you think of the bad things Jacob did; think also of the good points in the man.

Now we come to the evils of polygamy forced upon Jacob. He never wanted but one woman, but this trickery of his uncle gave him two, and the jealousy of these two wives fastened upon him two more; so that there were two wives and two concubines. For quite a while the strife between the two wives goes on. What kind of a home do you suppose that was? Among the Mormons they do sometimes give a separate house to each wife, but others put a dozen in the same house. Jealousy is certain to develop and cause conflict among the children. A struggle between these two wives is manifested in the names given to the children. Leah, in these seven years, bore Jacob seven children, six sons and one daughter. Rachel bore one son, Joseph, and afterward another. The two maidservants bore two each. That makes twelve sons. I will call the names out in the order in which they were born. Reuben, Leah's firstborn, means "See, a son." It expresses her pride, that Jacob's firstborn was a son, and not a daughter. Simeon, her second, means "a hearing": that she asked God, as the love of her husband had not come when Reuben was born as she supposed, to send her another child, but Jacob still did not love her. Levi, her third, means "a Joiner"; "Now I will be joined to my husband." But he did not join them. Judah, her fourth, means "praise"; "Praise Jehovah for the blessing that has come upon me, now that I have borne four sons to my husband."

From *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 25:19-28:9. Updated.

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Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant. This volume of the book is entitled *The World Before the Flood, and The History of the Patriarchs*.

This comes from Chapter 17, entitled *Jacob's Vision at Bethel - His Arrival at the House of Laban - Jacob's double Marriage and Servitude - His Flight from Haran - Pursuit of Laban, and Reconciliation with Jacob* (GENESIS 28:10-31:55).

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 29

No further incident worth recording occurred till Jacob reached the end of his journey in "the land of the people of the East." Here he found himself at a "well," where, contrary to the usual custom, three flocks were already in waiting, long before the usual evening time for watering them. Professor Robinson has made this personal observation, helpful to our understanding of the circumstances: "Over most of the cisterns is laid a broad and thick flat stone, with a round hole cut in the middle, forming the mouth of the cistern. This hole we found in many cases covered with a heavy stone, which it would require two or three men to roll away." We know not whether these flocks were kept waiting till sufficient men had come to roll away the stone, or whether it was the custom to delay till all the flocks had arrived. At any rate, when Jacob had ascertained that the flocks were from Haran, and that the shepherds knew Laban, the brother of Rebekah, and when he saw the fair Rachel, his own cousin, coming with her flock, he rolled away the stone himself, watered his uncle's sheep, and in the warmth of his feelings at finding himself not only at the goal of his journey, but apparently God-directed to her whose very appearance could win his affections, he embraced his cousin. Even in this little trait the attentive observer of Jacob's natural character will not fail to recognize "the haste" with which he always anticipated God's leadings. When Laban, Rachel's father, came to hear of all the circumstances, he received Jacob as his relative. A month's trial more than confirmed in the mind of that selfish, covetous man the favorable impression of Jacob's

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 29

possible use to him as a shepherd, which his first energetic interference at the "well" must have produced. With that apparent frankness and show of liberality under which cunning, selfish people so often disguise their dishonest purposes, Laban urged upon Jacob to name his own "wages." Jacob had learned to love Rachel, Laban's younger daughter. Without consulting the mind of God in the matter, he now proposed to serve Laban seven years for her hand. This was just the period during which, among the Hebrews, a Jewish slave had to serve; in short, he proposed becoming a bondsman for Rachel. With the same well-feigned candor as before, Laban agreed: "It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man (to a stranger)." The bargain thus to sell his daughter was not one founded on the customs of the time, and Laban's daughters themselves felt the degradation which they could not resist, as appears from their after statement, when agreeing to flee from their father's home: "Are we not counted of him strangers? for he has sold us." (Genesis 31:14, 15)

