

(Genesis) 45 - the Deceiver Deceived; or Jacob Learning the Justice of God

by S. Lewis Johnson

The sermon explores the theme of the justice of God and how Jacob learns to appreciate the value of his wife and to recognize the consequences of his actions through his experiences with Laban and his marriage to Leah.

Duration: 47:57

Scripture: Genesis 29:1

Topics: "Jacob", "God's Guidance", "Divine Justice"

Description

S. Lewis Johnson explores the story of Jacob in Genesis 29, focusing on how Jacob, a deceiver, is deceived by Laban, his uncle. This chapter illustrates the justice of God as Jacob learns the consequences of his deceitful actions through his experiences with Laban. Jacob's journey to find a wife leads him to Rachel, but he is tricked into marrying Leah instead, highlighting the theme of divine justice and the inevitability of reaping what one sows. Johnson emphasizes that God's presence and guidance are constant, even in the midst of life's challenges, and encourages believers to recognize God's hand in their ordinary experiences. Ultimately, the sermon calls for faith in Christ as the true source of guidance and learning in life.

Transcript

Will you turn with me to Genesis chapter 29 and I want to read the entire chapter for the scripture reading. Now just by way of review remember after the blessing had been obtained by Jacob in chapter 27 because of the threats that Esau made against the life of Jacob. Rebecca was very much disturbed and suggested to Jacob that he go.

She said that she was tired of living because of the daughters of Heth that is Ishmael's pagan wives and therefore Isaac called Jacob to himself and charged him that he should not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan but rather should go to Paddan Aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. Now these were cousins of Jacob. Rebecca was the sister of Laban they both were the children of Bethuel and so Jacob is now charged to go to the east in order to obtain a wife.

Along the way Jacob a fugitive from justice really has this great experience in which at Bethel the latter appears in a dream to him. This latter has it has its top reaching to heaven and its bottom upon the earth

and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it and then God stood by the side of it and said I am the Lord the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac and then after saying this he introduced Jacob not only to the promises that had been given to Abraham and Isaac but also added some special words for him. He said that he would be with him and he would keep him wherever he would go and he would bring him back to the land and that he would not leave Jacob until he had done what he had promised him.

And so that is something of a blank check for the care of God over Jacob's life and therefore from that point Bethel Bethel from Bethel we pick up the story in Genesis chapter 29. Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the sons of the east and he looked and saw a well in the field and behold three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large.

When all the flocks were gathered there they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. And Jacob said to them my brothers evidently calls them brothers because they were fellow shepherds my brothers where are you from and they said we are from Haran and he said to them do you know Laban the son of Nahor and they said we know him and he said to them is it well with him and they said it is well and behold Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep and he said behold it is still high day it is not time for the livestock to be gathered water the sheep and go pasture them. It's quite obvious he wants to be alone with Rachel.

But they said we cannot until all the flocks are gathered and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well then we water the sheep. While he was still speaking with them Rachel came with her father's sheep for she was a shepherdess and it came about when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother that Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. You'll notice that's mentioned three times so this relationship is evidently important to the author of Genesis Laban is uncle Laban Rebecca's sister and therefore Rachel who is the daughter of Laban is his first cousin.

I guess we could say they were kissing cousins we we do we do say that in South Carolina anyway and that stretches to about the third or fifth degree. So verse 11 then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted his voice and wept and Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebecca's son and she ran and told her father. So it came about when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son that he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house.

Then he related to Laban all these things and Laban said to him surely you are my bone and my flesh and he stayed with him a month. Then Laban said to Jacob because you are my relative should you therefore serve me for nothing tell me what shall your wages be. Now Laban had two daughters the name of the older was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel and Leah's eyes were weak.

Now I think that the authorized version has perhaps tender but it means weak. Leah's eyes were weak but Rachel was beautiful of form and face. Now Jacob loved Rachel so he said I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel and Laban said it is better that I give it to you than that I should give her to another man stay with me.

So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. Then Jacob said to Laban give me my wife for my time is completed that I may go into her and Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast. This was the marriage feast usually lasted about a

week.

