**The Parable of Jacob’s Marriage to His Wives [Gen 29:15-28]**

In the story, Jacob left Canaan to Paddan Aram in obedience to his father’s instruction not to marry Canaanite women. He met his uncle Laban who took him in as a worker and told him to name his wages. Jacob responded, saying he would like to marry Laban’s younger daughter Rachael as his wife in exchange for seven years of service to Laban. Laban agreed and Jacob served him for seven years and the time passed by quickly for him because he loved Rachael.

Laban hosted a wedding feast for Jacob and when evening came, Laban gave his older daughter Leah instead of Rachael for whom Jacob had served. The following day, Jacob discovered that the woman he was given was not the woman for whom he had served and after confronting Laban, was told that it was not the custom of their people to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older. Laban asked him to finish the bridal week with Leah and then he would be given Rachael in exchange for another seven years of work. After Jacob completed the bridal week with Leah, he was given Rachael and had to work another seven years to pay for her.

**Keys to Interpreting the Parable**

|  | **Elements in the Parable** | **Spiritual Meaning** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **The Characters** | Jacob | Christ |
| Leah the older daughter | The Gentiles |
| Rachael the younger sister | Israel |
| Laban | God the Father |
| **The Locations** | Canaan | Heaven, Jesus’ home before He left to find a nation (bride) |
| Paddan Aram | The Earth where He came to pick a nation (bride) |
| **The Time** | Each seven years of labour | An age |

**The Meaning of the Parable**

Jacob left Canaan his home to Paddan Aram to find a wife for himself. Similarly, Jesus left His Father’s house to come to the earth to pick a nation, a bride for Himself.

Just as Jacob loved Rachael, Jesus loves Israel. Israel was the nation He chose when the nations were divided

*The Most High assigned nations their lands; he determined where peoples should live. He assigned to each nation a heavenly being, but Jacob's descendants he chose for himself. [GNT Deu 32:8-9]*

The nations were divided the year of the birth of Peleg, 101 years after the flood [Gen 11:16; 10:25]; Abraham was called by YAHWEH 266 years later with the promise of making him a great nation. The nation of Israel was obviously formed hundreds of years after nations were first formed therefore; the nations (Gentiles) are older than Israel. Just as Jacob chose the younger daughter to take as his bride, Jesus chose Israel – a younger nation – to be His bride.

However, when He came to His own (Israel), God gave Him the Gentiles instead. It is important to note that not every aspect of a parable translates directly into the reality. In the parable, it was through deception that Laban gave Leah to Jacob but in the reality, it was as a result of the Jews rejecting Jesus that He got the Gentiles instead [Deu 32:16-21; Rom 10:16-21]

In the parable, Jacob was blinded from seeing Leah by the cover of darkness (as it was evening when she went to him) and perhaps she was wearing a veil. In the reality, it was the Jews (the bride) that were blinded (veiled). Laban used the cover of darkness to give Leah to Jacob but in the reality, God used the darkness (blindness) of Israel to give the Gentiles to Jesus [Deu 29:4; Isa 29:10-13; Rom 11:8-11].

In the parable, Jacob was given Leah and Rachael pretty much at the same time. In reality, Jesus will return for both Gentile and Jew at the same time.

**Summary Table**

| **Description of Event** | **Spiritual Meaning** |
| --- | --- |
| Laban did not want Jacob working for him for nothing [Gen 29:15]  1.This favor applied to Jacob because he was Laban’s kin and not just a stranger. | God planned to reward Jesus for his labor  1. This favor applied to Jesus Christ, and does not apply to angels though they also labor, because he is God’s kin, he is the exact representation of God |
| Laban said it was better Jacob married his daughter than someone else did [Gen 29:15,19]. Laban didn’t want an outsider marrying his daughter | God does not want an angel or mere man ruling his creation |
| First seven years [Gen 29:20-21] | This present age |
| Second seven years | The coming age, the age of the restoration of all things |
| Jacob labored for seven years to marry Racheal [Gen 29:20-21] | Christ’s labour in this age is primarily to marry Israel, i.e., to become the King of the Jews |
| Jacob is blinded by the night | The Jews are blinded from recognizing Jesus |
| At the end of the years, he was given the two sisters | At the end of this age, Christ will marry both Jews and Gentiles |
| First, however, he had to fulfill his duties to Leah after that he was given Rachel | Christ will first be one with the Church which is made up of Jews and Gentiles before he becomes one with Israel |
| Though he was given both sisters, he had to labor seven extra years for the second, i.e., for Rachel | There is an age that will follow after this age in which Christ will restore all things. In this age, Christ will truly own the earth |