

JACOB AND RACHEL

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 29:10 – 30:22

*God will not be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Jacob fled Esau's wrath and finds a wife – On his mother's recommendation, Jacob fled from his brother Esau who was intent on killing him as revenge for taking his birthright and blessing. Jacob traveled through the desert aware of his status as a fugitive. Though he won the blessing of his father, he traveled alone and without the riches he might need to get a wife. Upon seeing the beautiful Rachel, Jacob falls in love and his troubles were forgotten. He rolled away the large stone from the mouth of the well, which normally required the strength of several men, then he kissed Rachel. Jacob did not take time to inquire of the Lord.

Jacob made an agreement with Laban for Rachel – Because Jacob fled quickly from Esau without a lot of money or possessions, he had to work for what he wanted. Jacob suggested the wages be Rachel's hand in marriage in exchange for seven years of labor. Perhaps Rachel was too young for marriage and/or her beauty would demand a high price in dowry. Laban agreed and for the next seven years Jacob worked for Rachel.

Jacob is deceived who had deceived his father, is also deceived – When it came time for the wedding night, Laban deceived Jacob. In the light of morning, Jacob discovered the trick. The irony in this story is that Jacob deceived his father by pretending to be his brother. Here, Jacob reaped what he had sown. Leah deceived Jacob by posing as her sister. Jacob had disregarded the place of the firstborn son. Now he is chastised by God for his sin through the trickery of Laban, who honored the firstborn daughter. God's correction of Jacob would continue. Jacob used a goatskin to disguise himself and deceive his father. It would be the blood of a goat that stained the many colored robe of Jacob's son, Joseph when the other brothers deceived Jacob. In Galatians 6:7 we read, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."

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Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Rachel's father Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his daughter Leah. Leah believed in the promise of God and cried out to the Lord because she knew Jacob loved Rachel more. The Lord answered Leah's prayer, and because of her faith, allowed Jesus to come through the lineage of one of her sons, Judah.

Leah went on to bear six of the twelve sons of Jacob who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. Again, God rewards those who call out to him in faith.

'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'

(Matthew 2:6)

ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Micah 5:2

Connecting the passage to Christ:

The prophet Micah predicts that Christ will come out of Bethlehem. This passage is cited in Matthew 2:6. This prophecy was thought to predict the Messiah, see John 7:41-42.

Questions for reflection:

- The prophet mentions that the ruler over Israel will come out of Bethlehem; how does this connect with Jesus? (Jesus was born in Bethlehem in a stable.)
- The ruler is to come out of a clan of Judah. Who was Judah's mother and why is that significant to today's lesson? (Leah was Judah's mother and she was chosen over Rachel to produce the line of men who would lead to Jesus. God had mercy upon her because He saw that she was not loved like Rachel.)
- Micah tells us this king will have origins from of old, from ancient times. How is this true of Jesus? (Jesus has origins in David, the first king, but He is also the eternal son of God who is so ancient He has no beginning!)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

COUNTING THE DUST

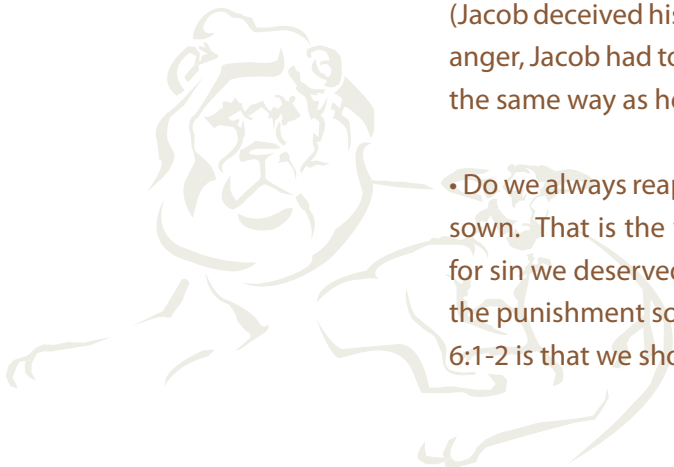
Supplies

several varieties of seeds
(You can purchase seeds from a garden shop or use dried beans and vegetables as well as the seeds taken from fresh vegetables. Some easy seeds to obtain are: corn, kidney beans, green pepper seeds, sunflower seeds and peanuts.)

Set the seeds out in small piles with a number next to each variety. Ask the children if they can guess which plant the seeds are from.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- If you planted a sunflower seed (or other plant) could you expect to get a different type of plant? (No, only the same variety of plant can grow from the seed planted.)
- Why is this picture of sowing and reaping used to describe our lives? (It is a good illustration because if you sow bad behavior, sin, then you reap bad consequences. If you sow good behavior, righteousness, you reap good consequences.)
- What bad behavior did Jacob sow that came back to him in bad consequences? (Jacob deceived his father and stole his brother's blessing. As a result of his brother's anger, Jacob had to flee. In the end, God arranged for Laban to deceive him in much the same way as he had deceived his father.)
- Do we always reap what we have sown? (No, we do not always reap what we have sown. That is the wonderful message of the Gospel. Jesus Christ took the wrath for sin we deserved from God by dying on the cross. We sowed the sin; He reaped the punishment so that we could be forgiven. The warning of scripture in Romans 6:1-2 is that we should not take advantage of grace.)