Now it came about in the evening that he took his daughter Leah and brought her to him and Jacob went into her and Laban also gave his maid Zopa to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came about in the morning that behold it was Leah and he said to Laban what is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me? But Laban said it is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. That certainly was a strange time for Jacob to learn of that practice custom.

But Laban goes on he says complete the bridal week of this one that is finished the week of the feast and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years. But now he's going to give Jacob Rachel now but Jacob is to serve another seven years that makes fourteen in all. And Jacob did so and completed her week and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid. So Jacob went into Rachel also and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah and he served with Laban for another seven years. Now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved and he opened her womb but Rachel was barren.

There's an interesting thing here that bears on one of the strange texts in the Bible in the minds of some people. And that's the text Jacob have I loved Esau have I hated. Now as Bible expositors we usually explain well of course that does not mean that God has personal animosity toward Esau.

Jacob have I loved Esau have I hated means simply that to love is to be the object of his redeeming electing love. To hate is to reject in the purpose and plan of God. And thus to be hated by God is not to be the object of personal animosity but simply a recognition of the fact that he does not belong to the Lord as the elect and redeemed children do.

And it's often been said that to hate in a situation like that means simply to love less. And to love Jacob have I love means to love more. Well you can see that that is precisely what is meant in this instance.

Because we read in verse thirty one now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved. But if you have a Bible with a marginal note you'll notice it is the word hated. Leah was hated.

But in verse thirty we've just read so Jacob went into Rachel also and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah. So that to be hated is to be loved less. To be loved is to be loved more.

That's what is meant. In the New Testament if I had time we can show the same illustration of this identical thing in our Lord's comments about one must hate father and mother in order to be a disciple. It means to love them less than the will of God.

Verse thirty two and Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben for she said because the Lord has seen my affliction surely now my husband will love me. Then she conceived again and bore a son and said because the Lord has heard that I am unloved hated. He has therefore given me this son also.

So she named him Simeon. And she conceived again and bore a son and said now this time my husband will become attached to me because I've borne him three sons. Therefore he was named Levi.

And she conceived again and bore a son and said this time well I will praise the Lord. Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

Now of course it's important to notice that it is Leah who is the mother of the promised seeds. Ancestor Judah and not Rachel. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

The subject this morning as we turn again to Genesis is the deceiver deceived or Jacob learning the justice of God. Bethel was a high point in the education of Jacob. Chapter twenty eight is the latter chapter and it taught Jacob some very important lessons.

It taught him first of all that earth and heaven are linked everywhere. And that was a great consolation for fallible erring Jacob. He had been forced to leave because of the threats of Esau.

And as a result of that he had to make his way into the far country. And out in the midst of the desert like country in which he perhaps was. It might have been a question in his mind.

Is this really the area of the Lord God Jehovah or have we passed beyond his territory. And he learns from the experience of the dream and the voice of the Lord and the reaffirmation of the promises and the addition of other promises that no place is to man deserted for the Lord. And then he also learned the awe that every believer should manifest in the presence of the Lord God.

Jacob you'll remember when he was getting the venison with the help of Rebecca for Isaac. When asked about this venison where did you get it had said the Lord your God caused it to happen to me and so he had flippantly used the name of the Lord. But now as a result of the experience at Bethel Jacob is frightened by the sense of the majesty of God.

We read in verse 16 of chapter 28 then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it. And he was afraid and said how awesome is this place. And so Jacob learned something of the awe.

That every Christian should have in the presence of the Lord God. But he learned something else that was no doubt in the later years even more significant for him. He learned that the God of Bethel is the God of pursuing grace.

And even though he was a fugitive and even though he may have done some things that were contrary to the will of God nevertheless he couldn't really put any distance between himself and the Lord God. And so the experience at Bethel of the latter vision God coming to him God speaking to him and God telling him that unworthy creature that he was nevertheless he was going to make his seed like the dust of the earth. And he was not going to be satisfied with Jacob until he had accomplished everything that he had said that he would accomplish.

