



Laban's Deceit – Genesis 29

GENESIS 29:1-10

As I'm reading this chapter, I can't help but notice the obvious symbolism behind it. Again, I'm looking at typologies and how the details of this story do more than simply entertain us—they point us to Christ. Everything from the well, to the watering of the sheep whispers His name. Let's start at the beginning.

As Jacob arrives at Paddan Aram, he sees a well with 3 flocks of sheep lying near it. While the number 3 can point to several things, the flock of sheep waiting to be watered reminds me of these verses from John 21:15-17 (NIV),

“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again, Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.

This chapter goes on to tell us that there was a large stone over the mouth of the well. Why didn't the shepherds remove the stone and water the flock?

“We can't,” they replied, “until all the flocks are gathered, and the stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the well. Then we will water the sheep.” (Genesis 29:8)

The idea of the large stone covering the well, points us to the tomb in which Jesus was laid, and that beautiful morning that stone was rolled away.

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

—Mark 16:4, NIV

When the stone was rolled away, it signified the victory of Christ over death and the opening of the way to eternal life for all who believe in Him.

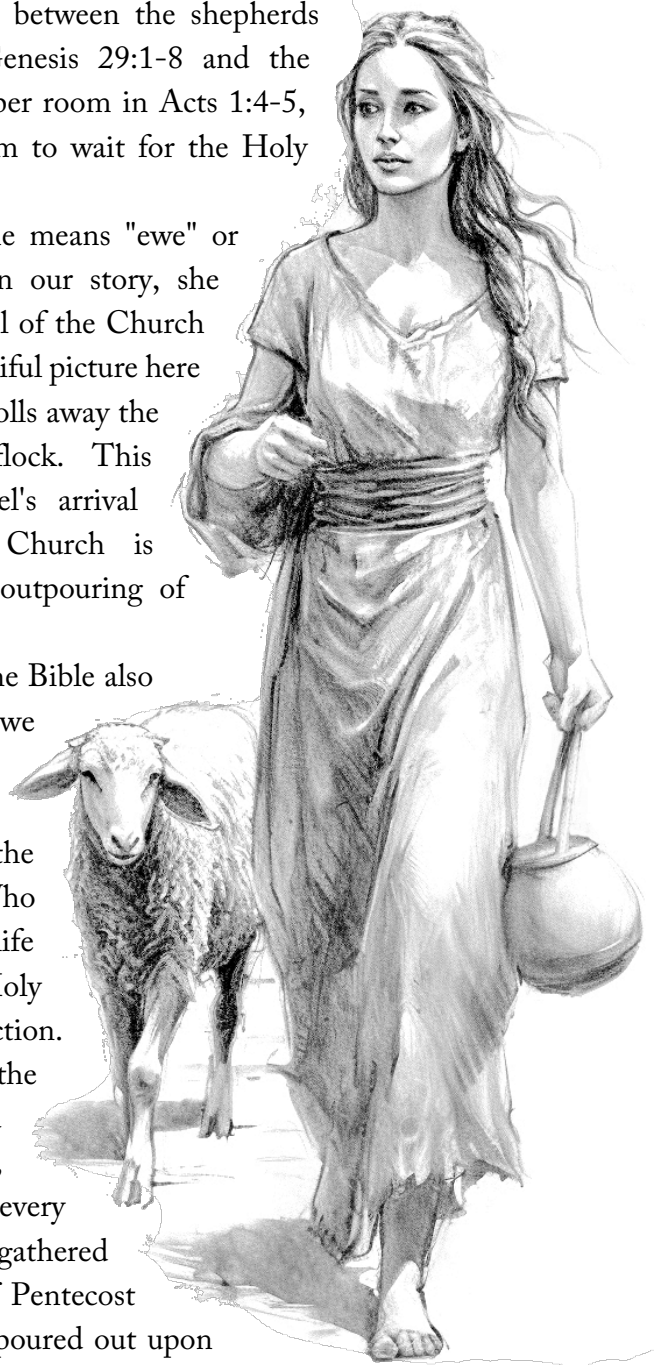
I shared a verse earlier on in this study where Jesus prophesied about the coming of the Holy Spirit. But here's the thing; the Holy Spirit was not sent until after His resurrection and His ascension into Heaven: “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7, NIV)

We see a parallel here between the shepherds waiting at the well in Genesis 29:1-8 and the disciples waiting in the upper room in Acts 1:4-5, where Jesus instructed them to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.

