

## RACHEL

### *The Displaced Bride*

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 29-31

NAME MEANING: “ewe” (first biblical person to have name derived from an animal. Used affectionately like “lamb” today.)

FAMILY ORIGIN: Daughter of Laban, niece of Rebekah

WELL: near city of Nahor/Haran in Paddan Aram

GOD: (Gen. 28:15) “I am with you....”

**BACKGROUND:** God had told Rebekah when the twins were born that the older would serve the younger. So when the aging (and nearly blind) Isaac wanted to give the blessing to his heir, she deceived him by substituting Jacob for Esau. Esau was angered by this, and threatened to kill Jacob. Jacob fled for his life to Paddan Aram (Haran) and that is the beginning of our story...

**RACHEL’S STORY:** (Read Gen. 29:1-28) Jacob arrived at the well mid-day. Three herds of sheep are waiting at the well. The local custom was to wait until all the herds were there then at a certain time together they removed the slab cover and watered the sheep in the order they had arrived. Shepherds were often boys or women. Jacob asked the boys if they knew Laban. They did and pointed out Rachel, his daughter, just arriving with Laban’s sheep. *It was love at first sight!* Jacob proceeded to become a hero and single-handedly moved the well cover stone and watered her sheep. He told her who he was, kissed her in greeting and she ran to tell her family. Laban received him and after a month agreed to give him Rachel for a wife if he’d work for him for seven years. Jacob was okay with that, knowing that his brother would still be angry anyway and he couldn’t return home. But at the end of the seven years, Laban tricked Jacob and substituted Leah on the wedding night. Jacob was upset, but agreed to work another seven years for Rachel!

**THE SEQUEL:** For about 20 years, Jacob stayed in Haran. Eleven sons were born to him from his four “wives” during that time. He finally left for Canaan on the sly with his wives, children and flocks. Rachel stole her father’s “gods” and lied about them. Eventually they got back to Bethel where Jacob buried the idols and Rachel died in childbirth. Esau had forgiven Jacob and welcomed him back.