

# Laban

Laban was son of Bethuel and brother of Rebekah [**Genesis 24:29; Genesis 25:20**] and thus uncle of Jacob and Esau, [**Genesis 27:23; Genesis 28:2**] and later Jacob's father-in-law.

This branch of the family had remained in Harran after Abraham and Lot had migrated, and it was there that both Isaac and Jacob found their wives.

Laban first appears in scripture giving permission for the marriage of Rebekah to Isaac, [**Genesis 24:47-61**] apparently playing a more prominent role in the negotiations than his father.

**When Jacob fled to him from Esau, Laban, realising his value as a servant, made use of Jacob's passion for Rachel to trick him into serving him for fourteen years.**

But Jacob was more than a match in craftiness, and Laban found himself defrauded, [**Genesis chapters 29 and 30**].

Subsequently, Jacob fled with his family and possessions, and Laban pursued them, but being warned in a dream not to be violent, eventually Laban made a covenant with Jacob, [**Genesis chapter 31**].

Laban's duplicity, seemingly a family characteristic, was ultimately thwarted, not merely by Jacob's superior cunning, but by the covenant-grace of the Creator God.

**We are all selfish, but some of us seem to make a speciality out of this weakness.**

**Laban's whole recorded life was filled with self-centredness, his chief goal was to look out for himself.**

The way Laban treated other people was controlled by this selfish goal.

In the end Laban realised that Jacob and Jacob's God were more than he could handle.

**How can we relate to and learn from Laban's life?**

Like Laban we all too often have strong tendencies to control other people and events for our benefit.

Any "*good reasons*" we give for treating people this way is a very thin cover over our self-centred motives.

One way to recognise our own selfishness is to consider how easy is it to admit we are wrong.

Laban could **not** bring himself to do this.

**Recognising selfishness is painful, but it is the first step on the road back to a relationship with our Creator God.**