

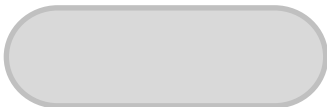


Knocking Off the Rough Edges

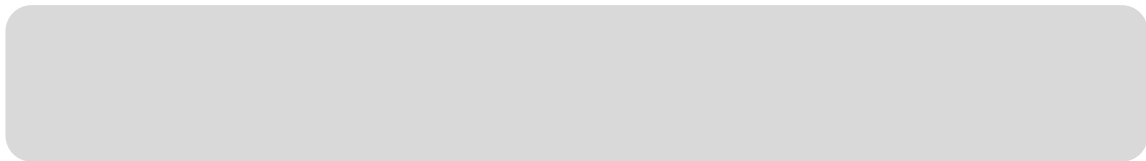
Genesis 29:1-30 | August 2, 2020

Context: After God appeared to Jacob in a dream and promised to bless him and his descendants, Jacob meets Laban and his daughters.

What is God doing in this account?

1. Beginning to discipline and shape Jacob 
2. Demonstrating faithfulness to his promises 
3. Sovereignly working out his perfect plans through imperfect people 

How does this point forward to Christ?



Discussion Questions:

1. How do we know that God was at work in this situation rather than these events being a series of coincidences?
2. What other passages or examples in the Bible can you point to which show that God disciplines and shapes his people?
3. What promises of God do you need to cling to right now?



Questions for Parents to use with their children:

- 1. Who did Jacob meet, and what was his response upon seeing one person in particular? Why do you think he responded this way?**

Answer: Jacob had traveled a great distance, beginning in Beersheeba (Gen 28:10), stopping in Luz that he renamed Bethel (Gen 28:19), and ending in Haran in Paddan-aram (Gen 28:2, 10).

(Parents: If you'd like, use this [map](#) to help your kids get an idea of how far Jacob traveled.)

Jacob initially met some shepherds tending their flocks, and he asked them if they knew Laban. As they were talking, Laban's daughter Rachel came with her father's sheep. Jacob got up and helped her water the flock, and he greeted her with a kiss and tears of joy after his long journey.

Since Jacob's journey had been very long, it must have been a tremendous relief to find a daughter of Laban so quickly, especially considering what his father Isaac had told him when he blessed him and told him to go there (Genesis 28:2-4) and we learn in Genesis 29:18 that Jacob loved Rachel.

- 2. What arrangement was made between Jacob and Laban, and what trick did Laban play on Jacob?**

Answer: Upon learning that Jacob was family, Laban promised to give Jacob whatever he asked as payment for serving him. Jacob asked for Rachel to be his wife for seven years of work. After the seven years, Laban agreed to give him Rachel, but then gave him his firstborn daughter, Leah, instead. In order to marry Rachel, Jacob agreed to work for Laban for an additional seven years. (That's a total of fourteen years to marry the woman he loved!)

- 3. Does this trick remind you of anything else in Jacob's life?**

Answer: In Genesis 27:1-29 we learned how Jacob had tricked his father Isaac into thinking he was Esau so that he could receive the blessing Isaac had promised to Esau.

- 4. What does this tell us about sin in our lives, and what does this tell us about God's faithfulness despite the sin in our lives?**

Answer: Just as Jacob had tricked his father for his blessing, Laban also tricked Jacob with his blessing (of giving his daughter in marriage). It should not surprise us if our sins are visited upon us in like manner. But, through it all, God proved faithful to Jacob and fulfilled the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We will see this in the chapters to come as the story unfolds, with more sin and deceit among Jacob and his sons, with the key figure being Rachel's first son born to Jacob (not Jacob's first son, though).

Note: Jacob's first four sons are born to him by Leah at the end of chapter 29. In chapters 30 and 35, the remaining eight sons will be born to Jacob by Rachel's servant Bilhah (2), Leah's servant Zilpah (2), Leah (2), and Rachel (2). These twelve sons in all become the twelve tribes of Israel, which is important to remember throughout the rest of the Bible.