Now you know we often cite Philippians chapter one and verse six it's one of my favorite verses and when people ask me to sign their Bibles as they frequently do and churches after I've preached there I usually sign my name and then put Philippians 1:6 in which the Apostle writes being confident of this very thing which he that he which hath begun a good work and you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. That's not simply an old a New Testament blessing but we have it right here for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. And so the God of Bethel is the God of infinite love and mercy.

He is the God of grace forgiving mercy too. He is the God who comes to this sinful disobedient wanderer and ministers us to him. He is the one who seeks us when we're not seeking him and he's the one who takes the initiative in all of his dealings with us.

He is the one who answers before we call as we read in the Old Testament. He is the man who came to Moses in the midst of the burning bush and revealed himself to Moses as the great I am. He is the God who called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees coming to him at his own initiative and bringing Abraham out of his heathen surroundings.

He's the God who came to Isaiah when he went up to worship in the temple and revealed himself there as the Lord God Jehovah. Holy holy holy. So the seraphim said concerning this Lord God of the hosts and of course he's the God of Jeremiah to whom he said before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.

And so the God of Bethel is the God of pursuing grace and Jacob learns that. Now of course if he has promised to direct Jacob in his life then it's clear that one of the first steps is marriage. Now the psalmist says that the steps of the saints are ordered of the Lord.

And so we should expect that the steps of the believing Jacob should be ordered of the Lord in this most solemn of all allowances. And that is exactly what we find. Marriage is not something to be left to the whim and fancy of an individual.

It's not something to be left to our friends. It's not something to be left even to the brethren in Christ. It's something that is the Lord's responsibility and it should be left to the Lord.

The scriptures make very interesting statements about this. A prudent wife is from the Lord. And it was God who taught us right in the second chapter of the book of Genesis that it is he who institutes marriage and it is he who should have the say so in the persons to whom we unite ourselves in this most solemn of allowances.

Now in this case Jacob's marriage comes before us in chapter 29 and we notice that his steps are ordered of the Lord. Now Jacob must also discover something else though. He must discover the justice of God.

Because after all he's been a deceiver. Now the Lord, I'm going to put this in human language. Now the Lord said I've got to teach Jacob that the man who deceives is a man who is sinning against me.

So what I need to do is to send him to school so he can learn the sinfulness of deceit. Now let me see where on the face of the earth can Jacob best learn about deceit. Now speaking humanly he says ah what better place than the place where Bethuel and Laban live.

Because there is no better deceiver than Laban. And furthermore Laban is the brother of Jacob's mother. And that's where Jacob learned a lot of his deceit.

He learned it from Rebekah. And Rebekah's brother Laban is the match of Rebekah. What better place than to send him to the school from which all of his powers of deceit originated.

Back there in Haran from Bethuel and Laban and Rebekah. And so Jacob's going to discover that Laban is the equal of his clever sister Rebekah his mother. And so Jacob is to be paid back as we say with the family coin.

He's going to get his own medicine from his own family. And how interesting it is. Now the Bible says in one place Genesis chapter 22 that God did prove Abraham.

That's very suggestive. It doesn't say that he proved Lot. Sodom proved Lot.

Sodom proved that Lot was a very worldly man. But it was God who proved Abraham. You know it's really a position of honor to be proven by God.

And so God proved Abraham when he had him offer up Isaac because he knew what was in Abraham since he had put in Abraham what was there. And so he felt confident that Abraham through that experience would manifest what he had put within him. The trust in the Lord God.

And so God now proves Jacob. Doesn't say that here but you can sense that this is part of Jacob's proof. He's going to prove Jacob just like he proved Abraham.

Men seldom drift to their desired haven. They usually sail and they sail against it against the most contrary winds. And in Jacob's case now we're going to discover that this man going to the school of the Lord is going to sail to the port that God desires for him against a great deal of opposition from the experiences of life from his own flesh and from other sources of difficulty.

Now we look at the first part of the chapter which we could entitle Jacob at the well or love at first sight. It's a beautiful story of the providence of God. The Lord guides the steps of the saints and it's such a comforting thing to know that all of our steps are ordered by the Lord.