As Rachel, whose name means "ewe" or "female sheep," emerges in our story, she serves as a profound symbol of the Church under grace. There's a beautiful picture here as Jacob, a type of Christ, rolls away the stone and waters the flock. This correlation between Rachel's arrival and the birth of the Church is significant, mirroring the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, wells in the Bible also represent eternal life. What we are seeing in this chapter then can be looked at as both symbolic of the resurrection of Christ, Who opened the door for eternal life and the coming of the Holy Spirit following the resurrection.

In the same way that the sheep were gathered around the well that day in Haran, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven were gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church (Acts 2:5).



It was then that Peter was enabled by the Spirit to address the crowd—to feed the sheep so to speak. Through the message of the gospel about 3,000 were added to the church that day.

⓪ How might the watering of the sheep point to the day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2?

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⓪ What did Jesus say to the woman at the well in John 4:14? And what did He mean by it?

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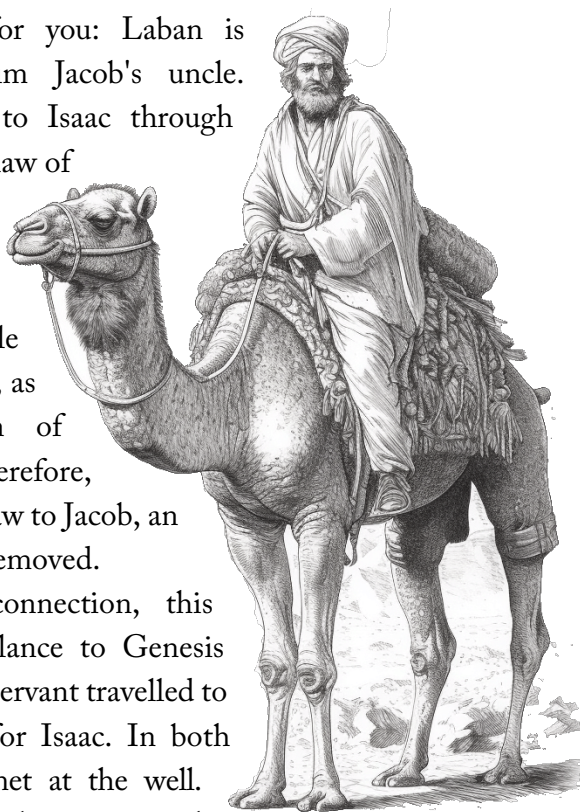
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GENESIS 29:11-13

Here's a little mind bender for you: Laban is Rebekah's brother, making him Jacob's uncle. Additionally, Laban is related to Isaac through marriage, as he is the brother-in-law of Isaac, who married Laban's sister, Rebekah. Furthermore, Laban's familial connection to Jacob extends from being his uncle to being his cousin once removed, as Laban is also the grandson of Abraham's brother, Nahor. Therefore, Laban is both a future father-in-law to Jacob, an uncle to him, and a cousin once removed.

Because of this familial connection, this chapter bears a striking resemblance to Genesis Chapter 24:10 where Abraham's servant travelled to Nahor's home to find a wife for Isaac. In both stories, the future brides were met at the well. Another similarity we find is that Laban is a central character in both stories. In fact, in Genesis 24:29 it seems that Laban does most of the negotiating on behalf of the family. Although the stories are similar, they do take place in separate locations. Genesis 24 was set in the town of Nahor, and this chapter is in the town of Haran. Both are in the same region of Paddan Aram.

In some ancient Near Eastern cultures, including those depicted in the Bible, displays of physical affection like kissing were not uncommon, especially within familial or close social circles. In the case of Jacob kissing Rachel in Genesis 29:11, it may have been a gesture of affection and respect, particularly given the circumstances surrounding their meeting. Jacob had just arrived in the land of his relatives, where he encountered Rachel at a well. Overwhelmed with emotion upon meeting her and realizing her significance as a potential spouse, Jacob's kiss was likely a customary greeting as demonstrated a few verses later with Laban.





The details in this chapter are similar to the events in Genesis Chapter 24 where Abraham's servant meets Rebekah. Can you think of another story in the Bible where a future bride is met at the well?

