

Chapter 29 Summary

Jacob ventures out and starts talking to locals. He asks about Laban the son of Nahor and someone mentions his daughter is approaching with sheep. (remember Laban is Rebekah, wife of Issac, sister so this is Uncle Laban) Long story short Jacob loves Racheal and agrees to work for Laban for 7 years in exchange for Rachael's hand in marriage. Laban tricks him after seven years and now Jacob is married to Leah, the oldest daughter. Not to panic Laban gave his servant to Leah, her name was Zilpah. Then Laban suggests Jacob work for him another 7 years and he can have Racheal who has a servant named Bilhah.

Chapter 30 Summary

Leah had Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun and Dinah.

Racheal isn't getting pregnant so she gave Jacob her servant Bilhah. Bilhan had Dan and Naftali.

Then Leah who isn't getting pregnant anymore gives her servant, Zilpah, to Jacob. Zilpah had Gad and Asher.

Finally Racheal get pregnant and had Joseph. (In chapter 35 she has Ben but dies during childbirth.

Jacob pulls a fast one on Laban and becomes very wealthy in animals and human servants.

Chapter 31 Summary

Jacob took his family and left the area of Haran for his homeland of Canaan without announcing his departure to Laban expecting trouble from Laban. Upon leaving, Rachel stole her father's false gods and hid them under her mattress. Laban soon caught up with them and demanded his gods. Jacob, not knowing that Rachel had them, permitted her father to search. Jacob pronounced a curse of death upon anyone that had them. Laban did not find them as Rachel was exempted from the search as she claimed to be unable to rise from her mattress because of her period. (Is this why she died in Chapter 35 giving birth to Ben?)

Chapter 32 Summary

On his way back home, Jacob realized that he had to travel through Esau's land. God spoke to Jacob again and promised to be with him. He followed this promise up by sending some angels to reassure Jacob of his protection.

But Jacob was still scheming rather than trusting. He sent some of his servants to bribe Esau with shmoozing and the hope of gifts. But they returned with news that sent chills down Jacob's spine--Esau was coming to see him with 400 men! For the first recorded time in the text, Jacob prayed to God for protection. But then he hatched an elaborate and self-protective plan to buy Esau off.

Alone that night before he had to face Esau, Jacob had an encounter with God that was the defining moment of his life . . .

The Wrestling Match

God initiated this wrestling match to portray Jacob's life up to now, and to teach him a crucial lesson.

God initiated the wrestling match, and Jacob responded by fighting back all night long. This was a picture of Jacob's relationship with God all this time. It wasn't primarily Esau or Laban that Jacob was resisting and trying to get around--it was God himself. God had a will for Jacob's life and made promises to him pertaining to that will, but Jacob had been stubbornly resisting God's leadership at every step.

After wrestling all night, God dislocated Jacob's thigh with a touch. This showed Jacob who he was fighting with (someone with immense power who could easily beat him), and that this was a picture. God had been taking progressively more drastic steps (Esau; Laban; Esau) to teach Jacob to abandon his self-sufficiency and trust him.

Now crippled, Jacob can only hang on to God--a picture of his proper relationship with God. Now that Jacob's tenacity is expressed in a dependent posture, God blesses him and renames him to cleanse him from his old ways ("supplanter;" "deceiver") and give him a new identity to live up to ("one who strives effectively with God"). God has always been willing to bless Jacob. He has only been waiting for Jacob to ask with a trusting, dependent heart.

Chapter 33 Summary

Jacob learned the lesson. The next morning, he dropped his elaborate and self-protective plan with Esau and instead passed ahead of everyone to meet him directly, trusting God's promise to protect him. He discovered that Esau had forgiven him, and he went on to supply godly leadership for his family.

Jacob and family travel to Shechem.