Incidentally they're great. There's great virtue in asking questions. You'll notice that Jacob's just full of questions but they get him to what he's interested in and so it's all right to ask the questions.

Now the first few verses here describe the meeting with the shepherds. We read then Jacob went on his journey and did you notice in the margin that that is literally then Jacob lifted up his feet. You can sense that there is a new spring in the step of Jacob because of the experience at Bethel.

God has appeared to him and God has strengthened him and encouraged him and now he has hope with reference to the future and so with a light springing step he makes his way to the east and comes the 450 miles finally to the area of Haran. Well when he arrives he sees a well in the midst of the field. That's a very insignificant thing something very common no doubt.

He saw some flocks lying about and a few men who were shepherds and since he was a shepherd himself he went over to them and he said my brothers where are you from and they said we're from Haran. You can sense that in Jacob's heart there must have been at that point he began to beat faster because that's where he was going. He was going to Haran.

It just so happened so my Arminian friends would say it just so happened that there were some people there who were from Haran and he said to them do you know Laban the son of Nahor and they said we know him and he said is it well with him and they said it's well and look Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep and by this time you can just imagine how Jacob felt. All of these days and days that he had spent thinking about this wife that he had been urged to take and Isaac had said to him don't take one from the daughters of Haran of Canaan but go to Bethuel to his house and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. And here is Rachel and she's coming with the sheep and as he looks out there she is with all of the flock and here are these shepherds around the well.

I know that in his heart there just must have leapt up the conviction that God is really directing my steps. This is the first installment of the promise of his presence with me that he gave me back at Bethel and incidentally my dear Christian friends it is very important that we as Christians practice the art of discerning the movement of God's finger in the most minute experiences of our lives because that is exactly what is taking place. Jacob is no different from you and me.

We are directed by the providence of God our steps are ordered by him and we should learn to recognize him in the commonness of events just as happens in this case. Now the shepherds are lying around and the water is there the well has the large stone upon it and Rachel is coming. What would you do young men? Well you would think of some way to get those other shepherds out of the way wouldn't you? Well that is exactly what Jacob did.

He thought about that. So he said behold it is still high day it is still noon it is not the time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep and go and pasture them get away.

He wanted Rachel to himself. He did not want any double dating. Now Jacob is a man of maybe 57 to 77 years of age.

He is quite old but he is wise. The Lord Jesus said that we should be wise as serpents and harmless as doves and in this case Jacob is wise. He wants Rachel to himself.

This is forethought wise forethought but of course it fails. They did not go. They said we cannot until all the flocks are gathered and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well.

Then we water the sheep and while he was still talking with them Rachel came with a father sheep for she was a shepherdess. Now of course Jacob has been brought to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and that is the greatest of God's gifts faith in Christ. Who cannot who is a Christian who cannot put first in his life that moment when by the grace of God we came to the trust in the Lord Jesus that means the forgiveness of sins.

That is the greatest of blessings. If you are in the audience and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ then you are lost. You are guilty under the condemnation of your sin and you are headed for a Christless eternity.

Now many in this audience know the experience of seeing the Lord Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. Realizing that the blood that was shed there is sufficient for the sins of the whole human race and by the grace of God the Holy Spirit you have come to faith in Christ and you have come to know the forgiveness of sins and you know the joy and rejoicing that comes to the believer who knows that he is justified before the Lord. But now the second best of God's gifts may be a woman's love and Jacob is now going to experience the second of these.

Well when Rachel arrives Jacob has been taught properly he is not gallant he is gallant. Now there is a difference. Now a gallant man is a man who is very courageous in battle but a man who is gallant is a man who knows how to treat a woman.

He is courteous. He has been trained properly. In Charleston we have gallant men.

Not as courageous as they ought to be but some gallant men. Well anyway Jacob is gallant and so he rushes to remove this large stone. It said it was a large stone.

So he rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and he watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Now you can say this about Jacob he had an eye for Rachel but he also had something else. He had an eye for Laban's sheep.

Did you notice that? That's what it says. When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother. So he had an eye for the girl and he had an eye for the sheep because he knew that if he married this girl it just might be that he might get some of those sheep too.

