

Then Jacob went onward in his long journey. He walked across the river Jordan in a shallow place, feeling his way with his staff; he climbed mountains and journeyed beside the great desert on the east, and at last came to the city of Haran. Beside the city was the well, where Abraham's servant had met Jacob's mother, Rebekah; and there, after Jacob had waited for a time, he saw a young woman coming with her sheep to give them water.

Then Jacob took off the flat stone that was over the mouth of the well, and drew water and give it to the sheep. And when he found that this young woman was his own cousin Rachel, the daughter of Laban, he was so glad that he wept for joy. And at that moment he began to love Rachel, and longed to have her for his wife.

Rachel's father, Laban, who was Jacob's uncle, gave a welcome to Jacob, and took him into his home.

And Jacob asked Laban if he would give his daughter, Rachel, to him as his wife; and Jacob said, "If you give me Rachel, I will work for you seven years." And Laban said, "It is better that you should have her, than that a stranger should marry her."

So Jacob lived seven years in Laban's house, caring for his sheep and oxen and camels; but his love for Rachel made the time seem short. At last the day came for the marriage; and they brought in the bride, who, after the manner of that land, was covered with a thick veil, so that her face could not be seen. And she was married to Jacob, and when Jacob lifted up her veil he found that he had married, not Rachel, but her older sister, Leah, who was not beautiful, and whom Jacob did not love at all.

Jacob was very angry that he had been deceived, - though that was just the way in which Jacob himself had deceived his father and cheated his brother Esau. But his uncle Laban said: "In our land we never allow the younger daughter to be married before the older daughter. Keep Leah for your wife, and work for me seven years longer, and you shall have Rachel also."

For in those times, as we have seen, men often had two wives, or even more than two. So Jacob stayed seven years more, fourteen years in all, before he received Rachel as his wife.

While Jacob was living at Haran, eleven sons were born to him. But only one of these was the child of Rachel, whom Jacob loved. This son was Joseph, who was dearer to Jacob than any other of his children, partly because he was the youngest, and because he was the child of his beloved Rachel. **(END OF STORY)**