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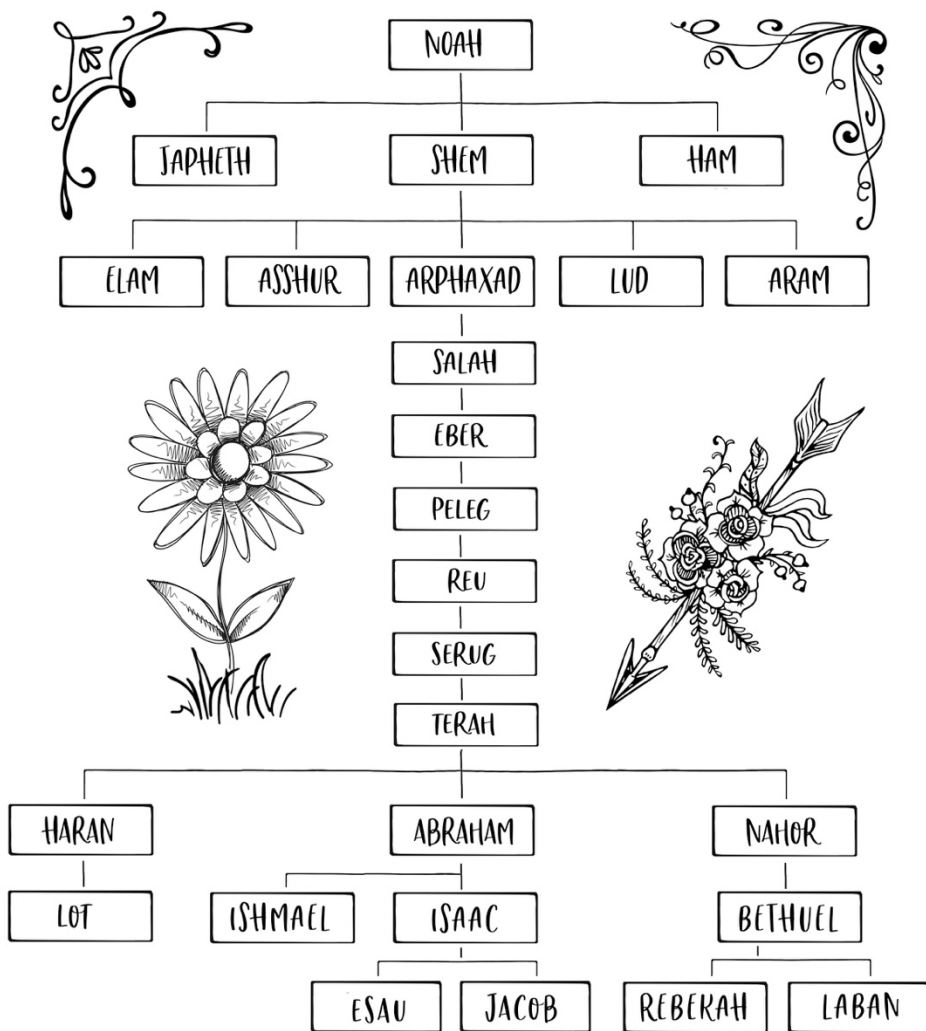
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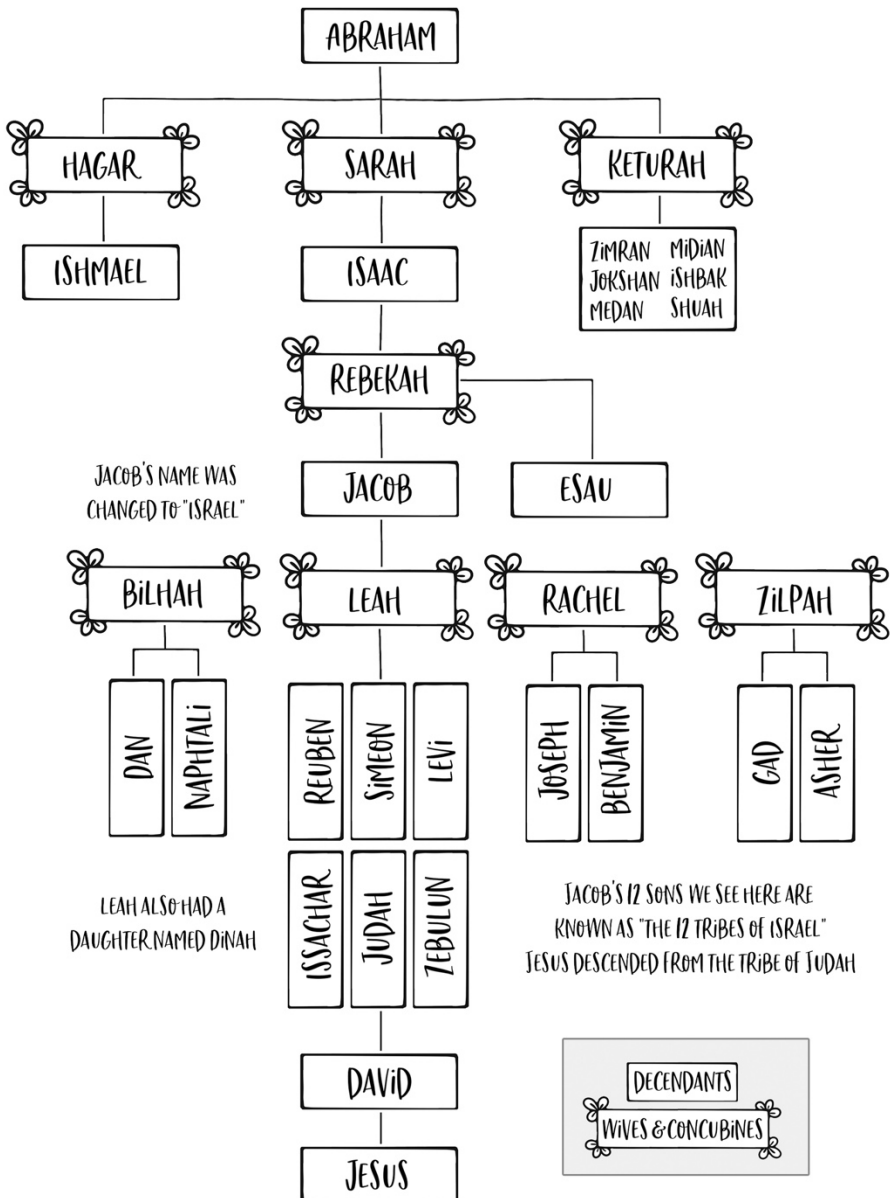
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FAMILY TREE - NOAH TO JACOB