The period of Jacob's servitude seemed to him rapidly to pass, and at the end of the seven years he claimed his bride. But now Jacob was to experience how his sin had found him out. As he had deceived his father, so Laban now deceived him. Taking advantage of the Eastern custom that a bride was always brought to her husband veiled, he substituted for Rachel her elder sister Leah. But, as formerly, God had, all unknown to them, overruled the error and sin of Isaac and of Jacob, so He did now also in the case of Laban and Jacob. For Leah was, so far as we can judge, the one whom God had intended for Jacob, though, for the sake of her beauty, he had preferred Rachel. From Leah sprang Judah, in whose line the promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled. Leah, as we shall see in the sequel, feared and served Jehovah; while Rachel was attached to the superstitions of her father's house; and even the natural character of the elder sister fitted her better for her new calling than that of the somewhat petulant, peevish, and self-willed, though beautiful younger daughter of Laban. As for the author of this deception, Laban, he shielded himself behind the pretense of a national custom, not to give away a younger before a first born sister. But he readily proposed to give to Jacob Rachel also, in return for other seven years of service. Jacob consented, and the second union was celebrated immediately upon the close of Leah's marriage festivities, which in the East generally last for a week. It were an entire mistake to infer from the silence of Scripture that this double marriage of Jacob received Divine approbation. As always, Scripture states facts, but makes no comment. That sufficiently appears from the lifelong sorrow, disgrace, and trials which, in the retributive providence of God, followed as the consequence of this double union.

The sinful weakness of Jacob appeared also in his married life, in an unkind and unjust preference for Rachel, and God's reproofing dealings in that He blessed the "hated" wife with children, while he withheld from Rachel a boon so much desired in a family where all that was precious stood connected with an heir to the promises. At the same time, this might also serve to teach again the lesson, given first to Abraham and then to Isaac, how especially in the patriarchal family this blessing was to be a direct gift from the Lord. (See also Psalm 127:3) Leah bore in rapid succession four sons, whom she significantly named Reuben ("behold! a son"), saying, "Surely Jehovah hath looked upon my affliction;" Simeon ("hearing"), "Because Jehovah hath heard that I was hated;" Levi ("cleaving," or "joined"), in the hope "Now this time will my husband cleave to me;" and Judah ("praised," viz., be Jehovah), since she said: "Now will I praise Jehovah." It deserves special notice, that in the birth of at least three of these sons, Leah not only recognized God, but specially acknowledged Him as Jehovah, the covenant-God.

From http://philologos.org/_eb-bhot/vol_/ch17.htm accessed December 3, 2016.

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GENESIS

CHAPTER 29

DESIGNED BY PETER HUI

Jacob's Labors

So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East.

My brethren, where are you from?

DO YOU KNOW?

LABAN
— SON OF NAHOR —

IS HE WELL?

It's still high day
Not time for cattle to be gathered
Water the sheep, go and feed them

We are from **HARAN**

We know him

Yes, his daughter Rachel is coming with the flock

WE CANNOT UNTIL...

all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled

Now while he was still speaking with them...

Saw Rachel and Jacob rolled the stone from the well's mouth... And watered them

I'm your dad's relative

— Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

Then Laban said...

RELATIVE \neq SERVE ME FOR FREE

WHAT SHOULD YOUR WAGES BE?

LABAN'S DAUGHTERS

LEAH
ELDER
DELICATE EYES

RACHEL
YOUNGER
BEAUTIFUL OF FORM AND APPEARANCE

SERVE YOU 7 YEARS FOR RACHEL

IT'S BETTER TO GIVE HER TO YOU THAN SOMEONE ELSE

So Jacob served 7 years for Rachel and they seem like days because of the love he had for her...

Finally, the time came for Jacob to marry her.

Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her

Laban gathered all the men and made a feast

LEAH ZILPAH MAID

What did you do to me? Didn't I serve you for **RACHEL**? Why did you deceive me?

NOT OUR CUSTOM THAT THE YOUNGER MARRY BEFORE THE FIRSTBORN

FULFILL HER WEEK

SERVE ME 7 YEARS

Jacob went in to Rachel and served Laban another seven years.

When the Lord saw...

LEAH HATED
Opened her womb

RACHEL
Barren

The Children of Jacob

REUBEN

SIMEON

LEVI

JUDAH

Stopped bearing ↓

The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me.

Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved. He has therefore given me this son also.

Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.

Now I will praise the Lord.

Genesis 29 in a Graphic Nutshell (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed August 11, 2017.

This is the first time I have come across these *graphic nutshells* (that is my name for them). Text and graphics are combined to give an overview for a chapter of the Bible (which is probably being done for biographies, books, sets of chapters and possibly even doctrines). What I particularly like about this graphic is, it uses quotations directly from this chapter. Even though this seems very elementary, this chart makes it easy for us to read and get the gist of the chapter, visually and with words.

