

# Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

## Genesis 29:1-30

"Scheming the Schemer"— May 28, 2023



### **Introduction**

As we have gone through the book of Genesis, we have met the fathers of faith. When we first met Jacob, we learned that he was a bit of a con artist. He deceived people and lied to get ahead in life. He stole the birthright from his brother and had to flee his home. Last week, we saw that God revealed himself to Jacob reminding him of His promise to be with him and carry him through to the place where God had called. This promise should have made Jacob bold, creative, and fearless, and at first, he was.

Jacob was making the long, 500 mile journey to Haran. He was homeless, penniless, and alone. He had a lot of time to think. There was time for fear and anxiety to creep back into his heart. He believed, but sometimes his faith wavered. It was easy for him to live like God wasn't there and rely on self. Can you relate to Jacob?

However, in His providence, God gets us where He wants us to go and makes us who He wants us to be.

### **Sermon Outline**

1. God's providence gets us to where He wants us to go. Vs. 1-14
2. God's providence makes us who He wants us to be. Vs. 15-30

### **Read & Discuss**

#### **1. Read vs. 1-14**

Jacob had been on a 500 mile journey to Haran. At the well, he met people from Haran, from the house of Laban. He met Rachel also. This is NO coincidence. God, in His providence, was arranging this meeting at just the right time. They met at the well. Moses wants us to compare this chapter with another meeting in chapter 24. While there are a lot of similarities, there are also some key differences. In chapter 24, the servant came with camels and gold. In contrast, Jacob came to Haran with nothing. In chapter 24, Abraham's servant sought the Lord before the journey. He gave thanks and worshipped. But, where is God mentioned in chapter 29? You will not find God mentioned in this chapter, but He was there, providentially directing the events. Jacob was blind to it. He had fallen back into his self-reliant way of living.

"The stone" was mentioned over and over. Why all the details about the stone? The stone was too heavy for the shepherds to move the stone, but Jacob moves it himself. The stone should have reminded Jacob of the stone and God's presence in chapter 28. ([Genesis 28:18](#)) Yet he used this opportunity to impress Rachel by moving the stone all by himself.

All the details are a reminder that God's providence was at work, but Jacob seemed blind to that. Are there times when you don't see God at work? Does doing things according to God's word and God's way pose a threat to you? Do you rely on self? Are you tempted to suppress the truth about God in order to get ahead, fit in, or keep what you want? There is a cost that comes with our self-reliance. When we are blind to the providence of God, we deceive ourselves. We miss all the benefits of the confidence and patience that an accurate view of God affords us. Does this chapter encourage you about the providence of God? He rules all things from a Fatherly hand - a hand that wants to bless you. He arranges ALL of life - the big and the small - to suit and affect His providence. Do you see your God this way?

**Additional Reading:** Genesis 24 and 28

#### **2. Read chapter vs. 15-30**

Laban sounded like a good guy, but he remembered what happened in chapter 24 when the servant came with a lot of expensive things. He was hatching a "get rich scheme" to keep the goodies. He was trying to get Jacob to stick around, and he gladly accepts Jacob's offer to work seven years for Rachel.

Up to this point, Jacob had gotten everything by scheming and conning. But the schemer is about to get schemed. The word "serve" is repeated several times. In Chapter 25, Rebekah was told the older would serve the younger. The reminder that Jacob would serve Laban had an ominous note. Jacob was about to get a taste of his own scheming medicine. Laban gave the older daughter, Leah to Jacob, tricking him in that

marriage. Laban was a con artist who “one-ups” Jacob with this “switch-a-roo.” Surely, Jacob must have realized that he did the same thing to his father and brother. This is a reminder to us that we never get away with nor are we better off by sinning. ([Galatians 6:7](#))

God, the loving Father, is orchestrating events for Jacob's good. God isn't “sticking it” to Jacob. He disciplines those He loves. The fourteen years of working for Laban (plus an additional six years after) must have been hard, but these years were not wasted. During this time, God was shaping Jacob, working out the rough edges. Trials in our life are not a waste. They are for our good.

We love “happily ever after” stories, but the end of this story seems like a disaster. Why would this happen to Jacob? It's easy, in the pain of bad circumstances, to blame God. ([Proverbs 19:3](#)) However, God was there the whole time. He had been with Jacob, exactly as He promised. Self-reliance may ignore God, but it doesn't erase God. God was with Jacob and would continue to be with him. When life is difficult, God seems distant. Are you tempted to think that? In tough times, are you tempted to rely on yourself?

God was at work and used the despised, unloved Leah who would bare Judah. It was from this lineage that Jesus, the Messiah would come. Jesus is the divine ladder who would bridge the gap between us and God, opening up all the resources of heaven to bring us home to God. Is there a Laban in your life - someone who makes your life miserable? Have you ever considered that perhaps God, in His providence, brought that “Laban” into your life for you to see what needs to change in you? Don't rush to push them out of your life. Ask God to change you. Ask God to give you the grace and patience to change. God is with us. He delights to bring about the change that needs to happen in us.

**Additional Reading:** Genesis 25

#### **Prayer of Response**

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at [fbcum.org](http://fbcum.org)

<b>Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <a href="#">Matthew 23:1-12</a> “Be Great”
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