Now this man he is some man. I'll say this and he takes particular notice of the letter. The text of scripture lays a great deal of stress on it and later on we're going to see that a large part of Jacob's life is built up is built around the sheep of Laban.

Now in the 11th verse I imagine he offered a word of thanksgiving to the Lord. Rachel is a kissing cousin. So he's we read then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted his voice and wept.

I said in Charleston it was a custom to kiss cousins. We used to talk as kids about kissing cousins down to the third or fourth or if they happen to be one sixth or seventh degree that appeared to be it might be advantageous to apply the apply the the tradition of kissing cousin you might kiss to the seventh degree. But in Charleston everybody knew who your cousins were first second third fourth fifth.

Now we're living out in the West and we don't know things like that but there was some value in that there was some benefit in it. So Jacob kisses Rachel it's a kiss of greeting and he lifted up his voice and wept. No he didn't say after he had kissed her why have I waited so long to do that.

That was probably not the reason. Do you know why he wept? I think he wept because he was so filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit over the providence of God in bringing him to this place and then bringing him to the very person that he might marry. And he was so pleased with what he saw and with what God had done that he was so over and so overjoyed with it that a lump came in his heart and he began to weep.

He's an emotional man and he appreciates the great providence of God. You know you have to be a very very poor Christian if there have not been times in your life when you felt just as Jacob has felt. The experiences of life have been so wonderful that you cannot do anything but weep over the things that God has brought into your life.

You know it was a very ordinary kind of experience a journey on the road meeting some shepherds near a well a young woman coming up a shepherdess an act of courtesy removing the stone. And these great and far-reaching results that came from it because the God of heaven was interested in every little thing that was transpiring there in fact had arranged it. There is nothing really small in the life of a Christian.

A chance meeting a receipt of a letter some experience in the supermarket some providential meeting of a friend on the street. All of these things are important for the Christian believer. It is true that these are the experiences of ordinary life.

But do you know what ordinary means? It really comes from ordered. Our ordinary life is the ordered part of our life. And so here we have the harmonious beneficent combination of circumstances that guided and directed Jacob by the overruling wisdom of God to this woman that was to share his life.

Now he meets Laban. I'll pass that by for the sake of time and say a word about the next section which could be entitled Jacob and Laban the deceiver deceived. God chooses in his instruments not for their sakes but for his.

Leah is unloved but she is the one who bore the sons. Rachel is loved but she is the one that was barren. This is an evidence of the independence of the grace of God.

Now Laban after Jacob has been there for a little while has a proposition and so there is a contract that is drawn up between Laban and Jacob. Laban said to him you are my relative therefore should you serve me for nothing tell me what shall your wages be. Was he generous? Well yes in some ways Laban was a generous man.

Was he greedy? Yes he was very greedy. Was he sagacious? Yes he was very wise because he wanted another hand on the ranch and Jacob evidently was a useful hand. And so he offered him this proposition and Jacob is said or is asked what shall your wages be.

Now Laban had two daughters the name of the older was Leah the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak. Now I don't know what exactly what that means the commentators are divided in their interpretations.

It does not mean that she needed glasses evidently it means that she had eyes that were not as sparkling as say Rachel's evidently. There are eyes like that. You know there are eyes that when you go to write down on your driver's license the color of the eye it's difficult to do it like mine.

So they put down hazel whatever that means. Then there are some eyes that just don't sparkle and then there's some that sparkle. There are those beautiful brown eyes there are beautiful blue eyes there are beautiful green eyes and Leah just had weak eyes.

That was that was it. But Rachel Rachel she was beautiful of form and face. Female loveliness does not render the loving heart less pure.

The man who loves a beautiful woman is not less holy than the man who loves one who is not so beautiful. And we're not suggesting of course that because one is beautiful one is therefore more likely to be the object of the grace of God. That of course is not true.

But Jacob loved Rachel. Now we read in the 18th verse now Jacob loved Rachel and he said I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel. Labor said it's better that I give it to you than that I should give it to another man.

