

# A Fresh Encounter with God

## The Beginning of A New Life

Genesis 29:1-30

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JACOB, ABRAHAM'S GRANDSON; CHOSEN TO PRESERVE THE LINE OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND THE GREAT PROMISES OF GOD, [28:10-36:43](#)

### Jacob Married Leah and Rachel: The Beginning of A New Life

**(29:1-30) Introduction: life is made up of new beginnings, fresh starts, brand new days.**

Every time we make a mistake, we have to begin anew and get a fresh start. This was Jacob's experience, except his mistake was not a small failure: Jacob had fallen flat upon his face. He had literally ruined and wrecked his life. He had deceived and lied to his father to steal the blessing and inheritance from his brother, Esau. Esau had threatened his life, and now Jacob was on the run. He had been forced to flee for his life to escape the wrath of Esau. He had lost home, family, friends, and all his property; and now he was all alone and destitute in the world, living in fear and separation from God.

But the most marvelous thing had happened to Jacob: he had experienced an encounter with God. God had con-fronted Jacob and led him to make a new commitment: a vow that the LORD, the God of redemption and salvation, would always be his God. Jacob vowed that he would follow the Lord more diligently than ever before, and God gave Jacob a new life, a new beginning, a fresh start, a brand new day to live.

This experience of Jacob holds many lessons for us. As we journey through life, we often need just what Jacob needed: a new life, a new beginning, a fresh start, a brand new day. This is the subject of this great passage: *Jacob Married Leah and Rachel: The Beginning of a New Life*, [29:1-30](#).

- [1. The joy of starting a new life: Jacob began his new life after his encounter with God \(v.1-8\).](#)
- [2. The joy of finding one's new family: Jacob met Rachel \(v.9-14\).](#)
- [3. The joy of working and saving to marry a loved one: Jacob wanted to marry Rachel \(v.15-20\).](#)
- [4. The shocking interruption to one's joy: Jacob was deceived—reaped what he had sown \(v.21-30\).](#)

**1. (29:1-8) Jacob— New Life— Church— Labor— Responsibility: there was the joy of starting a new life: Jacob began his new life after his encounter with God.** The Hebrew language in [Genesis 29:1 \(Young's Literal Translation-YLT\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> **And Jacob lifteth up his feet, and goeth towards the land of the sons of the east;** is very suggestive and colorful: **"Then Jacob lifted up his feet."** The picture is that of a new found joy and bounce in Jacob's life. He sensed a new life, a new beginning, a fresh start since his new commitment to God. Jacob was like a new convert, full of joy and rejoicing as he traveled along. The distance between Bethel and Haran was about 500 miles, a long and dangerous journey for that day. But Jacob was now sure—absolutely sure—of God's protection, love, and care. He knew that God was leading and guiding him to Haran, knew beyond question.

Therefore, he "lifted up his feet" and joyfully traveled along toward his destination. Finally, he arrived in the country of his relatives.

**1. Immediately, Jacob began to search for what was to become his new family, his relatives ([Genesis 29:2-6](#)).** Note what happened.

- Jacob searched at the right place. As he was approaching the city of Haran, he noticed off in the distance three flocks of sheep lying close by a well. As he walked to meet the shepherds, he saw that the well had a large rock covering its mouth. Jacob cordially introduced himself and met the shepherds. They said that they were actually from Haran ([Genesis 29:4](#)).
- He then asked them if they knew his relative, Laban, the son of Nahor. They replied, yes, they knew him ([Genesis 29:5](#)).
- The shepherds not only knew Laban and his family, but they watered their flocks with Laban's daughter Rachel.
- Jacob then asked if Laban was well ([Genesis 29:6](#)). He, of course, needed to know this, for Laban and his family were the only people he knew anything about in the area. The shepherds answered that Laban was well. In fact, his daughter Rachel would be soon coming to the well with her flock of sheep.

**2. While waiting for Rachel, Jacob tried to be helpful and responsible ([Genesis 29:8](#)).**

Remember, Jacob was about 77 years old, and he had been one of the largest ranchers in Canaan, a very responsible man. The shepherds were probably somewhat younger than he, and he had noticed that the sun was still high, that there was still plenty of daylight left for feeding the sheep. Apparently, he felt that he should encourage the younger shepherds in their work, that they should go ahead and water the sheep and take them back to pasture.

