



Vayetze

Beresheet (Genesis) 28:10 – 32:3

While fleeing to Haran, Jacob rests one night, and in a dream, sees angels ascending and descending a ladder. G-d comes to Jacob, repeats the blessing given to Abraham and Isaac, and promises to protect him and return him to Canaan.

Jacob arrives in Haran where he meets Rachel, his future bride, by a well. It is the second of three examples in the Torah where the Biblical hero meets his wife at such a place. Soon he is taken in by his Uncle Laban, who has two daughters, Leah and Rachel. A bargain is struck; Jacob will work seven years and be given Rachel as a wife. Laban deceives Jacob on the wedding night and substitutes Leah for Rachel. To resolve Jacob's anger with what has happened, Laban offers Rachel also in exchange for Jacob's promise to work another seven years.

Leah bears Jacob four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel is barren, so she gives Jacob her maid Bilhah as a concubine. Bilhah bears two sons Dan and Naphtali. Leah, in turn, gives Jacob her maid Zilpah, and she bears him two sons, Gad and Asher. Leah has three more children: Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. Finally, Rachel conceives and bears Joseph. Later, Jacob asks Laban to allow him to return to his home in Canaan. They agree that as his wages for 20 years of service, Jacob will build himself a flock from Laban's herds. Jacob amasses a large flock (through the use of magic or genetic manipulation). Then, unbeknownst to Laban, Jacob and his household flee. Prior to leaving, Rachel steals her father's idols. Laban pursues Jacob, but is warned by G-d in a dream not to take revenge. Jacob promises Laban that whoever stole his idols shall not remain alive but the idols are not found. The portion ends with Jacob and Laban sealing a pact to end hostilities.



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