

Character Study: Jacob

Part 2 – Laban’s Deception

Genesis 29:1-30

What’s happening?

- After Jacob’s encounter with God, he continued on toward Haran to stay with his uncle Laban. Once in the city, Jacob found shepherds who knew his uncle and he even met Laban’s daughter, Rachel. Hearing of his arrival, Laban welcomed Jacob into his home. (29:1-14)
- Jacob stayed with Laban and began working for him. Laban asked what would be a fair wage to pay him, and Jacob offered seven years of labor in exchange for his daughter Rachel’s hand in marriage. (29:15-19)
- After seven years of work, Laban hosted a wedding feast. However, in the evening, Laban secretly gave Jacob his firstborn daughter Leah instead of Rachel. Realizing the next morning that he had been deceived, Jacob was upset, but Laban insisted that in their culture the older daughter must be given in marriage before the younger. (29:20-26)
- Because of Jacob’s love for Rachel, he vowed to work another seven years for her hand in marriage as well. Laban agreed and gave Rachel to Jacob as his wife. Jacob continued to work in return. (29:27-30)

What’s God doing?

> God was having Jacob get a taste of his own medicine. Jacob, who had earlier used deception to trick his father, was now dealing with someone who used deception to trick him.

> We see recorded here, as in a few other places in the Old Testament, an instance of polygamy. Though the Scriptures record such historical events, keep this in mind: God never approved of it; the practice goes against God’s original design for marriage (Gen. 2:21-24); it was biblically forbidden in the Old Testament (Deut. 17:17) and New Testament (I Cor. 7:1-3); and it was never blessed by God.

What’s to learn?

→ Galatians 6:7 says that people will sow what they reap. By being tricked by Laban, Jacob could now understand how Esau and his father Isaac felt after he had tricked them. God used Laban’s actions to help Jacob realize the sin of his own craftiness. Have you found yourself sowing what you have reaped? What may God be teaching you about how to treat others and how to demonstrate faith in Him?