They simply answered that they could not water their sheep until all the flocks had arrived to be watered. This was probably a law of the area to guarantee even distribution of the water or else to make sure there were enough shepherds around to roll the stone off the mouth of the well.

**Thought 1.** There is always joy when we are converted and begin a new life or when we get a fresh start or make a new commitment to God. When this happens to us, we need to do exactly what Jacob did:

- 1) We need to search for our new family, the family of God, the family of the church; and we need to diligently search for them. We need their fellowship, help, and encouragement; and we need to join them in their study of God's Word and in their service and witness for the Lord.

**"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" ([Hebrews 10:25](#)).**

**"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" ([1 John 1:3](#)).**

**"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" ([Matthew 18:20](#)).**

2) We need to encourage those who seem to be irresponsible. We need to arouse them in their labor and stir them to work hard so that they can contribute all they can to society and God. Every one of us needs to work as hard as we can to make the world a better place for us all to live.

"[Be] not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" ([Romans 12:11](#)).

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" ([Ephes. 4:28](#)).

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" ([Col. 3:23](#)).

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden [the earth] to dress it and to keep it" ([Genesis 2:15](#)).

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" ([Proverbs 13:4](#)).

"In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury [poverty]" ([Proverbs 14:23](#)).

"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster" ([Proverbs 18:9](#)).

"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" ([Proverbs 20:4](#)).

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" ([Eccles. 9:10](#)).

## 2. ([29:9-14](#)) **Jacob— Rachel— Laban: there was the joy of finding one's new family.**

While Jacob was still talking with the shepherds, Rachel came up with her flock. When Jacob first saw Rachel, the excitement of having found his family (relatives) stirred his emotions to the limit.

### 1. Note the excited emotions aroused in him ([Genesis 29:10-12](#)).

- ⇒ There were the thoughts rolling in his mind over and over: this is "my mother's brother." The Hebrew really brings this out. He referred to "his mother's brother" three different times ([Genesis 29:10](#)).
- ⇒ There was the unusual behavior of not walking over to speak to Rachel. What did he do? He was so excited, he walked over and single-handedly rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the sheep for her. Obviously, his excitement did what it often does for us: gave him a burst of strength ([Genesis 29:10](#)).
- ⇒ There was an astonishing kiss and burst of tears ([Genesis 29:11](#)). It was the custom of that day for family members to greet one another with a kiss, but note: Jacob had not yet *identified himself*. He was still a complete stranger to Rachel. She did not know he was a family member, yet he walked over and kissed her.
- ⇒ There was the identification of himself: he was a relative of her father and Rebekah's son. Rachel had, of course, heard her father speak of his sister, Rebekah, who was her aunt ([Genesis 29:12a](#)).
- ⇒ As soon as Jacob identified himself, Rachel ran to tell her father, Laban ([Genesis 29:12b](#)).

**2. Now, note the excited welcome extended to Jacob and his month long stay ([Genesis 29:13-14](#)).**

- a.** Laban rushed out to meet Jacob, embraced and kissed him repeatedly. The Hebrew brings out the repeated kissing (Leupold, p.790). Laban was naturally thrilled to see a son of his sister, a sister who had left home almost one hundred years ago when they were only children. Laban then took Jacob to his house.
- b.** Eventually, Jacob had to share and tell why he was there ([Genesis 29:13c](#)). How much did Jacob share? Certainly he shared how he found Laban and his family and that he had come to find a wife from among his mother's people. But did he share about the whole sordid mess back home and accept personal responsibility for his own sin and deception? Did he share that he had to flee for his life? Several factors seem to indicate that Jacob did share all with Laban.

