

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[Gen 30:25-43 NKJV] 25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. 26 "Give [me] my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." 27 And Laban said to him, "Please [stay], **if I have found favor in your eyes, [for] I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake.**" 28 Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give [it]." 29 So [Jacob] said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. 30 "For what you had before I [came was] little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?"

Jacob had been away from home for **over 14 years** now.

He has four wives - Leah and Rachel and their maids

He has children now – including one from Rachel whom he loved  
So, Jacob is ready to go home now. Back to the land that God had promised him.

Remember, this was supposed to be a short road trip to uncle Laban's house to allow Esau to cool off and also so that Jacob could find himself a bride.

Jacob was a hard worker and Laban realized that. Jacob was his cash cow.

As God continued to bless Jacob, Laban became a beneficiary of the blessings as well.

As believers, we know that God is "with" us.

God's presence in our lives is a blessing and we often see that this blessing of God affects those that are around us as well.

Earlier in the book of Genesis, the scriptures tell us that Abimelech had seen the presence of God in the life of Isaac.

In a few weeks, when we study the life of Joseph, we are going to see that Potiphar was blessed because of Joseph.

(**Gen 39:2-5 NKJV**) The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. {3} And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. {4} So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. {5} So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field.

However, the sad thing about this is that despite the blessings, Laban didn't want anything to do with the Almighty God.

In verse 27 Laban says, "**[for] I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake.**" – the Hebrew word that is utilized here infers that Laban found out the source of the blessing through divination.

What is divination???

Divination is the practice of consulting a median for answers or someone who reads tea leaves or cards.

We will learn in a little bit that Laban was an idol worshipper as well.

So Jacob wants to leave and Laban wants Jacob to stay. So what we have next is a contest between the two con men to determine who can outcon the other.

**31 So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: 32 "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and [these] shall be my wages. 33 "So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that [is] not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if [it is] with me." 34 And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!"**

So the deal that they come up was that Jacob was going to continue to watch Laban's flocks, any goat that is born with a spotted coat, will be Jacob's and any lamb that is born spotted or

any color besides white will be Jacob's. The rest will continue to be Laban's.

Easy enough – however Jacob is already at a disadvantage since lambs are predominantly white – and goats are predominantly a solid color.

**35 So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had [some] white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave [them] into the hand of his sons. 36 Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.**

So sneaky Laban is up to his old tricks and the first thing he does is that he takes out all the speckled goats and the colored lambs and eliminated them from the flock that Jacob was going to watch over and he also made sure that they were far away from each other.

This was going to make it even harder for Jacob's flocks to produce the goat and lambs that were going to belong to him,

However, Jacob has only begun to fight – he has a few tricks up his sleeve.

37 Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which [was] in the rods. 38 And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39 So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. 40 Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock. 41 And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42 But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put [them] in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. 43 Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

So Jacob attempts to manipulate the situation and he begins by placing these peeled branches in the water troughs that his animals

were drinking and apparently it **got them in the mood** and their offspring came out spotted and speckled.

He then mated the animals as they faced the speckled and spotted animals that were already in Laban's flocks thinking that this would cause the animals to produce spotted and speckled young.

Then Jacob started **practicing selective breeding** and he placed the branches in the water trough when the stronger flock came to drink and pulled them when the weaker flock came to drink.

In our last Midweek service, we saw that Rachel was having fertility issues and we saw the whole episode with the mandrakes.

Leah's son had picked up some mandrakes and Rachel believed that they were some form of aphrodisiac and she makes a deal with Leah where Rachel trades Jacob for a few mandrakes.

**However, we find out that it was God that finally opened up Rachel's womb and allowed her to conceive – it had nothing to do with the mandrakes.**

**The same goes for Jacob, Jacob did not have to go through this entire routine of placing the branches in the water trough and having them face the spotted sheep.**

God was behind the entire thing. God produced the spotted goats and lambs.

We will see that God was behind this in the next chapter

So, what is the lesson for us from this chapter, it appears that Jacob still can't shake off his deceptive ways. It appears that Jacob is still not placing his trust in the Lord. That he is placing his trust on worldly solutions.

God blessed Jacob, but it was not because Jacob was especially good. It was because of the promise God made to Jacob and to Abraham.

In the same way, blessing comes from the LORD to us not because we are great or good, but because of the covenant God has made with us through Jesus Christ, and the promises He has given us in His word.

Our walk is a process. It doesn't happen overnight.

You see, God has been preparing Jacob, just like he is currently working through each one of us right now.

Jacob will come to the place in his life where he will finally place his trust in the Lord.



## Chapter 31

**[Gen 31:1-3 NKJV] 1 Now [Jacob] heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." 2 And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it [was] not [favorable] toward him as before. 3 Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."**

Now, there are times in our lives where it appears our circumstances are dictating to us that we may need a change in scenery.

Maybe it's where we live, maybe it is where we work or maybe it is in the ministry that we are a part of.

