

# Community Bible Church

## The Book of Genesis

### Chapters 29-30

The story of **Jacob**, a grandson of Abraham, is told in **Genesis chapters 27-37**. We will spend a few weeks in our study of the life of this patriarch. In this week's lesson (**chapters 29-30**) Jacob spends a lengthy period of time in foreign country in an effort to gain a wife. These two chapters can be outlined as follows:

<b>Jacob meets Rachel and her father, Laban.</b>	<b>29:1-17</b>
<b>Jacob labors for fourteen years to marry Rachel.</b>	<b>29:18--30</b>
<b>Jacob has twelve children by four wives.</b>	<b>29:31-30:24</b>
<b>Jacob prospers and prepares to return to Canaan</b>	<b>30:25-43</b>

1. Here are some background facts for this week's study. **Genesis 29-30** takes place in the town of Haran in the region of Paddan-aram. This is an area where Abraham and Sarah once resided, and is located in the southern region of modern-day Turkey. It is around 400 miles north of Jacob's home in Cannn. Laban is the brother of Isaac's wife, Rebekah and the father of Rachel. Therefore, Rachel is the first cousin of Jacob, and Laban is his uncle. Leah is Rachel's older sister. Got it?

Now, with that information in mind, read **29:1-12** and describe the initial meeting between Jacob and Rachel.

2. From **29:13-20**, describe Jacob's first meeting with Rachel's father, Laban. What "deal" was struck at that meeting?
3. Time goes by, and in **29:21-27**, after seven years of working for Laban, Jacob prepares for his marriage to Rachel. Read this passage and describe the deception by Laban as well as the result of this deception.
4. Have you formed any opinions about Uncle Laban so far in this narrative?

5. Time again passes in this story. What happens after an additional seven years of working for Laban in **29:28**?
  
6. Read **29:30**. After some fourteen years in Haran, Jacob and Rachel were finally married. However, by that time, according to ancient custom and law. Jacob had acquired two “wives” (Rachel and Leah) and two female “servants” (Bilhah and Zilpah) who functioned as surrogate wives. From **29:30** what decision is made by Jacob at that time and why may he have done so?
  
7. Read the narrative in **29:31** through **30:24**. While this passage describes the jealousy, anger, and competition between the two wives of Jacob (Rachel and Leah) and his two female servants (Bilhah and Zilpah) as they give birth to eleven sons and one daughter, this narrative also gives a crucial part of the redemptive history of the formation of the nation of Israel. The birth of the 12th son, Benjamin, by Rachel will be described in **chapter 35**. These twelve sons will eventually establish the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. From this passage, see if you can identify the names of the eleven sons and the birth mother of each.. Which of these sons will carry on the promise of the Abrahamic covenant?
  
8. Finally, after more than twenty years in Haran, Jacob makes the following request to Laban in **30:25**: “**Send me away that I may go to my own place and my own country.**” The rest of **chapter 30** describes their negotiation to allow this return, including Jacob’s acquisition of livestock that he would take with him. From **30:43**, describe the status of Jacob at the time he and his family departed Haran.