- ⇒ He came alone, with no servant or attendants with him. Laban knew that the family was wealthy and that Abraham had sent a whole caravan of servants to seek a bride for Isaac. How could Jacob explain his being alone with no servants?
- ⇒ Jacob had no gifts, no dowry with which to secure a bride. How could he explain this?
- ⇒ Jacob had not come for just a few days visit. He had apparently come for a long time and showed no desire to leave, even after a month ([Genesis 29:14](#)).
- ⇒ Jacob had just had a deep experience with God, repented, and committed his life anew to the Lord. This alone would have stirred Jacob to share his testimony, how God had saved him and strengthened him at Bethel. H.C. Leupold says this:

"It behooves him to give an account of himself. So 'he reported to Laban all these matters.' How much is to be included in...'all these things'....if Jacob came as a godly man and one repentant of his recent deceit...then he could not do otherwise than relate the direct and the more remote reasons of his coming" (*Genesis*, Vol.2, p.790).

- c.** Laban accepted Jacob: he received Jacob as his own flesh and blood. And he invited Jacob to stay and work for him. This Jacob did for a whole month ([Genesis 29:14](#)).

**Thought 1.** Think of the excitement of a new believer! Of a repentant believer who makes a new commitment to the Lord!

- ⇒ How many churches welcome him as excitedly as Laban welcomed Jacob?
- ⇒ How many believers open their hearts and homes to those who have sinned but have repented?
- ⇒ How many repentant believers are welcomed when they are trying to be restored back into the church and family of God?

**"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Gal. 6:1-2](#)).**

**"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" ([Ephes. 4:32](#)).**

**"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" ([Acts 20:35](#)).**

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Romans 15:1](#)).

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging" ([1 Peter 4:9](#)).

**3. ([29:15-20](#)) Love— Labor— Jacob— Rachel: there was the joy of working and saving to marry a loved one.** Note, this passage is not dealing with Jacob purchasing Rachel; it concerns the dowry money that a young man gave to the father of the bride. A dowry was not purchase money but rather the proof that a young man was financially secure and could take care of his bride (H.C. Leupold, Vol.2, p.794).

1. Note how the subject of work came up. During Jacob's month long stay with Laban, he had not been sitting around doing nothing, imposing and taking advantage of the hospitality of the family. On the contrary, Jacob had been working hard. He had proven himself to be very capable and worthy of wages. So one day Laban asked Jacob what he thought his wages should be.

2. This opened the door for Jacob to discuss a subject that had obviously been stirring within his heart: the subject of his love and desire to marry Rachel ([Genesis 29:16-19](#)).

a. Laban had two daughters, the oldest was Leah and the youngest was **Rachel** ([Genesis 29:16](#)). Both were apparently quite old, well beyond the age when most women marry. Leah had weak eyes. This could mean that she was cross-eyed or else had very bad eyesight. Or it could mean that her eyes were just not attractive, that they lacked a gleam, a sparkle, a lustre that is so appealing. In contrast, Rachel was beautiful in both looks and form ([Genesis 29:17](#)).

b. Jacob loved Rachel ([Genesis 29:18](#)). It was that simple. So Jacob stated his desire: he wanted to marry Rachel, but he had no dowry. So he made an offer that would meet Jacob's need for a place to live and meet Laban's need for good, competent workers. What was the offer? He would work seven years for Rachel if Laban agreed.

c. Laban accepted Jacob's proposal, as any reasonable business man would. He simply stated that he would rather have Rachel marry Jacob than some other man ([Genesis 29:19](#)).

The question sometimes arises, was Laban entirely sincere in his dealings with Jacob at this point of their relationship?

⇒ Did he have an eye on Jacob's inheritance in the future? This seems most unlikely, for Jacob had to stay away from his father's estate as long as Esau was living. Moreover, what good would Jacob's estate be to Laban? The estate, the ranch and business holdings, were over 500 miles away.

⇒ When Laban made this agreement, was he already scheming to give Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel? This, too, is most unlikely, for Jacob had to work for seven long years before the marriage could take place. Leah's future over a seven year period would be totally unknown: she could die, become seriously ill, or be married by then. It is doubtful the thought even crossed Laban's mind.

The evidence seems to be that Laban was sincere. He and Jacob obviously had an excellent relationship at this point, both of them being perfectly satisfied with the agreement. And keep this in mind: Laban was offering Jacob both a home and employment when Jacob desperately needed both.