FAMILY TREE - ABRAHAM TO JESUS



GENESIS 29:14-30

As I was meditating on this chapter throughout the day, my thoughts kept returning to Laban. Why was his name mentioned so often and what did he represent, if anything, in this story? I went back to Genesis chapter 24 to see what role he played in both stories, and what I saw was that he was a negotiator, the one who received the bride price. And, as we see further on in this chapter, Rachel was a costly investment.

I realized then that Laban pointed to the fallen world and its demands for payment or restitution for sin. Laban's insistence on a bride price echoes the idea of sin's demands for payment or atonement, reflecting humanity's fallen state and its separation from God due to sin.

Jacob willingly pays the price for Leah and for Rachel. By working for Laban and eventually fulfilling the requirements for the bride price, Jacob's actions illustrate the sacrificial love of Christ, who offered himself as a ransom to redeem and purify his bride, the Church.

*For you know that it was not with perishable things
such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from
the empty way of life handed down to you from your
ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a
lamb without blemish or defect.
—1 Peter 1:18–19, NIV*

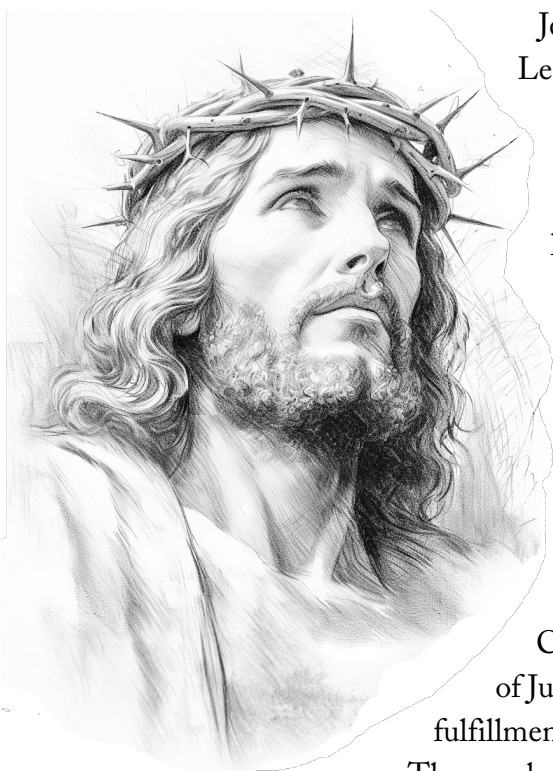
Leah and Rachel's names point to the transition from law to grace: Leah, meaning "weary," is reminiscent of the law—tiresome and laborious, a system that humanity could never fulfill. Romans 8:3 (NIV) tells us, "The law was powerless because it was weakened by the flesh." Leah's weak eyes, the Greek word for which is "ἄσθενής" (asthenes), meaning "weak or feeble," may symbolize the inability of the law to save us, lacking the strength to bring about righteousness. And as you'll see further on in this story, Leah tries to earn her husband's favor again and again.

