

## January 16

**Scriptures:** Read Genesis 28 & 29

**Key Verse:** “Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and take yourself a wife from there...” (Genesis 28:2)

### Overview

Isaac reaffirmed to Jacob the blessing of Abraham, and, like his father Abraham (24:3), Isaac told his son to not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, but to return to their relatives, to the household of Rebekah’s brother Laban, in order to marry a godly wife. Jacob obeyed his father’s instructions and left for Padan Aram, which was where his mother had already told him to go out of fear that Esau would kill him. Esau heard his father instructing Jacob not to take a wife from the Canaanites and finally realized the grief his Canaanite wives had caused his father, so he tried to please him and show respect by marrying a relative as will (28:8, 9). He married his uncle Ishmael’s daughter who would have learned about the God of Abraham. Possibly Esau had learned his lesson (although the hard way) and had begun to consider spiritual things more seriously.

On Jacob’s journey, an unusual thing happened at Luz, which he renamed “Bethel”, meaning “house of God”. The ladder, with angels ascending and descending, could represent Jacob’s needs and prayers ascending before God, and God’s help and answers to prayer descending upon him. The ladder illustrates the connection between heaven and earth. Jesus said to one of His followers, Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man” (John 1:5). Jesus would have been referring to this story of Jacob’s ladder, and saying that this ladder represents Him, for as He said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

No doubt Jacob was aware of the prophecy concerning him that his mother received even before his birth, but not until this time did he have the covenant and all the promises (which had been given to Abraham and Isaac) personally confirmed by God Himself. Despite his unworthiness and sins he heard the merciful and forgiving voice of God which gave him the courage to carry on. After awakening, Jacob made a vow with conditions before the Lord; if the Lord was with him in his going, provided all his needs and brought him back to his father’s house in peace (meaning peace with his brother), then the Lord would be his God.

The Lord did indeed do for Jacob what he had asked, but these are things the Lord had already promised to do (28:15) and would have done, so these conditions expressed Jacob’s lack of faith and carnality. However, his vow to give a tenth of all he had unto the Lord was commendable, and it must have been pleasing to God. This principle of tithing goes throughout the Bible and we, if we desire to please the Lord, should vow to tithe to Him as well.

We see the guidance of the Lord when Jacob arrives in his uncle Laban’s territory. Providentially, Rachel went to the well much earlier than usual with her father’s flock, arriving at the same time as Jacob with. She was very beautiful and it was love at first sight. Laban had agreed to give her

in marriage to Jacob after he had worked seven years for him. Then we see how the deceiver himself was deceived. In those days, the bride kept her face completely veiled and, unaware that he'd been tricked, Jacob married the older sister Leah. Laban used the excuse that in their country the younger is never married before the elder. However, after the seven days of the wedding celebration were over, Jacob took Rachel to be his wife as well and had to work an additional seven years, but because of his great love for her, the years seemed but a few days (29:20).

Jacob did not choose to become a polygamist, he was deceived into it. Polygamy was common in those days, and although the Bible does not command directly against it, the Bible does teach against it through examples of the many problems and evils it has caused. Jacob paid for his deceptions by getting a wife he did not love and by working hard and enduring afflictions (31:40-42) like a servant for his father-in-law for twenty years. The Lord saw that Leah was unloved and so he opened her womb. She conceived and gave birth to four sons (four tribes of Israel).

There is a biblical principle that, "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Jacob reaped the deception he had sown to his brother and father. Let us be careful to be honest in all our dealings.

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, please give us Your grace of honesty in our confessions unto You and in our dealings with ourselves and others.