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Addendum

I had wondered if anyone else noticed that Jacob leaving the land of promise twice was a type of nation Israel. Looks like Scofield did.

Jacob as a Type of Israel (from C. I. Scofield)

Jacob at Haran becomes a sterling illustration, if not type, of the nation descended from him in its present long dispersion. Like Israel, he was:

- (1) Out of the place of blessing (Gen. 26:3).
- (2) without an altar (Hosea 3:4–5).
- (3) gained an evil name (Gen. 31:1 Rom. 2:17–24).
- (4) but was under the covenant care of Jehovah (Gen. 28:13–14 Rom. 11:1, 25–30).
- (5) and was ultimately brought back (Gen. 31:3 35:1–4 Ezek. 37:21–23).

The personal lesson is obvious: while Jacob is not forsaken, he is permitted to reap the shame and sorrow of his self-chosen way.

C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 29:1.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

I am taking this position under advisement; and this may be a moot point anyway.

Wenstrom Argues that Leah was Jacob's Right Woman

The Word of God indicates that Leah and not Rachel was Jacob's right woman as indicating by the following.

First of all, when we take into consideration of the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God, we must acknowledge that, in spite of the deceptiveness of Laban, Leah was Jacob's wife. Furthermore, it was Leah, not Rachel, who became the mother of Judah, who was to be the heir through whom the Messiah would come (cf. 49:8-12).

Also it was Levi, a son of Leah, who provided the priestly line in later years. It seems noteworthy that both Leah and her handmaid had at least twice the number of children as compared to Rachel and her maid (cf. 29:31-30:24; 46:15, 18, 22, 25). The firstborn was always to have a double portion and so it would seem Leah did, so far as children are concerned.

Wenstrom Argues that Leah was Jacob's Right Woman

The fifth factor, which reveals the superiority of Leah to Rachel is that Rachel died at an early age, yet she was the younger sister. When she died, she was buried on the way to Bethlehem (35:19) and yet when Leah died later, she was buried with Jacob in the cave at Machpelah (49:31).

Lastly, the Word of God reveals that Jacob chose Rachel based solely upon looks and did not take into consideration her character as Abraham's servant Eliezer did when selecting Rebekah for Isaac.

From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf accessed August 9, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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Jacob was willing to go along with the deception which his mother came up with; and so, he finds himself now in Haran, subject to the deception that his mother's brother came up with.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. on Divine Discipline

1) In life there are two categories of suffering: deserved and undeserved. Everybody, believer and unbeliever, goes through both categories of suffering.

2) Undeserved suffering falls into two categories: a) Suffering from self-induced misery. It is just the principle of reaping what we sow. We get the negative consequences of bad decisions. b) There is an additional suffering that goes on top of that, and that is divine discipline. Reaping what you sow isn't divine discipline. Divine discipline, according to Hebrews 12, is God's family discipline on those who are members of the royal family. It flows out of His love and is designed for the purpose of producing self-mastery, spiritual discipline, and self-control in the life of the believer. Suffering divine discipline is a matter for spiritual training and is directed by a loving father to His children to bring them to spiritual maturity.

3) Divine discipline is deserved suffering in the life of the believer and it is designed by God to accomplish two things: to teach, to instruct us so that we learn certain spiritual principles in the process, and it is also designed for correction or remedial discipline.

4) The goal of all discipline is to produce in the believer the character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5) All divine discipline is based on love. Hebrews 12:6, "**For whom the Lord loves he chastens [disciplines].**" This is not necessarily the retributive type of discipline. It is in the second part of the verse. But in this verse the Greek word PAIDEUO [paideuw] which has the idea of training and discipline. It is the idea of teaching and training children to have self-discipline, self-mastery, and to do that which is right because it is the right thing to do. This is positive training for obedience. The next verse is a contrast: "and scourges every son whom he receives." The Greek word there is the verb MASTIGOO [mastigow] and it means to whip or to flog or to scourge. It used in Luke 18:33; John 19:1 to describe the whipping that the Lord Jesus Christ received before He went to the cross. So this is a harsh word for retributive discipline. This is an enforcement of certain negative consequences on a child in order to reinforce whatever other negative consequences there might be. The goal of divine discipline is positive, to produce in the believer the character of the Lord Jesus Christ and to instill self-mastery.