Stay with me. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her. This was love at first sight.

Now someone might say well it doesn't quite say that. No it doesn't say that. It says that they were there that Jacob was there for a month.

But it would seem from reading the account and most of the commentators pedantic though they be agree that this was likely love at first sight and it certainly was love after only a month of relationship. For we read in verse 18 now Jacob loved Rachel. He had been there one month and he was ready to marry her.

Now he had no dowry. He had no property and so he was going to serve seven years and in that statement in verse 20 we have one of the most beautiful statements about love found in all of literature. Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.

Those words express the purest tenderness and express more emphatically than the flowery excesses of language of romantic phraseology the deep attachment that this man had developed for Rachel. There is nothing more beautiful in any romantic literature than that statement. They seem to him but a few days because of his love for her.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge said no man could be a bad man who loved as Jacob loved Rachel. Well in one sense that would be true. All men are bad but this was one of the great things about Jacob.

He did love Rachel in that way. And incidentally this is an illustration of the love that Jesus Christ has for the church of Jesus Christ. Almost all the commentators comment upon that fact because here is Jacob who is illustrative of the Lord Jesus Christ serving because he loved Rachel.

And so the Lord Jesus Christ the servant of God has carried out his work of atonement because of his love for the church. He loved the church and gave himself for her. And Jacob is a person who served that he might be united with Rachel in that deepest of human unions, marriage.

And the Lord Jesus Christ served that he might unite us to himself in an even deeper union. For they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit. And of course Jacob served that we might have the confidence that Rachel might have the confidence of his love.

And so the Lord Jesus Christ has carried out his work of atonement that we might have the confidence and security of the love of God. If you want security, if you want the sense of truly belonging then to know Christ and to know his love for us and to have by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit to have responded is to know true security. What a magnificent really picture.

Now of course Laban comes into the story and Laban's quite a different character. After the end of the seven years Jacob said to Laban give me my wife for my time is completed that I may go into her. That was incidentally evidence that his love for Rachel was pure and true.

Give me my wife that I may go into her. And so they had the marriage feast and Jacob was anticipating being married to Rachel. This was a seven day feast as a rule.

They had a large party and sometimes they had a few alcoholic beverages. It's possible that that may have accounted for some of the difficulty but the other is this that in those days it was custom for the customary for the wife to be brought to her bridegroom with a veil that covered not only her face but also her body. And so there would have been no way for Jacob to know definitely it was night time.

There were a lot of festivities with the veil over this woman. There was no way for him to know that it was not Rachel but Leah. And so Jacob's chickens now come home to roost.

He's the deceiver. He's the deceiver and he's going to be deceived by the master craftsman of deceit Laban himself. The brother of his mother who taught him what he knew.

But he's going to get another lesson right now. Now of course the next morning he took the veil aside and instead of Rachel it was Leah. And you can sense the spirit of the statement in verse 25 that came about

in the morning that behold it was Leah.

And he said to Laban what is this that you've done to me was it not for Rachel that I served with you. Why then have you deceived me. Well we could have answered that this way you would deceive Jacob because God is reminding you in this way of your own deceit.

But that's on the divine side. Well Laban has another proposition for him. Just go ahead and finish out the week of festivities and I'll give you Rachel at the end of the week and you'll have two.

But of course you'll have to serve another seven years. Well Jacob is so much in love with Rachel that he's going to do it. And so that's exactly what happened.

The feast was finished. He was given Rachel. And so now at the end of the one week when he should have had one bride Rachel he has two.

Rachel and Leah. You wonder about Leah. Was she herself deceived? Is it possible that Laban said to her now we've arranged a little different situation here.

Jacob's willing. It's obvious Leah loved him. Leah loved him.

Maybe Laban did deceive Leah and that accounted for the fact that she participated in this. On the other hand so far as the record is concerned she herself was involved and she loved him enough and wanted him so much that she was willing to be a part of the deceit. And after all she was part of the family too.

And this family they are experts in deceit. So the last part of the chapter I won't say anything about. It's the story of how God blesses Leah with children and Rachel is barren.