3. Note the subject of reward: Jacob's strong love stirred both faithful labor and unmarked time ([Genesis 29:20](#)). He worked seven long, hard years for Rachel, but they were joyful years. The years seemed to be only a few days because of the great love he had for her.

**Thought 1.** There are three strong lessons here on love and marriage.

- 1) A couple should not rush into marriage just as Jacob did not rush into marriage. They must...
  - make absolutely sure that they love each other.
  - make absolutely sure that they are responsible and can provide for themselves financially.
- 2) Both the man and woman must be hard, capable workers. Jacob and Rachel are excellent examples of diligent workers. Remember, Rachel was a shepherd girl. Such examples are desperately needed when so many people are...
  - lazy
  - non-productive
  - clock-watchers
  - abusive of work time
  - work absentees
  - gripers and grumblers
  - trouble-makers
  - living off welfare
  - focused on retirement
  - recreation and sports minded, not work-minded
- 3) True love recognizes this fact: there is a time to marry and a time not to marry. True love is willing to remain sexually pure and to wait until the time is right for marriage.

"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" ([Hebrews 13:4](#)).

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" ([Mark 10:9](#)).

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" ([Matthew 5:32](#)).

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" ([1 Cor. 7:10-11](#)).

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" ([1 Tim. 5:14](#)).

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" ([Ephes. 5:28](#)).

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" ([Col. 3:19](#)).

**4. (29:21-30) Deception—Laban—Wedding Feast—Bigamy**: there was the shocking interruption to his joy: Jacob was deceived. He reaped exactly what he had sown back home among his father and brother. Jacob completed his seven years' labor for Rachel. As noted above, Jacob had worked hard and faithfully for Laban, but the seven years seemed to be only a few days because of his great love for Rachel (**Genesis 29:20**).

1. Jacob now expected to be given the right to marry Rachel (**Genesis 29:21**). Note that Jacob was the one who brought the subject up to Laban. He was probably so excited over the wedding date's finally arriving that he was just bursting at the seams to discuss the preparations with Laban. There is also the possibility that Laban was hesitant to bring the subject up because he was fearful that Jacob might leave, and he just hated the thought of losing such a hard, capable worker.

2. Laban gave a large wedding feast in honor of the couple (**Genesis 29:22**). This was the custom of the day: the father of the bride would hold a week-long feast to which family, friends, and neighbors were invited. The marriage was consummated—the couple came together—at the end of the week after the celebration.

Note that Laban invited all the men—all the people—of the community to the celebration.

3. Laban was plotting a cruel hoax and deception on Jacob (**Genesis 29:23**). He was planning to push Leah off on Jacob, tricking him into marrying Leah as well as Rachel. How did Laban pull off such a scheme? On the wedding night, he simply substituted Leah for Rachel. How was this possible? How could Jacob not know?

- ⇒ Because Leah was veiled.
- ⇒ Because it was dark and the cover of darkness hid Leah.
- ⇒ Because Leah and Rachel were similar—obviously very similar—in stature, shape, and size. They differed only in facial features, and Leah's face was completely hid by the veil at the wedding and by the cover of darkness at night.
- ⇒ Because Rachel and Leah's voices were apparently also similar. Moreover, conversation on the wedding night is usually little and whispered in a quiet spirit of love.
- ⇒ Because Leah probably wore Rachel's clothing and perfume.
- ⇒ Because Jacob was unsuspecting; the thought never even crossed his mind that the bride lying beside him was not Rachel.

Considering all these factors, the scheme was probably easy to pull off. But why? Why would Laban wish to pull such a mean hoax on Jacob?

- ⇒ This was a sure way to secure another seven years service and work from Jacob. Jacob would have to commit himself to work seven more years for Rachel.
- ⇒ This was also a sure way to see that Leah got a husband.

Note that the plot worked: Jacob consummated the marriage: he and Leah had sex on their wedding night (**Genesis 29:23c**). Note also that Laban gave Leah a maid-servant named Zilpah (**Genesis 29:24**). This fact will later become important (cp. **Genesis 30:9f**).

4. When morning came, Jacob made the rude discovery and was utterly shocked. He rushed madly to Laban and flew into a confused outrage, a perfectly understandable outrage:

- ⇒ What have you done to me?
- ⇒ I worked for you—completed my agreement—didn't I?
- ⇒ Why have you deceived and tricked me?