6) Every believer has arrogance skills. These have to be controlled not just in the power of the flesh because anybody can exercise a certain amount of self-discipline in the flesh, but it has to come from a supernatural self-discipline from the Holy Spirit. And one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is self-mastery. As we grow and mature as believers self-discipline is developed which is a control of the trends and the lusts of the sin nature. That can only come about through the work of the Holy Spirit and is one form of divine discipline.

Divine discipline, as we see from Hebrews 12:6, means that sin is not the issue at salvation. It is the issue after salvation. Personal sin in the life of the believer is dealt with by the Lord as a family matter. It is not a matter

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. on Divine Discipline

of getting into the family because Jesus Christ already paid the penalty for all sins on the cross—1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." The word translated "for" [for sins] is the Greek preposition PERI [peri] which indicates "once concerning sins" or "once with reference to sins." Then in the next phrase is that same English word "for" but it is a different word in the Greek, "the just for the unjust." There we have the Greek preposition HUPER [u(per) plus the genitive, indicating substitution: "the just in the place of" or "as a substitute for the unjust." The word there for unjust is the Greek word ADIKAIOS [a]dikaioj], so it is translated "the righteous [the Lord Jesus Christ] for the unrighteous" because that is our core problem, unrighteousness. The issue, therefore, is not what sins we have committed because the sins are paid for on the cross. It doesn't say He suffered for sins, He died once for sins, He paid the sin penalty on the cross so that that is not the issue. The issue has to do with the next clause which is righteousness. So the issue is not sin in salvation, the issue is understanding that we must have perfect righteousness and we must have spiritual life in order to have a relationship with God.

From <http://www.deanbibleministries.org> accessed August 11, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD AND THE DISPOSITION OF THE ELEMENTS.

CHAPTER 19.

CONCERNING JACOB'S FLIGHT INTO MESOPOTAMIA, BY REASON OF THE FEAR HE WAS IN OF HIS BROTHER.

4. So he proceeded on his journey to Mesopotamia, and at length came to Haran; and meeting with shepherds in the suburbs, with boys grown up, and maidens sitting about a certain well, he staid with them, as wanting water to drink; and beginning to discourse with them, he asked them whether they knew such a one as Laban, and whether he was still alive. Now they all said they knew him, for he was not so inconsiderable a person as to be unknown to any of them; and that his daughter fed her father's flock together with them; and that indeed they wondered that she was not yet come, for by her means thou mightest learn more exactly whatever thou desirest to know about that family. While they were saying this the damsel came, and the other shepherds that came down along with her. Then they showed her Jacob, and told her that he was a stranger, who came to inquire about her father's affairs. But she, as pleased, after the custom of children, with Jacob's coming, asked him who he was, and whence he came to them, and what it was he lacked that he came there. She also wished it might he in their power to supply the wants he came about.

5. But Jacob was quite overcome, not so much by their kindred, nor by that affection which might arise thence, as by his love to the damsel, and his surprise at her beauty, which was so flourishing, as few of the women of that age could vie with. He said then, "There is a relation between thee and me, elder than either thy or my birth, if thou be the daughter of Laban; for Abraham was the son of Terah, as well as Haran and Nahor. Of the last of whom (Nahor) Bethuel thy grandfather was the son. Isaac my father was the son of Abraham and of Sarah, who was the daughter of Haran. But there is a nearer and later cement of mutual kindred which we bear to one another, for my mother Rebeka was sister to Laban thy father, both by the same father and mother; I therefore and thou are cousin-germans. And I am now come to salute you, and to renew that affinity which is proper between us." Upon this the damsel, at the mention of Rebeka, as usually happens to young persons, wept, and that out of the kindness she had for her father, and embraced Jacob, she having learned an account of Rebeka from her father, and knew that her parents loved to hear her named; and when she had saluted him, she said

Josephus' History of this Time Period

that "he brought the most desirable and greatest pleasures to her father, with all their family, who was always mentioning his mother, and always thinking of her, and her alone; and that this will make thee equal in his eyes to any advantageous circumstances whatsoever." Then she bid him go to her father, and follow her while she conducted him to him; and not to deprive him of such a pleasure, by staying any longer away from him.