You can see the party in the midst of this situation though because Leah names her children in ways that reflect the glory of God and finally when Judah is born she says I will praise the Lord and she named him Judah which means praise. So she's a pious woman and it is from Leah of course and the tribe of Judah that the Lord Jesus shall eventually come. Well let me just say one or two things in conclusion.

The twenty-ninth chapter then makes some very important lessons or points. And the first is the inevitability of the divine judgment. When I was in Basel lecturing on the Greek text of the epistle to the Galatians in the Freie Evangelische Theologische Akademie I came to the sixth chapter of the book of Galatians where we have that text about sowing and reaping.

Whatsoever a man soweth this shall he also reap. What a great statement that is. That does not say whatsoever a man soweth well he shall reap what he thinks or what he thinks he shall reap.

What he wants to he shall reap. What he would like to. But it says whatsoever a man soweth this this very thing this very thing that he has sown that shall he reap.

Or as it is put in one of the prophets if we sow to the wind we shall reap the whirlwind. And so Jacob has been a deceiver. He's participated in deceit and now he is the object of that deceit.

He sowed to the wind and he reaps the whirlwind. The Greeks felt that Nemesis was the goddess of retributive justice. And all of Greek tragedy is just a comment on a sentence the doer shall suffer.

And here Jacob must suffer. And so all of his misdeeds come home to roost. But of course there is another lesson here too.

It's the compensations of life. Leah talks about affliction but that's often by the noble family of sons that God gave her. He tempers our sorrow with joy.

But most of all here in this chapter we have evidence of the unchanging presence of the God of Bethel. He's always faithful to his promises. He guarantees that whatever he has said with reference to us he will accomplish.

He will give Jacob in spite of his deceit a noble destiny and a noble family. And even in the midst of these experiences in which he is training him in the school of Jesus Christ, Jacob is accumulating the family that from which is to come the great blessing that God has promised. Because of his seed shall come one who shall be the means whereby the whole of this earth shall be blessed.

Oh God of Bethel by whose hand thy people still are fed, who through this weary pilgrimage hast all our fathers led. Isn't it great to know that the God of Bethel is the God who leads and guides his saints today. That same God who put Jacob in the school of Laban in order to learn the consequences of deceit is the God who guides and directs us.

So I say to you as I close today, if you do not know the Lord Jesus as your Savior you're not enrolled in the right school. The school of Christ is where we learn the lessons of life. And the great thing about the school of Christ is that there is no tuition.

There is no registration fee. It's free. And when by the grace of God we've recognized the Lord Jesus as the one who has suffered and died on the cross of Calvary, as the one who shed the blood for sins, and that we by the grace of God may receive as a free gift everlasting life, when the Holy Spirit has brought home to us the conviction of our sin and of our judgment, our condemnation, and by the grace of God we've been led to hold out our hands for the gift of eternal life, we pass into the school of Christ.

We are enrolled in that school. We become a new student, first grade, elementary. And in our Christian life we are educated in that school.

Jacob's being educated. The magnificent thing about it of course is that God is the teacher. God is the instructor.

He's the one who keeps us and he's the one who guarantees ultimately to graduate us with honors. Isn't it great to be in the school of Christ? So we urge you this morning to put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus by the grace of God and be enrolled in the school of eternal life. For you who are Christians, all of the ordinary experiences of life are the experiences through which the God of Bethel passes us.

Recognize his presence. Respond to him and learn of him. May we stand for the benediction.

We are grateful to thee Lord for the blessings that are ours through the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank thee that by thy grace we have been enrolled in the school of Christ. There is so much that we need to know.

We're in such a low grade, O God. Enable us to grow. Enable us to advance.

Enable us to come to the high school and the university of the grace of God. And in the experiences of life, enable us Lord to see thy hand. Guide and direct us.

Glorify thy name through us. Deliver us from the perils of sin. Give us a love for holiness and righteousness.

Give us a love for thyself, for thy word. Deepen us Lord. Take us out of elementary education into higher education.

We look forward to the future and we give thee praise and thanksgiving. May grace, mercy, and peace be our experience from now and forever. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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