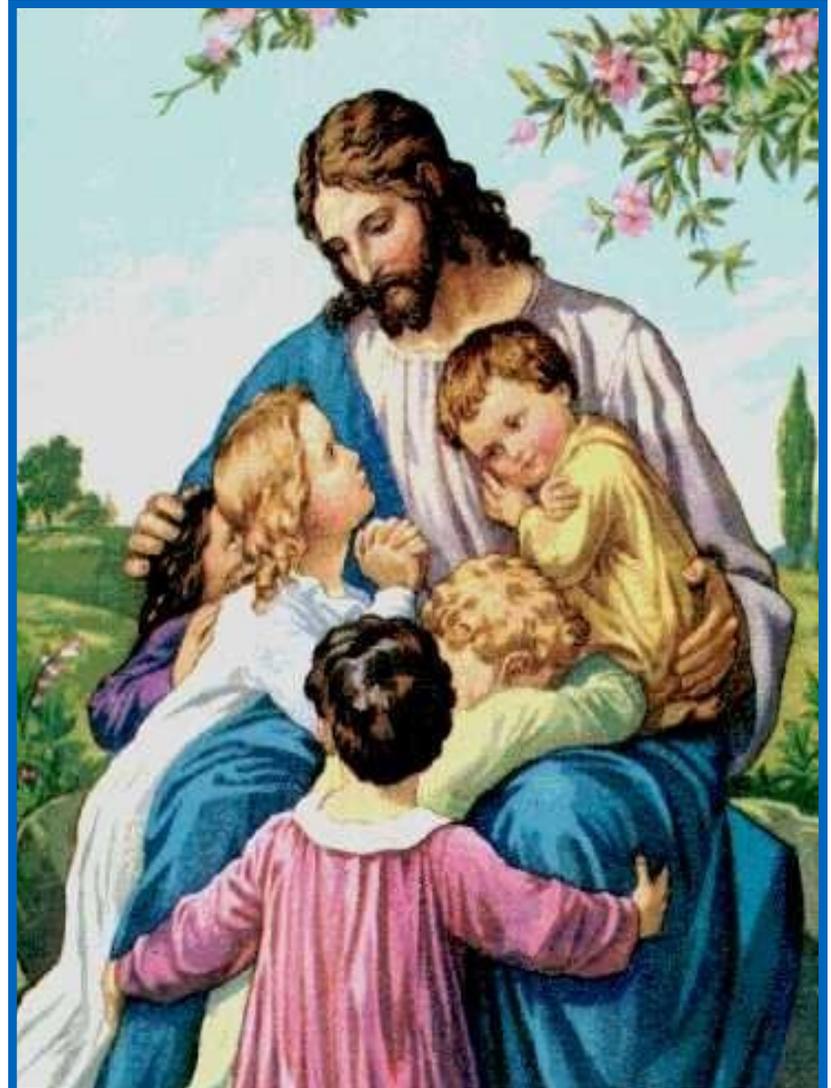


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## ***THE STORY OF JACOB***

### ***PART II***

Then the old man ate the food that Jacob had brought to him; and he kissed Jacob, believing him to be Esau; and he gave him the blessing, saying to him: “May God give you the dew of heaven, and the richness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. May nations bow down to you and peoples become your servants. May you be the master over your brother, and may your family and descendants that shall come from you rule over his family and his descendants. Blessed be those that bless you, and cursed be those that curse you.”

Just as soon as Jacob had received the blessing he rose up and hastened away. He had scarcely gone out, when Esau came in from hunting, with the dish of food that he had cooked.

And Esau said: “Let my father sit up and eat the food that I have brought, and give me the blessing.”

And Isaac said, “Why, who are you?” Esau answered, “I am your son; your oldest son, Esau.”

And Isaac trembled, and said, “Who then is the one that came in and brought to me food, and I have eaten his food and have blessed him; yes, and he shall be blessed.”

When Esau heard this, he knew that he had been cheated; and he cried aloud, with a bitter cry, “O, my father, my brother has taken away my blessing, just as he took away my birthright! But cannot you give me another blessing, too? Have you given everything to my brother?”

And Isaac told him all that he had said to Jacob, making him the ruler over his brother.

But Esau begged for another blessing; and Isaac said: “My son, your dwelling shall be of the riches of the earth and of the dew of heaven. You shall live by your sword and your descendants shall serve his descendants. But in time to come they shall break loose and shall shake off the yoke of your brother’s rule and shall be free.”

All this came to pass many years afterward. The people who came from Esau lived in a land called Edom, on the south of the land of Israel, where Jacob’s descendants lived. And after a time the Israelites became rulers over the Edomites; and later still, the Edomites made themselves free from the Israelites. But all this took place hundreds of years afterward.

It was better that Jacob’s descendants, those who came after him, should have the blessing, than that Esau’s people should have it; for Jacob’s people worshipped God, and Esau’s people walked in the way of the idols and became wicked.

After Esau found that he had lost his birthright and his blessing, he was very angry against his brother Jacob; and he said to himself, and told others: “My father Isaac is very old and cannot live long. As soon as he is dead, then I shall kill Jacob for having robbed me of my right.”

When Rebekah heard this, she said to Jacob, “Before it is too late, go away from home and get out of Esau’s sight. Perhaps when Esau sees you no longer, he will forget his anger, and then you can come home again. Go and visit my brother Laban, your uncle, in Haran, and stay with him for a little while.”

We must remember that Rebekah came from the family of Nahor, Abraham’s younger brother, who lived in Haran, a long distance to the northeast of Canaan, and that Laban was Rebekah’s brother.

So Jacob went out of Beersheba, on the border of the desert, and walked alone, carrying his staff in his hand. One evening, just about sunset, he came to a place among the mountains, more than sixty miles distant from his home. And as he had no bed to lie down upon, he took a stone and rested his head upon it for a pillow, and lay down to sleep.

And on that night Jacob had a wonderful dream. In his dream he saw stairs leading from the earth where he lay up to heaven; and angels were going up and coming down upon the stairs. And above the stairs, he saw the Lord God standing. And God said to Jacob: “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac your father; and I will be your God, too. The land where you are lying all alone, shall belong to you and to your children after you; and your children shall spread abroad over the lands, east and west, and north and south, like the dust of the earth; and in your family all the world shall receive a blessing. And I am with you in your journey, and I will keep you where you are going, and will bring you back to this land. I will never leave you, and I will surely keep my promise to you.”

And in the morning Jacob awakened from his sleep, and he said: “Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it! I thought that I was all alone, but God has been with me. This place is the house of God; it is the gate of heaven!”

And Jacob took the stone on which his head had rested, and he set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on it as an offering to God. And Jacob named that place Bethel, which in the language that Jacob spoke means “The House of God.”

And Jacob made a promise to God at that time, and said: “If God really will go with me and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and will bring me to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God: and this stone shall be the house of God and of all that God gives me I will give back to God one-tenth as an offering.”