6. When she had said thus, she brought him to Laban; and being owned by his uncle, he was secure himself, as being among his friends; and he brought a great deal of pleasure to them by his unexpected coning. But a little while afterward, Laban told him that he could not express in words the joy he had at his coming; but still he inquired of him the occasion of his coming, and why he left his aged mother and father, when they wanted to be taken care of by him; and that he would afford him all the assistance he wanted. Then Jacob gave him an account of the whole occasion of his journey, and told him, "that Isaac had two sons that were twins, himself and Esau; who, because he failed of his father's prayers, which by his mother's wisdom were put up for him, sought to kill him, as deprived of the kingdom⁽³⁴⁾ which was to be given him of God, and of the blessings for which their father prayed; and that this was the occasion of his coming hither, as his mother had commanded him to do: for we are all (says he) brethren one to another; but our mother esteems an alliance with your family more than she does one with the families of the country; so I look upon yourself and God to be the supporters of my travels, and think myself safe in my present circumstances."

7. Now Laban promised to treat him with great humanity, both on account of his ancestors, and particularly for the sake of his mother, towards whom, he said, he would show his kindness, even though she were absent, by taking care of him; for he assured him he would make him the head shepherd of his flock, and give him authority sufficient for that purpose; and when he should have a mind to return to his parents, he would send him back with presents, and this in as honorable a manner as the nearness of their relation should require. This Jacob heard gladly; and said he would willingly, and with pleasure, undergo any sort of pains while he tarried with him, but desired Rachel to wife, as the reward of those pains, who was not only on other accounts esteemed by him, but also because she was the means of his coming to him; for he said he was forced by the love of the damsel to make this proposal. Laban was well pleased with this agreement, and consented to give the damsel to him, as not desirous to meet with any better son-in-law; and said he would do this, if he would stay with him some time, for he was not willing to send his daughter to be among the Canaanites, for he repented of the alliance he had made already by marrying his sister there. And when Jacob had given his consent to this, he agreed to stay seven years; for so many years he had resolved to serve his father-in-law, that, having given a specimen of his virtue, it might be better known what sort of a man he was. And Jacob, accepting of his terms, after the time was over, he made the wedding-feast; and when it was night, without Jacob's perceiving it, he put his other daughter into bed to him, who was both elder than Rachel, and of no comely countenance: Jacob lay with her that night, as being both in drink and in the dark. However, when it was day, he knew what had been done to him; and he reproached Laban for his unfair proceeding with him; who asked pardon for that necessity which forced him to do what he did; for he did not give him Lea out of any ill design, but as overcome by another greater necessity: that, notwithstanding this, nothing should hinder him from marrying Rachel; but that when he had served another seven years, he would give him her whom he loved. Jacob submitted to this condition, for his love to the damsel did not permit him to do otherwise; and when another seven years were gone, he took Rachel to wife.

8. Now each of these had handmaids, by their father's donation. Zilpha was handmaid to Lea, and Bilha to Rachel; by no means slaves,⁽³⁵⁾ but however subject to their mistresses. Now Lea was sorely troubled at her husband's love to her sister; and she expected she should be better esteemed if she bare him children: so she entreated God perpetually; and when she had borne a son, and her husband was on that account better reconciled to her, she named her son Reubel, because *God had had mercy upon her, in giving her a son*, for that is the signification of this name. After some time she bare three more sons; Simeon, which name signifies that *God had hearkened to her prayer*. Then she bare Levi, *the confirmer of their friendship*. After him was born Judah, which denotes *thanksgiving*.

⁽³⁴⁾ By this "deprivation of the kingdom that was to be given Esau of God," as the first-born, it appears that Josephus thought

Josephus' History of this Time Period

that a "kingdom to be derived from God" was due to him whom Isaac should bless as his first-born, which I take to be that kingdom which was expected under the Messiah, who therefore was to be born of his posterity whom Isaac should so bless. Jacob therefore by obtaining this blessing of the first-born, became the genuine heir of that kingdom, in opposition to Esau. ⁽³⁵⁾ Here we have the difference between slaves for life and servants, such as we now hire for a time agreed upon on both sides, and dismiss again after he time contracted for is over, which are no slaves, but free men and free women. Accordingly, when the Apostolical Constitutions forbid a clergyman to marry perpetual servants or slaves, B. VI. ch. 17., it is meant only of the former sort; as we learn elsewhere from the same Constitutions, ch. 47. Can. LXXXII. But concerning these twelve sons of Jacob, the reasons of their several names, and the times of their several births in the intervals here assigned, their several excellent characters, their several faults and repentance, the several accidents of their lives, with their several prophecies at their deaths, see the Testaments of these twelve patriarchs, still preserved at large in the Authent. Rec. Part I. p. 294-443.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed . Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 1.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Genesis 29