Laban responded by declaring that the local community had an *ironclad law*: the older daughter of a family had to be the first to marry ([Genesis 29:26](#)). The younger daughter could not be given in marriage until the older sister was first married.

Was this true? Most likely, for Jacob could have easily checked out the law with neighbors and city officials. But why did Laban not tell Jacob this earlier? No doubt, for the reasons mentioned above: he wanted Jacob to remain working for him, and it was a chance to get a husband for Leah.

What part did Rachel and Leah have in the plot and deception? Where was Rachel during the wedding? She obviously loved Jacob, so she would not have been willing to cooperate in the plot. Apparently her father, Laban, kept her quiet by referring to the law of the community and assuring her that he would give her to Jacob after Jacob married Leah. Or else, he forcefully had her held captive until after the wedding night. The first possibility seems far more likely.

What about Leah: How guilty was she in the deception? Very guilty! She should have warned Jacob of the scheme long before it happened, and she could have at any time along the way. This would have been the decent and right thing to do, but she didn't. Why?

- ⇒ Was it because she feared her father?
- ⇒ Did she feel that this was her best, perhaps last, chance to marry?
- ⇒ Had she grown in love with Jacob?

Scripture does not tell us why she went along with the scheme. But she did, and it was a cruel thing to do. Imagine how she felt on the wedding night as she shared love with Jacob, knowing that Jacob was thinking of Rachel. She also knew that Jacob would be very angry with her as well as her father. She also knew that there was a chance that Jacob might reject her. On and on the possible reactions from Jacob could be listed. All this shows how much she wanted to marry Jacob. The best guess as to her reason is that she truly loved Jacob.

5. Laban suggested a solution: that Jacob labor another seven years for Rachel ([Genesis 29:27](#)). Jacob could have exploded in anger against Laban at this point. What kept him from exploding? Note that Scripture is silent, saying nothing about Jacob's response. In fact, the scene pictures Jacob as quiet and subdued after his first outburst at Laban ([Genesis 29:25](#)). Why? Most likely, the trick and deception pulled on him reminded him of his own deception against his father and Esau. Henry Morris states the case well:

"Isaac had thought Jacob was Esau, and so gave him the blessing. Now Jacob had thought Leah was Rachel, and had taken her to wife. In both cases, the deception had been commanded by a parent and in both cases the purpose of the deception was to acquire something desperately desired. Jacob had been sure the end justified the means in his case, but perhaps Leah and Laban also felt the same way in their case.

"Such considerations no doubt contributed to a lessening of Jacob's anger. He may even have recognized his situation as providential, in view of the remarkably similar circumstances. Accordingly, so far as the record goes, at least, he did not berate Leah for her part in the affair. It is not unlikely that his experience with her during the night had engendered a certain amount of love for her, in spite of her deception, especially as he suddenly realized that she had herself been in love with him all along. At any rate, though he still wanted Rachel, he could not bring himself to hurt Leah any more" (*The Genesis Record*, p.462-463).

**"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" ([Gal. 6:7-8](#)).**

**"Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same" ([Job 4:8](#)).**

**"A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape" ([Proverbs 19:5](#)).**

**"He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail" ([Proverbs 22:8](#)).**

**"And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity" ([Jeremiah 9:5](#)).**

**"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" ([Jeremiah 17:9](#)).**

6. Jacob accepted the solution offered by Laban, and married Rachel ([Genesis 29:28](#)). The *week* spoken about is the bridal week, the first week of marriage, a time when the bride and bridegroom are actually called *the king and queen* (H.C. Leupold, p.798). When Jacob finished his week with Leah, he was then given Rachel to be his wife. Note that Laban also gave Rachel a maid-servant named Bilhah who later became very important ([Genesis 29:29](#); cp. [Genesis 30:3f](#)).

7. Jacob consummated the marriage: he married and shared his love with Rachel. Note that he was given Rachel at the beginning of the seven years work, not after. He married Rachel and then fulfilled his agreement to work seven years for Laban.

