

# Rachel

Rachel was the younger daughter of Laban, the favourite wife of her first cousin Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin.

Rachel was a woman of great beauty, [**Genesis 29:17**].

Jacob first met Rachel when he was approaching Haran in Padan-Aram where Isaac had sent him to seek a wife among his mother's kin, [**Genesis 28:1-2; Genesis 29:1-14**].

**History seems to repeat itself, twice the town well at Haran was the sight of significant events in one family's history.**

**It was at this well that Rebekah met Eliezer, Abraham's servant who had come to find a wife for Isaac. Now some 40 years later, Rebekah's son Jacob met Rachel at this same well.**

**The relationship between Rachel and Jacob not only reminds us that romance is not a modern invention, but also teaches us a few lessons about patience and love.**

**It was a custom of the day for a man to present a dowry, or substantial gift, to the family of his future wife. This was to compensate the family for the loss of the girl.**

**Jacob's dowry was not a material possession, for he had none to offer, but he agreed to work seven years for Laban, [**Genesis 29:18-20**].**

**But there was another custom of the land that Laban did not tell Jacob. The older daughter had to marry first. By giving Jacob Leah and not Rachel, [**Genesis 29:20-27**] Laban tricked Jacob into promising another seven years' hard work.**

**So Rachel had to patiently wait seven years to marry Jacob, and Jacob fourteen years of work for her, [**Genesis 29:28-30**].**

**The most important goals and desires in life are well worth working and waiting for.**

**When tricked by others, keeping our part of the agreement may still be wise, for plotting revenge blinds us to seeing the situation from God's perspective.**

Jacob's commitment to Rachel kindled a strong loyalty to him within her.

But Rachel's loyalty to Jacob got out of hand and became self-destructive.

When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children while Leah gave him four sons, [**Genesis 29:31-35**], Rachel became jealous of her sister, [**Genesis 30:1-2**].

Rachel was frustrated with her barrenness and desperate to compete with her sister for Jacob's affection, yet she was trying to gain from Jacob what she already had given to her, devoted love.

**Rachel's attempt to earn the un-earnable are a picture of a much greater mistake we can make.**

We find ourselves trying to earn God's love.

By not believing what we find in the Word of God, the Christian Bible, that God is love, [**1 John 4:8, 16**] and everything He does is motivated by that love, and that our love is motivated by this love He has for every human being [**1 John 4:19**] and is expressed by the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ, [**John 3:16-17**].

**Such attempts to earn God's love will cause us to end up with two false ideas.**

**Either in our vanity consider that our "religious" acts really does deserve God's love, or we assume that can never be good enough to earn that love so it will never be ours.**

Yet God's Word, the Christian Bible, again and again shows God's great patient love for all humanity.

Because God is love it has no beginning and is also shown through His dealings with Israel this love is incredibly patient.

**All we need to do is to respond to that love by yielding our lives to God in an act of worship.**

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship."*

The Greek word translated "bodies" is "soma" meaning our whole life, physical body, mind and human spirit, in thanksgiving not as payment.

**Living our life in the freedom of knowing we are loved by our Creator God.**

**Rachel made the mistake of not accepting the love that Jacob already had for her.**

Rachel allowed her envy and competitiveness to mar her relationship with her sister Leah, these attitudes of mind can destroy any inter-human relationship.

When Rachel took her loyalty too far it led to dishonesty, stealing her father's gods [**Genesis 31:19, 30**] perhaps with a view to securing for Jacob and her children rights and privileges which should have fallen to Laban's true sons.

**Those idols [gods] called Teraphim, had legal significance, for they were passed on to an heir, the person who received them could rightly claim the greatest part of the family inheritance.**

Rachel died as a result of difficulties in childbirth [**Genesis 35:16-20**].

Rachel became the ancestress of three tribes of Israel, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh and in **Ruth 4:11** she is held in high regard with Leah as a building of the house of Israel.