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Jacob arrives in Haran and runs into some shepherds who know Laban	
Jacob then lifted up his feet and came to the land of the sons of the east. He looked and saw a well in the field [before him] and he observed three flocks of sheep there lying beside it, for they caused the flocks to be watered from that well. [There was] a large stone over the well opening.	Jacob then traveled to the land of the east. He looked out and saw a well in the field that was in front of him. He observed three flocks of sheep lying beside the well. The shepherds apparently watered these sheep from this well. There was a large stone over the well opening.
The [shepherds typically] gathered all the flocks there and then they would roll away the stone from over the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they returned the stone over the mouth of the well to its place.	The shepherds gathered their flocks there in order to give them water. They would first remove the stone from its place, give water to the sheep, and then place the stone back over the well's opening.
Jacob said to them, "My brothers, from where [do] you [come]?"	Jacob asked them, "My brothers, where do you all come from?"
They answered [him], "We [are] from Haran."	And they answered, "We come from Haran."
He asked them, "Do you know Laban ben Nahor?"	He asked them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?"
They answered, "We do know [him]."	They answered, "Yes, we know him."
He then asked them, "[Are things] well with him?"	He then asked them, "Are things well with him?"
And they answered, "[Things are] well [with him]. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming [this way] with the sheep."	And they replied, "He is doing well. In fact, look, here comes Rachel his daughter with the sheep."

A Complete Translation of Genesis 29	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
He said, "Look, [there is] still more day [remaining]. [Is this] not a time to gather the cattle? Water the sheep and go; put [them out] to pasture."	Then Jacob remarked, "Look, there is a lot of day left. Is this not the time that you gather your cattle and water and pasture them?"
They answered, "We are unable [to do those things] until the flocks have been gathered and they have rolled the stone away from over the well opening—then we [can] water the sheep."	They answered, "We are unable to water the sheep and put them out to pasture. First all the flocks must be gathered and then they roll the stone away from over the well opening—then we can water the sheep."
Jacob meets his family in the east	
[While] he yet spoke with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, for she [was] a shepherdess.	Yet while he was speaking with them, Rachel came up with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.
And it was as Jacob saw Rachel (the daughter of Laban his uncle) and the sheep of his Uncle Laban, he [lit., <i>Jacob</i>] approaches [her; the well?] and rolled the stone from over the well opening and watered the sheep of his Uncle Laban.	Then, after Jacob saw Rachel (the daughter of his Uncle Laban) and the sheep belonging to his Uncle Laban, he went up and rolled the stone away from over the well and he watered his Uncle Laban's sheep.
Jacob then kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and cried. Jacob made it known to Rachel that he [was] her father's relative and that he [is] a son of Rebekah. Therefore, she ran to tell her father.	Jacob then kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and cried. Jacob made it known to Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he is a son of Rebekah. Therefore, she ran to tell this to her father.
And it was as soon as Laban heard the report of Jacob (his sister's son), he ran to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and then brought him to his house. [All the time], Jacob [lit., <i>he</i>] told Laban all those things [that had happened].	As soon as Laban heard the news about the arrival of His nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him. Laban embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. All the while, Jacob told Laban about what had been happening with his family.
Laban therefore said to him, "Surely you [are] my flesh and bone!" Therefore, Jacob [lit., <i>he</i>] stayed with him for a month of days.	Laban therefore exclaimed, "Surely you are my flesh and bone!" Therefore, Jacob remained there with them for a month.
Jacob proposes to work for Laban in order to marry Rachel	
Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you [are] my brother, will you serve me for nothing? Tell me what your wages [should be]."	Then Laban said to Jacob, "Look, you are my nephew; you cannot work for nothing. Tell me what I should pay you."
Laban had two daughters: the name of the older [is] Leah and the name of the younger [is] Rachel. The eyes of Leah [are] weak [and timid]; but Rachel [had] a beautiful [eye-catching] figure and an attractive appearance.	Now, Laban had two daughters: Leah was the eldest and Rachel the youngest. Leah's eyes were weak and timid; but Rachel had a beautiful, eye-catching figure and she was very attractive.
Jacob loves Rachel, so he answered, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."	Since Jacob loves Rachel, he answered, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."
Laban then said, "[It is] better that I give her to you than I give her to another man. Stay with me."	Laban then said, "It is much better that I give her to you than give her to another man. Therefore, please stay with me; I accept your terms."