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A LARGE ROCK

Supplies

• one large 100 pound rock and a wagon or wheelbarrow to transport the rock (Large single rocks can be purchased at a garden center or landscape supply, or ask a farmer in your church if you could have a rock.)

Place the rock in the middle of the floor of your classroom. This rock represents the rock which covered the well in our Bible story. Genesis 29:8 tells us that several shepherds were already gathered but could not start watering the flocks until they all came and the stone was removed from the mouth of the well. Presumably the stone was so large (Genesis 29:2-3) it needed the help of all of the shepherds to move it. Jacob, however, upon seeing Rachel, moved it himself in a feat of strength.

Have some of the boys take turns moving the stone. Though they likely will not be able to lift the stone, they should be able to roll it from its original spot.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What clues might Jacob have used to determine God's blessing upon Rachel? (The situation was very similar to the scene with Rebekah and Abraham's servant. Certainly Jacob would have known the story of how his mother had come to the well as a confirmation that she should be the bride for Isaac. Here Rachel comes to the well, perhaps the same well. What is more, she is from the same family as his mother. The other shepherds said Rebekah was Laban's daughter. The shepherds didn't say that she was one of Laban's daughters, to indicate there was more than one daughter. On top of all of that, Rachel was beautiful.)
- How might the covenant that God repeated to Jacob encourage him in his pursuit of a wife? (God promised to give Jacob descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth like Abraham and Isaac before him. The promise had been good for his grandfather, who had a miracle baby in his old age, good for his father who had twin boys, and would presumably be good for Jacob. God's promise and Jacob's dream would have filled Jacob with faith.)



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BY THE LORD'S CHOICE

Supplies

purchase a double-sided coin, or tape two similar coins together to make them heads on both sides

Ask the children if they are familiar with the practice of coin tossing to start a football game. Ask them to explain the process. Finally, ask for volunteers who would like to, "Give it a shot." Pick two and have them come to the front of the class. Ask one of the two to "call it in the air." Let the coin hit the floor. (Be sure it is taped well so it doesn't break apart.)

Have the loser sit down and then ask for a new challenger. See how long you can keep this up until the children discover only heads is coming up. Explain to the children that you were able to control the outcome to always be heads because you altered the coin used.

God is able to affect the outcome by His sovereign control of all things. Ephesians 1:11 tells us that He "works all things according to the counsel of his will."

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Who should have received the birthright from Isaac? (Esau should have received the birthright.)
- Who received Esau's blessing and birthright instead? (Jacob received both the birthright and blessing.)
- Who should have been Jacob's wife? (Rachel should have been Jacob's wife, but Laban deceived Jacob and gave him Leah instead.)
- How do both of these twists in events point to the sovereign control of God? (First, God said about Jacob and Esau that the older would serve the younger and as for Leah, she became the grandmother of Christ through the line of her son, Judah. If it were up to Jacob, he would not have married Leah, but in God's plan he did.)

It is important that we humbly pray before the Lord, recognizing His complete control over all things.



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

Supplies

- paper
- colored pencils

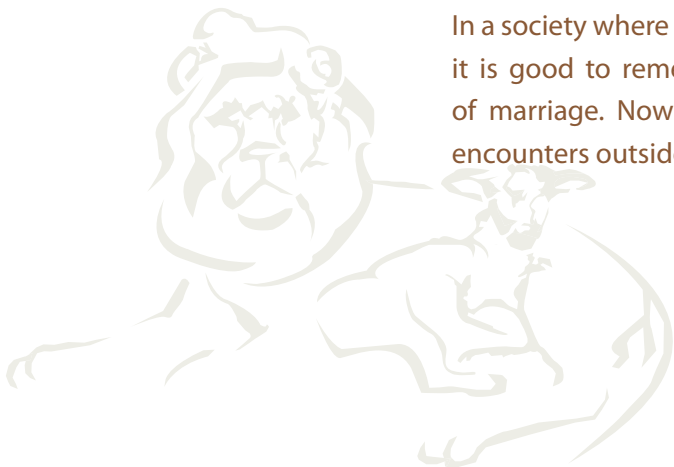
The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Draw a picture of Jacob moving the stone away from the well.

FOR OLDER GRADES

Ask the children if they think it was appropriate for Jacob to kiss Rachel and to give their reasons to support their answer.

Kissing was a common greeting among the people. Though Jacob's kiss may have been motivated by his instant attraction to Rachel, a simple kiss would not have aroused suspicions. What is important is what Jacob did after that moment. He asked for Rachel's hand in marriage and pledged seven years of labor. Jacob's relationship with Rachel honored her, honored her father and honored God. Jacob all along was looking for a wife and was willing to pledge his lifelong commitment to care for her.

In a society where dating for pleasure apart from lifelong commitment is the norm, it is good to remember that romance is reserved for marriage and the pursuit of marriage. Nowhere in scripture do you see that God approves of romantic encounters outside of the context of marriage.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Sovereignty – God's sovereignty is His absolute control and rule over all things. He controls everything, including our free self-determined choices. It was God who was in control of which son, Jacob or Esau, would get the birthright. It was God who was sovereignly determining which wife Jacob would receive first. God also determined which would conceive first and whether the children would be boys or girls. In short, it was God's plan that Jacob would flee to Haran, receive Leah as his first wife, have a fourth son, name him Judah and that out of Judah would come Jesus, the Messiah. God was never wondering how He was going to get to Jesus, He knew all along! He rules all!

