

Timeline of Jacob's Life

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- I. If you're like most people, you probably think that Jacob got married and started a family as a young man.
 1. If you thought that, you would be wrong.
 2. Jacob was actually 84 years old when he married Leah and Rachel.
 3. His age at marriage, and at many significant events in his life, is not given explicitly in scripture, but it can be deduced from various statements in scripture.
- II. There are only two places in scripture that mentions Jacob's age.
 1. He was 130 years old when he arrived in Egypt (**Gen 47:9**).
 2. He was 147 years old when he died (**Gen 47:28**).
- III. Working backwards, we can deduce Jacob's age at most of the significant events of his life.
 1. The famine began when Jacob was 128 and ended when he was 135.
 - A. Jacob arrived in Egypt at 130 years old (**Gen 47:9**).
 - B. The famine started two years prior to Jacob arriving in Egypt (**Gen 45:6**), putting Jacob at 128 years old when the famine began ($130-2=128$).
 - C. The famine ended five years after Jacob arrived in Egypt (**Gen 45:6**), putting Jacob at 135 years old at the end of the famine ($130+5=135$).
 2. The seven years of plenty began when Jacob was 121.
 - A. The famine began when Jacob was 128 (see above).
 - B. The seven years of plenty immediately preceded the seven years of famine (**Gen 41:29-30**).
 - C. Therefore, the seven years of plenty began when Jacob was 121 years old ($128-7=121$).
 3. Joseph became prime minister of Egypt when Jacob was 121.
 - A. Joseph became prime minister immediately after interpreting Pharaoh's dream about the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine (**Gen 41:39-41, 46-47**).
 - B. The seven years of plenty began when Jacob was 121 (see above).
 - C. Therefore, Joseph became prime minister when Jacob was 121.
 4. Joseph was 30 when Jacob was 121.
 - A. Joseph was 30 when he became prime minister (**Gen 41:46**).
 - B. Joseph became prime minister when Jacob was 121.
 - C. Therefore, Joseph was 30 when Jacob was 121.
 5. Isaac died when Jacob was 120.
 - A. Isaac died at 180 years old (**Gen 35:28**).
 - B. Isaac was 60 when he begat Jacob (**Gen 25:26**).
 - C. Thus, Jacob was 120 when Isaac died ($180-60=120$).
 6. Joseph was put in prison when Jacob was 119.
 - A. Joseph was put in prison two years (or possibly a while longer) prior to being made prime minister (**Gen 39:20 c/w Gen 40:1-4 c/w Gen 40:20-23 c/w Gen 41:1, 14, 37-41**).

- B. Joseph became prime minister when Jacob was 121 (see previous page).
- C. Thus, Jacob was 119 when Joseph was put in prison ($121-2=119$).
- 7. Joseph was sold into slavery when Jacob was 108.
 - A. Joseph was 30 when he became prime minister (**Gen 41:46**).
 - B. Joseph was sold into slavery when he was 17 (**Gen 37:2, 28**).
 - C. Thus, it was 13 years from the time that Joseph was sold until he became prime minister ($30-17=13$).
 - D. Joseph became prime minister of Egypt when Jacob was 121 (see previous page).
 - E. Therefore, Jacob was 108 when Joseph was sold into slavery ($121-13=108$).
 - F. Judah married Shuah and begat Er at the same time that Joseph was sold into slavery (**Gen 38:1-3**).
 - G. Judah would have been about 20 years old at this time (see notes below).
- 8. Joseph was born when Jacob was 91.
 - A. Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery (**Gen 37:2**).
 - B. Jacob was 108 when Joseph was sold into slavery (see above).
 - C. Thus, Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born ($108-17=91$).
 - D. As a second proof, Jacob was 121 when Joseph was 30 (see above), and therefore Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born ($121-30=91$).
- 9. Jacob left Laban to go back to his homeland when he was 97.
 - A. Jacob departed from Laban with his family after having served him for 20 years—14 years for his wives, and 6 years for his cattle (**Gen 31:17-18, 41**).
 - B. Jacob's 14 years of service for his wives ended at the birth of Joseph (**Gen 30:23-26**).
 - C. Jacob therefore served Laban for six more years after Joseph was born ($20-14=6$).
 - D. Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born (see above).
 - E. Therefore, Jacob was 97 when he left Laban to go back to his homeland ($91+6=97$).
- 10. Jacob married Leah and Rachel when he was 84.
 - A. Jacob served Laban for seven years for Rachel, but got Leah instead (**Gen 29:20-26**).
 - i. Laban gave Rachel to Jacob for a wife after his week-long "honeymoon" with Leah with the stipulation that he would serve him another seven years, which he did (**Gen 29:27-30**).
 - ii. Leah and Rachel became Jacob's wives at the same time (a week apart) after his first seven years of service.
 - B. Joseph was born at the end of the 14 years that Jacob served Laban for Rachel (see above).
 - C. Jacob married Joseph's mother Rachel seven years prior to Joseph's birth (because Joseph's birth took place at the end of the 14 total years he served for Rachel (see above)).
 - D. Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born (see above).
 - E. Therefore, Jacob was 84 when he married Leah and Rachel ($91-7=84$).
- 11. Ruben was born when Jacob was approximately 85.
 - A. Ruben was conceived soon after Jacob married Leah (**Gen 29:31-32**).
 - B. Jacob was 84 when he married Leah (see above).
 - C. Ruben would have been born about a year (9 months) after he was conceived.
 - D. Therefore, Jacob was about 85 when Ruben was born ($84+1=85$).

12. Judah was born when Jacob was approximately 88.
 - A. Ruben was born when Jacob was approximately 85 (see above).
 - B. Simeon and Levi were born of Leah after Ruben (**Gen 29:33-34**).
 - C. This would have taken at least two years.
 - D. Judah was born after Levi, which would be at least one more year later (**Gen 29:35**).
 - E. Therefore, Jacob was likely about 88 when Judah was born ($85+2+1=88$).
13. Jacob arrived in Padanaram to the house of Laban to find a wife at 77.
 - A. Jacob left for Padanaram to find a wife among the daughters of his uncle Laban (**Gen 28:1-2**).
 - B. Upon arriving at Laban's house, Jacob made a deal with Laban to serve him seven years for Rachel (**Gen 29:15-18**).
 - C. After seven years, Jacob married both Leah and Rachel at the same time (see previous page).
 - D. Jacob married Leah and Rachel when he was 84 (see previous page).
 - E. Therefore, Jacob was 77 when he left home to go to Laban to find a wife ($84-7=77$).

IV. The take-away

1. God will be with you and take care of you in old age (**Isa 46:4**).
2. God can use you to be His servant even in your old age (**Psa 71:15-18; Psa 92:13-14**).
3. God will give you strength to meet the challenges you will face all your days (**Deut 33:25**).
4. You're never too old to get married.
5. You might have children a lot later in life than you had planned.
6. Your greatest accomplishments may be in your latter years.