On the other hand, Rachel, meaning "ewe" or "lamb," represents the church under grace. Rachel, described as beautiful, echoes the beauty of the

gospel and the beloved church within it. She doesn't work to earn her husband's favor, she is simply loved.

The veil worn by Leah that led to Jacob's deception can be likened to the veil Moses wore and the spiritual veil that covers the hearts of those under the old covenant.

When Christ died, the veil in the temple was torn, symbolizing direct access to God granted through Christ, as 2 Corinthians 3:14 states, "But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away."



Jesus, born from the tribe of Judah, Leah's son, signifies the fulfillment of the law. Just as Jacob was asked to fulfill his commitment to Leah in Genesis 29:27, Jesus fulfilled the law completely, not abolishing but accomplishing all that was required (Matthew 5:17).

Working tirelessly, Jesus endured the cross for our sake, reflecting the ultimate act of service and love. This work was marred by betrayal, much like Jacob's experience with Laban. Christ, however, turned the betrayal of Judas—an act meant for evil—into the fulfillment of His mission of salvation.

The number seven in the Gospel holds layers of meaning, often associated with completion and perfection. Jesus' work on the cross and His resurrection on the third day complete the work of salvation, bringing to fruition the perfect plan of redemption.

In these ways, Jacob's story in Genesis is not just a historical account but a shadow of the greater work to come in Christ—a narrative that progresses from the weariness of the law (Leah) to the grace and beauty of the gospel

(Rachel), from the veiled to the unveiled, from commitment to fulfillment, and from betrayal to redemption.

Laban's actions throughout this chapter demonstrate his self-interest and greed. He exploits Jacob's labor for his own gain, continuously changing Jacob's wages and taking advantage of him. This reflects the selfish and greedy tendencies of fallen humanity, which prioritizes personal gain over integrity and justice.

❓ What did Jesus mean when He said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them?"

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- Jesus' labor of love started long before He went to the cross.
- What are some of the sacrificial ways that He's given Himself up for His bride?

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GENESIS 29:31-35

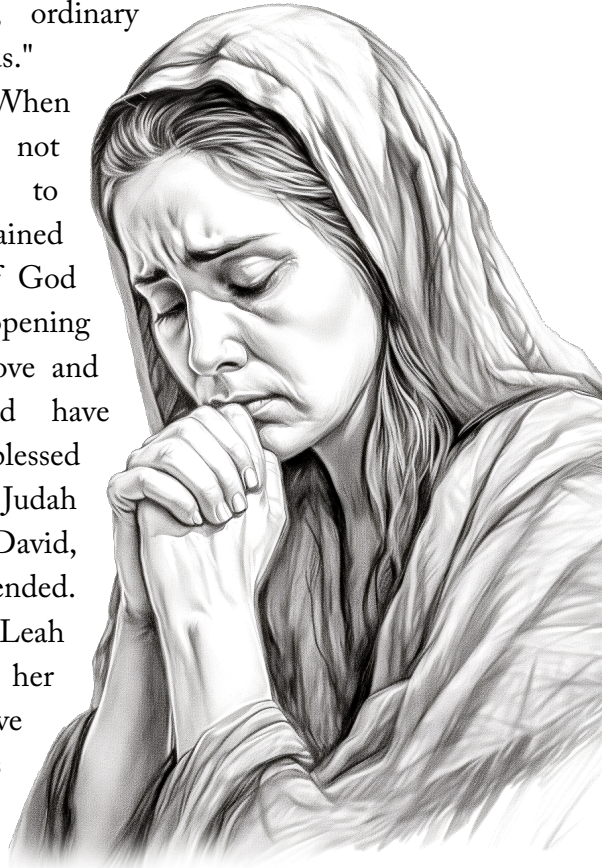
Looking at the dynamics between Jacob and Rachel, my heart goes out to Leah. Despite being the elder sister, she wasn't Jacob's chosen bride. Seven years, a significant span, passed by for Leah to secure a husband, yet she remained unmarried during that time. The Bible offers little insight into Leah's appearance, only noting her 'weak eyes.' In contrast, Rachel was described as beautiful. The societal pressure to marry was undoubtedly intense in those days, and I can only imagine that the plan orchestrated by her father was humiliating for her. I can almost feel her pain in the latter part of this chapter as each time she gives birth, she's hoping to earn her husband's love.

