



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### Talk Genesis 29:1-14: Jacob Meets Rachel, His Future Wife

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#### Lesson 66

*"So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. 2 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. 3 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. 4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." 5 Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." 6 So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." 7 Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." 8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep." 9 Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 12 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. 13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month."*

#### Background Notes

After Jacob's dream, he continued on his journey to the northeast. His destination was Haran, in the area of Padan Aram. This area today is approximately where Turkey, Syria, and Iraq come together at the top of the Fertile Crescent. Kurdish people live there today. Haran would be about five hundred miles from Beersheba, where Jacob started his journey. Here Jacob would be safe from Esau's wrath, and here Jacob would find a wife. Remember, Isaac had instructed Jacob to find a wife in this area where Rebekah had come from: *"Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother" (Geneis 28:1-2).*

Jacob arrived in the area of Haran and he “just happened” to stop by a well where there were some shepherd boys who “just happened” to know Laban, Jacob’s uncle. Then Rachel, a shepherdess, “just happened” to arrive with Laban’s sheep, and she “just happened” to be a very nice- looking single young woman! “Wow!” thought Jacob, everything is going great! God is making good on those promises that He made to me in the dream back at Bethel.” Seriously speaking, God really **was** making good on His promises. These events weren’t “just happening”! God was working behind the scenes to accomplish His purposes.

This account reminds us of Genesis 24, where Abraham’s servant come to this same area to find a wife for Isaac. We saw divine providence at work there, and we see divine providence at work here as well.

In verse 7, it appears that Jacob tried to get the other shepherds, probably young boys, to water their sheep and move on. Why? Jacob saw Rachel coming, and he wanted to meet and talk with her alone. When Rachel arrived, Jacob single-handedly removed the stone from the well’s mouth -- showing that Jacob was no weakling! Then he watered all of Rachel’s sheep. He certainly wanted to make a good impression on this beautiful single young woman! After this, he went over and kissed Rachel, and he began to weep, *“Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept”(v11).*

Now let me ask you married ladies a question. If your husband had kissed you on your first date and then started crying, would you have married him? Well, we assume that Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative before he kissed her and started crying! It’s clear that Jacob was crying for joy -- he was a long way from home, and he was happy to be with family. Rachel ran to tell her father, Laban, and he came out and welcomed Jacob. *“when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, “Surely you are my bone and my flesh.” And he stayed with him for a month” (v13-14).*

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. The guidance of God is working for good in spite of spiritual immaturity.**

We certainly see that truth taught here in the life of Jacob. Jacob was a believer, but at this point in his life he was not a spiritually mature believer. In fact, at this point in his life Jacob was a selfish, deceitful, cunning and crafty believer. He had just deceived his father Isaac in order to steal the blessing from his brother Esau, and the vow he made before God in chapter 28 was a somewhat self-centered bargain with God. Look back here at Genesis 28:20-21: *“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.”* Do you notice how selfish that vow was?

Jacob was certainly no spiritual giant at this point in his life! But here is the point: in spite of all his shortcomings and spiritual immaturity, God was working for good in Jacob’s life. Here in this chapter we see that God’s guidance was working behind the scenes to provide for and to protect Jacob. And God was working behind the scenes in Jacob’s life to make him the man of faith God intended him to be. The guidance of God was working for good in spite of Jacob’s spiritual immaturity.

That was true in Jacob's life, and it is true in our lives as well. Just this summer Margie and I heard some great news about a young man who had been in our church youth group over twenty years ago. He was a believer, but after high school he drifted away from the Lord and did his own thing. His interests were all self-centered, and he had very little time for God. But in spite of his spiritual immaturity, God was working behind the scenes, and he guided him to the right wife. Then He guided him in his travels so that his eyes were opened once again to the things of God. To make a long story short, he and his wife are now joyfully serving the Lord full time as missionaries in Eastern Europe! The guidance of God is working for good in spite of spiritual immaturity.

## **2. The guidance of God is working for good in spite of spiritual ignorance.**

At this stage of the game, Jacob was not only spiritually immature; he was spiritually ignorant. He was not aware that through all these mundane events, God was accomplishing his purpose of bringing about a nation through which the Redeemer for all mankind would come. At this point in Jacob's life, as we saw from his vow in chapter 28, Jacob was only interested in his own safety and his own needs. He was spiritually ignorant of all that God was doing through him, and would do through him.

The same is true in our lives. We are often spiritually ignorant of all the good God wants to do for us and through us. Here's an illustration from my own life. Many of you know that over twenty-five years ago now I was working as a research engineer, and I made a job change to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We went house-hunting in the Pittsburgh area, but we couldn't seem to find just the "right" house. Finally, almost in desperation (and shall we say a little frustration on our part), we decided to rent a small house temporarily, by the month. The house wasn't really adequate for our family's needs, but it provided a base from which we could continue to hunt for a house to buy.

Well, it was through that rather run-down rental house, which "just happened" to be near the local high school, that we became very heavily involved with the evangelistic ministry there, and gradually came to realize that God was calling us into a full time ministry with high school kids. Within 10 months of renting that house, we left secular employment and were serving the Lord full time. At that time we were spiritually ignorant of all that God was doing for us as He guided us through the events of those days!

We continue to be amazed at the way God works behind the scenes, without our knowing it, to accomplish **His** purposes. The same is true in your life as well. The guidance of God is working for good in spite of spiritual ignorance. I am sure many of you could share stories from your own lives along this line.

### **Practical Application**

#### **Do you really believe Romans 8:28?**

Do we really believe Romans 8:28? "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*" There is no way we can study this chapter in Jacob's life and not be reminded of Romans 8:28.

Notice that Romans 8:28 does not say that all things are good, but all things **work together** for good in the believer's life. All things were **not** good in Jacob's life. Jacob deceiving his father was not good. Jacob's selfishness was not good. Jacob's spiritual

immaturity was not good. And, as we will see, Jacob marrying four wives was not good. But do you see what the Scripture is saying? God can take all things -- including our shortcomings and sin -- and work them together to accomplish His good plans for us. Those plans will certainly include discipline to correct us, as we'll see in Jacob's life. But God can take all things and work them together for our good.

Do you really believe Romans 8:28? You may say, "Well, I believe it for Jacob's life, but I have a hard time believing it for my own life." Listen -- if you are a believer, Romans 8:28 is addressed to you. **All** things work together for good to those who love God -- all our ups and downs, all our pleasures and hurts, all our joys and and disappointments, all our triumphs and all our tragedies -- even all our shortcomings and sins -- are being **worked together for good** by our loving God. Of course He doesn't condone our shortcomings and sins in any way, and we must be disciplined, but still God can take all of these things and work them together for our ultimate good and blessing.

That is what the Bible teaches --do you believe it? Believing it will make a tremendous difference in your life as a believer! Do we **really** believe Romans 8:28?