Now, why did Jacob commit bigamy? Note what Scripture says: he loved Rachel more than Leah. Why did he not refuse to keep Leah as his wife? He did not willingly marry her. Jacob was somewhat in a dilemma and forced to face the issue by being tricked into marrying Leah. However, Jacob had several ways that he could have handled the situation. He was at fault for marrying two women.

1. He did not have to keep Leah. True, it was the custom of the day that the older daughter be given away in marriage first, but Jacob could have given Leah back to her father. Of course, Laban could have reacted and kicked Jacob out, leaving him without home or family. Nevertheless, many believers down through the centuries have been rejected by family and still stood fast for God and righteousness.

2. The whole community knew about the scheme, but Jacob could have borne the embarrassment and rejected Leah. The problem was, of course, he had slept with her; and she could have conceived from that one sexual experience. He had no way of knowing. This was a dilemma that preyed upon his mind.
3. Leah would, of course, have been crushed if Jacob had rejected her. But Jacob could have eased the pain by talking with her and giving her whatever support he could. He could have explained God's will of *one wife for one man*.

4. If the law that the older daughter had to be married first was set in concrete, then Jacob had two choices.

- ⇒ He could have kept Leah and learned to love her. This would have been a live option if he was burning and just had to have a wife.
- ⇒ He could have returned Leah to her father and waited until she married. He would then have been free to marry Rachel.

However in all honesty, Jacob faced two problems if he had made the decision to reject Leah. It was doubtful that Laban would have ever given Rachel to him. Also, remember that Jacob was about 84 years old at this time. This suggests that Leah was already an older woman who had never been spoken for by a man. The likelihood was that she would never marry, which meant that Jacob might never be allowed to marry Rachel.

Now, did Jacob have to stay married to Leah in order to please God? Would he be guilty of adultery if he had rejected her and married Rachel? H.C. Leupold says this:

"Were Jacob and Leah guilty of adultery, or would their union have to be classed as adulterous if Jacob had refused further to consort with her?' Luther was right when he said, No. Their union was not marriage at first, because there was no free consent between these two. It was not adultery, for Jacob consorted with one whom he certainly did not desire. Consequently, Jacob could on ethical grounds have rejected Leah and would still have been guiltless" (*Genesis*, Vol.2, p.798).

Henry M. Morris adds this:

"He therefore fulfilled Leah's week, and then Laban finally gave Rachel to him. Jacob was thus more or less forced to become a bigamist. In light of the times, however, this was not as serious a corruption of the marriage relation as it would be in the Christian dispensation. Polygamy was quite common; Jacob's own brother had two wives, and his grandfather had taken Hagar as well as Sarah as his wife. Nevertheless, many problems did develop later in Jacob's home and family because of it, thus showing again that monogamy is the better way. Even today, although 'parallel' polygamy is illegal in Western nations, a 'serial' type of polygamy is commonly practiced as a result of frequent divorces. Today, however, as well as in Jacob's time, such multiple marriages normally involve much heartache and serious family problems" (*The Genesis Record*, p.463.)

J. Vernon McGee, in very simple and practical terms, says this:

"You may be thinking, *Well, since this is in the Bible, God must approve of polygamy.* No, God does not approve of everything that is in the Bible—that may startle you. For instance, God didn't approve of the devil's lie. God didn't approve of David's sin, and He judged him for it. But the *record* of both events is inspired—literally, God-breathed. In other words, God said through the writer, Moses, exactly what He wanted to say. The thing that is inspired is the record of the words God gave to Moses to write down in this Book we call the Bible. In [Genesis 29](#) God gave an accurate record: Jacob did have two wives, and it tells us the way it came about. That is where inspiration comes in. It does not mean that God approved of everything that is recorded in the Bible. Certainly God disapproved of Jacob's having more than one wife" (*Thru The Bible*, Vol.1, p.123).

**"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them] at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" ([Matthew 19:4-6](#)).**

**"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife" ([1 Tim. 3:2](#)).**

**"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly" ([Titus 1:6](#)).**

**"Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away" ([Deut. 17:17](#)).**

**"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" ([Malachi 2:14-15](#)).**

**[DEEPER STUDY #1 \(29:23\)](#) Deception— Sowing and Reaping— Jacob**