

Laban: Jacob's Match & Matchmaker (Gen 29:1–30)

Grace Chapel January 20, 2010 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

CHRONOLOGY (Gen 28:10ff. occurred in 1930 BC)

Jacob married Leah & Rachel at age 76 (Joseph was born 14 yrs after Jacob went to Paddan Aram. Joseph was 40 & Jacob was 130 when Jacob went to Egypt). Leah & Rachel were much younger than Jacob (Jacob was 90 at Joseph's birth)

PARALLEL USES OF *HINNEH* (“BEHOLD”) in the Hebrew text

	Gen 28:12–13	Gen 29:1–6
Setting	<i>Behold</i> , a ladder	<i>Behold</i> , a well in the field
Attendants	<i>Behold</i> , the angels of God	<i>Behold</i> , three flocks of sheep
Focus	<i>Behold</i> , the Lord was standing	<i>Behold</i> , Rachel is coming

What is the significance of this parallelism?

Implicit linkage to Genesis 24

JACOB MET RACHEL AND WATERED HER SHEEP (29:1–14)

(29:1–3) Jacob picked up his feet and came to a well where three flocks of sheep awaited watering

Significance of Jacob picking up his feet

(29:4–6) The shepherds informed Jacob that they knew Laban, whose daughter Rachel was bringing Laban's sheep to be watered

(29:7–8) The (lazy) shepherds refused to remove the stone to water the sheep
The word translated *cattle* = livestock

(29:9–10) When Rachel arrived, Jacob removed the stone and watered her sheep

(29:11) Jacob kissed Rachel and wept

(29:12–14) Jacob identified himself to Rachel and Laban welcomed him

AFTER SEVEN YEARS LABORING FOR RACHEL, JACOB RECEIVES LEAH AND IS TRICKED INTO ANOTHER SEVEN YEARS OF LABOR FOR RACHEL (29:15–30)

Notice the odd twist on the double portion of the firstborn:

Jacob pays for the younger one twice (7 yrs + 7 yrs), but the firstborn is for free

(29:15–19) [After serving Laban for a month] Jacob offered to serve Laban for seven years to marry Rachel

Chiastic arrangement of 29:20–30

A		Jacob's payment for his wife (20)
	B	Consummation of marriage to Leah by deception (21–24)
		C
		Jacob's accusation against Laban (25)
		C'
		Laban's defense against Jacob's accusation
	B'	Consummation of marriage to Rachel by negotiation (27–30a)
A'		Jacob's payment for his wife (30b)

(29:20–21) After seven years of service, Jacob asked that the marriage to Rachel occur

The text says *in to*, not *into*. Hebrew is quite genteel, contrary to what many suppose.

(29:22–24) At the marriage feast, Laban deceived Jacob by bringing Leah instead of Rachel

(29:25) In the morning, Jacob discovered that it was Leah, so he confronted Laban by saying that he served for Rachel so it was wrong for Laban to deceive him

(29:26) Laban said that it was not customary in the land for a younger daughter to marry before the firstborn

(29:27) Laban told Jacob to finish the seven days and to serve for another seven years for Rachel

The week in verses 27–28 is the bridal week (seven days)

(29:28–30) When the (first) seven years were complete, Laban gave Jacob the beloved Rachel and he served Laban for seven more years

SUMMARY