Leah's experience speaks to those who grapple with societal expectations and personal longing, but there's a beautiful message in this chapter which is this: God is near the broken-hearted. He's right there beside you when you feel like no one is.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.
—Psalm 147:3–4, NIV

Charles Spurgeon once said, "My broken-hearted friend, suppose that all men forsake or forget you, God does not. His eye sees you, His heart feels for you, and His hand is able to deliver you. You are not friendless, nor will you be till the God of all consolation dies, and that can never be." He goes on to say, "He could not pass by a sorrow-stricken heart, He must stand still, and put forth His power to heal it. And He is the same now as He was then, He still cares for those who have broken hearts and contrite spirits, and even in our common, ordinary sorrows, He sympathizes with us."

Genesis 29:31 says, "When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless." The compassion of God never fails to amaze me. By opening her womb, He was going above and beyond anything she could have imagined. Not only was she blessed with seven children, but her son Judah was also the ancestor of King David, from whose lineage Jesus descended. This act of divine favor granted Leah solace, while it also affirmed her place within God's redemptive plan, demonstrating His unwavering love and concern for our pain.



? Can you think of a time when you felt alone and broken hearted?
In what ways did you sense God comforting you?

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? What assurance from scripture can you give someone who might be feeling the same way?

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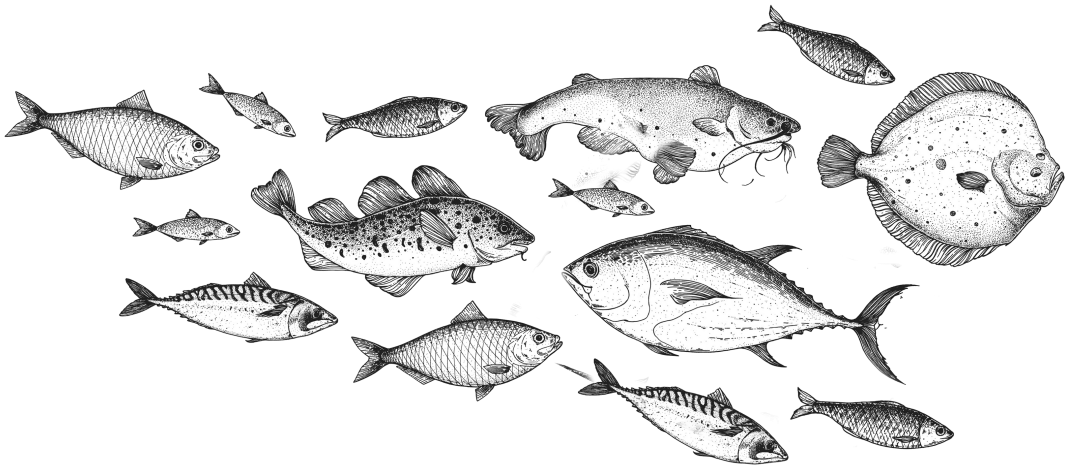
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? Leah was uniquely blessed with 7 children, one of whom was in the lineage of Christ. In what ways has God uniquely blessed you?