A Complete Translation of Genesis 29	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Jacob served [Laban] near Rachel [for] seven years, but they are in his estimation a few days in his love toward her.	Jacob served Laban for Rachel for seven years, but this time was, in his estimation, but a few days, because of his love for her.
Laban deceives Jacob; but gives Jacob both daughters to marry	
Jacob then said to Laban, "Give my wife [to me] for my days [of service] have been fulfilled; so that I may go in unto her."	Jacob then said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days of service to you have been completed; so that I may take her as my wife."
So, Laban gathered all the men of that place together and he made a celebratory feast.	Therefore, Laban gathered all the men of that place together and he held a celebratory feast.
And so it is in the evening that Laban [lit., <i>he</i>] takes his daughter Leah and brings her to Jacob [lit., <i>him</i>]. And Jacob [lit., <i>he</i>] goes in unto her.	Later that evening, Laban took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob and Jacob had relations with her, not knowing that she was Leah.
Laban also gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah [to be her] maid.	(Laban also gave Zilpah his maid to his daughter Leah to be her maid.)
And so it is the morning and, Jacob saw [that] she [was] Leah. Therefore, he said to Laban, "What [is] this [that] you have done to me? Did I not serve you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?"	In the morning, Jacob saw that he had consummated his marriage with Leah. Therefore, he went to Laban and said, "What is this that you have done to me? Did I not serve you in order to marry Rachel. How could you deceive me like this?"
Laban then said, "[It] is not done this way in our country, to give the youngest [daughter in marriage] before the firstborn. Also fulfill a week of this one and let us give you another [one] by the service which you will perform for me [with] yet seven more years."	Laban then said, "We don't do things like that in our country—we don't give the youngest daughter away in marriage before the firstborn. First fulfill this celebratory week and we will give you another wife in exchange for your service—just 7 more years."
Jacob therefore did [what Laban said] and fulfilled [another] week of this [celebration]. Consequently, Laban [lit., <i>he</i>] gave to him Rachel his daughter for his wife.	Jacob therefore fulfilled the agreement to celebrate his wedding over the next seven days; and Laban gave Jacob Rachel as his wife.
Laban also gave Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his maid, to her for a maid.	(Laban also gave Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his maid, to her for a maid.)
He goes in unto Rachel and he loves Rachel more than Leah. Therefore, he served with him yet another seven years.	Jacob then had relations with Rachel and he loved Rachel more than Leah. He served Laban yet another seven years for Rachel.
Leah bears 4 sons for Jacob	
Y ^e howah observed that Leah is hated, so He opened up her womb, while Rachel [was] barren. Leah conceived and bore a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, "Y ^e howah has seen my humiliation; indeed my husband will love me [because I bore him this son]."	Jehovah observed that Leah was hated, so He allowed her to conceive, while Rachel remained barren. Leah conceived and bore a son whom she named Reuben. She explained, "Jehovah has looked upon my humiliation and has given me a child so that my husband will love me."

A Complete Translation of Genesis 29	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
She conceived again and bore [another] son, saying, "Because Y ^e howah has heard that I am hated, He also gives me this [son]." And she named him Simeon.	She conceived again and bore another son, whom she named Simeon. She remarked, "Jehovah has heard that I am hated; and He therefore gave me this son."
She conceived again and bore a son and said, "At this time my husband will be joined to me for I have born three sons to him." Therefore, she named him Levi.	She conceived again and bore Jacob another son, saying, "Now, my husband will be joined to me for I have given him three sons." Therefore, she named her son Levi.
She conceived again and bore [another] son. Then she said, "This time I will praise Y ^e howah." Therefore, she named him Judah. Then she [temporarily] ceased from bearing [children].	She conceived again and bore a fourth son. Then she said, "This time, I will praise Jehovah." Therefore, she named him Judah. After that, she ceased bearing children.
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time: none.

I do not show this as a chapter to be covered by R. B. Thieme, Jr. in his available studies.

