

A Bride Worth Waiting For

Key Verse: “*So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.*”
—**Genesis 29:30**
(*New American Standard Bible*)

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 29:15-30
however, Jacob fled his homeland, following his father’s instructions to journey to the house of Laban and take one of his daughters as his wife.—Gen. 28:1-3

As Jacob travelled, he was strengthened by God, who renewed his promises to him. Then he “came into the land of the people of the east.” (Gen. 28:10-22; 29:1) Upon reaching his destination, he saw shepherds watering their flocks near a well. He found that they knew Laban. As they talked, Rachel, one of Laban’s daughters, came to the well. Jacob was taken by Rachel’s beauty. Upon arriving at Laban’s home, he related his reason for being there. Laban suggested that “wages” be paid to Jacob

THE BACKGROUND OF OUR

lesson centers on Jacob’s departure from his brother, Esau. We recall that Esau had sold his firstborn “birthright” to Jacob for “bread and pottage of lentils.” Later, Jacob also obtained the chief blessing from his father Isaac. (Gen. 25:29-34; 27:1-46) As a result of these incidents, Esau hated his brother and resolved in his heart that he would kill him after the death of their father. Through the overruling providences of God,

for his work on behalf of the household.—Gen. 29:2-15

Jacob proposed that he serve Laban for seven years in return for his younger daughter Rachel, who would then become his wife. To this Laban agreed. However, at the end of the seven years, because Leah, his older daughter, was not yet married, Laban found himself in a difficult position. According to the custom of the day, it was improper to give a younger daughter in marriage while an older one remained unwed. Laban's solution was to give Leah, the older daughter, to Jacob, instead of Rachel, which he did. Jacob was not satisfied with this arrangement, because he loved Rachel much more than Leah. (vss. 16-26) He then agreed to work another seven years in order to gain Rachel for his wife, as stated in our Key Verse.

Various pictures are presented to us in the account of these events. Concerning Jacob and Esau, we see how the natural seed of Abraham—fleshly Israel, represented by Esau—was first given the opportunity to be God's specially chosen and blessed people. They failed, however, to receive God's chief blessing. Like Esau, natural Israel, when they might have inherited the spiritual promises, preferred instead earthly things. The Gospel Age church, represented by Jacob, though developed later, receives the choicest blessings—the spiritual.—Rom. 9:11,12,30,31

Similarly, as Rachel was the one loved most and first promised to Jacob, the Abrahamic Covenant is that which the church is developed under, and was given by promise from God prior to "the law" covenant. (Gal. 3:8,16-18) Leah, the eldest daughter, represented the Law Covenant arrangement, which operated prior to the arrival of the Abrahamic seed of promise. Thus, natural Israel was first recognized, being called "children of the flesh" and "Israel after the flesh." (Rom. 9:8; I Cor. 10:18) Their experiences were used by God as an "example and shadow of heavenly things," and of "good things to come" to all the families of the earth.—Heb. 8:5; 10:1 ■