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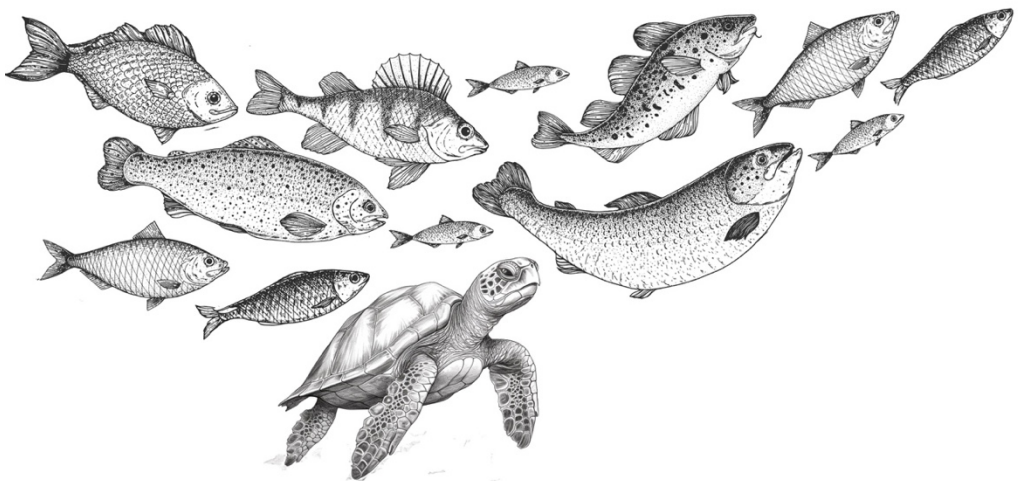
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THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER WOMAN WHO OWNS THE LOOK, THE PERSONALITY, AND THE EXPERIENCE THAT YOU DO... IT'S YOUR GIFT FROM THE LORD - OWN IT. GOD CREATED EACH ONE OF US IN OUR OWN UNIQUE WAY.

CANDACE CAMERON BURE, RESHAPING IT ALL



Answer Key

Chapter 5 – Genesis 29

GENESIS 29:1-10

How might the watering of the sheep point to the day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2?

Jacob removing the stone from the well's mouth to water the sheep, pointed to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. In the same way that the Holy Spirit provides the spiritual nourishment and empowerment necessary for the church's growth and vitality, the well water provided nourishment and strength for the sheep.

What did Jesus say to the woman at the well in John 4:14? And what did He mean by it?

In John 4:14, Jesus told the woman at the well, "whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Jesus meant that the 'water' He provides is not physical but spiritual. This living water represents the Holy Spirit, who dwells within believers and satisfies their deepest spiritual needs, ensuring eternal life and a continuous inner renewal that surpasses any earthly sustenance.

GENESIS 29:11-13

The details in this chapter are similar to the events in Genesis Chapter 24 where Abraham's servant meets Rebekah. Can you think of another story in the Bible where a future bride is met at the well?

Another story in the Bible where a future bride is met at a well is the encounter of Moses with Zipporah in Exodus 2:15-21. After fleeing Egypt, Moses sat down by a well in Midian. The seven daughters of

Reuel came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock, but shepherds drove them away. Moses stood up and helped them, even drawing water for their flock. This led to Moses being invited into their home, where he eventually married Zipporah, one of Reuel's daughters.

GENESIS 29:14-30

What did Jesus mean when He said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them?”

He meant that His purpose was not to nullify or replace the teachings of the Old Testament. Instead, He came to complete their purpose and demonstrate their true meaning through His life, teachings, death, and resurrection.

Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies about the Messiah and perfectly obeyed the moral laws, thus exemplifying how they were intended to be lived out.

Jesus' labor of love started long before He went to the cross. What are some of the sacrificial ways that He's given Himself up for His bride?

Jesus' labor of love for His bride, the Church, includes numerous sacrificial acts beyond the ultimate sacrifice of the cross:

- 1) **Incarnation:** Jesus gave up His divine privileges, taking on human form and living among us, fully experiencing human limitations and suffering (Philippians 2:6-8).
- 2) **Service:** Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated servant leadership—washing His disciples' feet, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and teaching the truths of God's kingdom—all actions of self-giving love (John 13:1-17).
- 3) **Spiritual Warfare:** Jesus continually resisted temptation and fought spiritual battles against the forces of darkness to protect and secure His followers (Matthew 4:1-11).

GENESIS 29:31-35

Can you think of a time when you felt alone and broken-hearted? In what ways did you sense God comforting you?

(This answer will be different for everyone)

What assurance from scripture can you give someone who might be feeling the same way?

A comforting assurance from scripture for someone feeling alone and broken-hearted is found in Psalm 34:18: "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." This verse reassures us that God is intimately aware of our pain and sorrow. He is not distant or indifferent; rather, He is near and active, providing strength and healing to those who are hurting.

Leah was uniquely blessed with 7 children, one of whom was in the lineage of Christ. In what ways has God uniquely blessed you?

(This answer will be different for everyone)