

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

Genesis 29:15-30

After fleeing from his brother, Esau, Jacob headed to the land of his ancestors, and there he found his uncle Laban. Laban welcomed Jacob into his home, and Jacob fell in love with Rachel.

No one knows for sure the meaning of Scripture's description of Leah's eyes as "weak." Some suggest that she was nearsighted; others say that her eyes lacked the sparkle or fire that was considered a sign of great beauty in that culture. Still others think the Hebrew word translated as "weak" could also be translated as "delicate" or "gentle," indicating that Leah had some beauty but it paled by comparison to Rachel's overwhelming beauty. Whatever Leah's eyes were like, Jacob definitely liked Rachel better!

This story raises an interesting question: How could Jacob have slept with Leah without knowing she wasn't Rachel? Remember that this event happened before the invention of electric lights, so it would have been very dark once the weak lamps were extinguished. Also Leah likely tried to make the deception succeed. Finally, Jacob's senses may have been dulled by eating and drinking during the wedding feast.

Fortunately for Jacob, multiple wives were common in that culture, and Laban agreed to let him take Rachel as his second wife after just one week—providing Jacob worked for Laban another seven years!

So Jacob found himself still working for Laban. Notice the last sentence of this passage: "And he worked for Laban another seven years." Jacob fulfilled his promise. Perhaps this shows some growth in Jacob. Perhaps years of hardship had curbed his deceptive ways—after all, he could have taken his two wives and run before the second seven years were up. Perhaps he realized that God was teaching him patience and faithfulness through the hard times that came into his life.

Hard times come. How we respond to them may influence how God helps us through them. As we trust in him, he will never let us down.

Devotion for Leaders

The One Thing: Everyone encounters hardship. What a comfort to know that God uses our difficulties to help us grow and make us more like Jesus.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Reread Genesis 29:26-30. How would you feel serving 14 years to earn something you thought you had been promised? Are you facing a trial or difficulty right now? Your response could change an outcome and strengthen your faith! If you're in the midst of hard times, tell your story to someone you trust, and allow that person to encourage you.