The question becomes, how do we know that it is God's will as opposed to our will?

Here in the beginning of chapter 31, we see the circumstances as Laban and his children no longer have the same feelings as before. They are envious of Jacob and accusing of stealing from their future inheritance.

It is amazing what the love of money does to a person.

Laban and his sons would not have been as prosperous if not for the blessings that God had bestowed upon Jacob.

However, their focus was on why Jacob had more than they had.

That is why they are angry.

You see, It is our fleshly nature to want more – this is why children when they open their presents on Christmas day will have one eye on their presents and the other eye on what their brother or sister got. Right???

This is why we have to make sure that we get the comparable gifts or else chaos happens.

Why did Billy get 5 toys and I only got 4.

Church, money isn't the problem – it is the love of money that is the problem.

In 1 Timothy 6:10 – Paul tells us.

**[1Ti 6:10 NKJV] 10 For the love of money is a root of all [kinds of] evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their**

**greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**

This is what has happened to Laban and his children...

So the circumstances are telling Jacob that it is time to leave..

However, we also see the confirmation and affirmation of God in His word (vs 3)

The same applies to us – this is why we need to be in the word daily because if God wants us to move, we will see confirmation of it in His word. Everything will start to point in the same direction.

We don't make decisions based on hunches or feelings – we use God's word to guide us and lead us.

**[Gen 31:4-13 NKJV] 4 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, 5 and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it [is] not [favorable] toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. 6 "And you know that with all my might I have served your father. 7 "Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. 8 "If he said thus: 'The**

speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. 9 "So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given [them] to me. 10 "And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks [were] streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. 11 "Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' 12 "And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks [are] streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13 'I [am] the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar [and] where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' "

So Jacob gathers Rachel and Leah and reveals to them that what they probably already knew – that their father was a creep.

He keeps changing the conditions of the agreement.

10 times Laban attempted to change the conditions of their agreement.

When the offspring started to come out spotted, Laban then changed it to speckle. However, God revealed to Jacob in a dream that He was the source of the blessing.

God was the one that was there protecting Jacob.

**[Gen 31:14-16 NKJV] 14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? 15 "Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. 16 "For all these riches which God has taken from our father are [really] ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."**

Jacob already has confirmation from the Lord, the circumstances also point out that he should leave, and now those around him also tell Jacob that – yes, it is time to leave.

The dowry that Jacob had payed Laban for Leah and Rachel had already been spent by Laban, he had ripped off his own daughters. There was nothing left for them there.

You see, the dowry was an insurance policy in case something happened to the husband – if he dies or was killed, the wife would

return home to her parents and live off the wages of the dowry. But now, that is all gone.

**17 Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. 18 And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. 19 Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. 20 And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. 21 So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.**

So Jacob waits for the perfect opportunity and gathers his stuff and leaves Padan Aram.

Now, in verse 19, it tells us that Rachel stole Laban's idols.

The scriptures do not reveal to us why she stole the idols.

It doesn't tell us whether or not she used the idols herself or was she simply trying to get back at her dad for stealing her inheritance.

And then immediately, it stated that Jacob stole away –

Jacob had a bad habit of running away from his problems. The only reason that he is here is because he was running away from Esau. Here he continues in his ways and sneaks out without telling Laban.

**[Gen 31:22-30 NKJV] 22 And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. 23 Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. 24 But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."**

So Jacob gets a three day head start on Laban and Laban goes after Jacob.

However, we see God intervene here once again in Jacob's behalf and speaks to Laban in a dream.

God is warning Laban against persuading Jacob to return – or doing harm to him.

**25 So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. 26 And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and**

carried away my daughters like captives [taken] with the sword? 27 "Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp?

If you told me you were leaving, I would have thrown you a big party – that is what Laban is telling Jacob.

28 "And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in [so] doing. 29 "It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' 30 "And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, [but] why did you steal my gods?"

Laban understands why Jacob wanted to return to Canaan, however, all he cares about is why Jacob stole his idols – remember, Jacob doesn't know that Rachel stole them.

[Gen 31:31-35 NKJV] 31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32 "With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our



brethren, identify what I have of yours and take [it] with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. 33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find [them]. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find [them]. 35 And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women [is] with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.

Like I said earlier, Jacob had no idea that Rachel had stolen her father's idols so Jacob gives permission for Laban to search them.

Jacob is so offended by the accusation that he tells Laban, whoever stole your idol is deserving of death.

Laban searches everyone's tents and doesn't find his idols because Rachel was sitting on them – as she placed them on the saddle of the donkey.

In verse 35, Rachel tells her dad that she can't get up because she is on her period.

Therefore Laban did not search her saddle.

**[Gen 31:36-55 NKJV] 36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What [is] my trespass? What [is] my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37 "Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set [it] here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! 38 "These twenty years I [have been] with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. 39 "That which was torn [by beasts] I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, [whether] stolen by day or stolen by night. 40 "[There] I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. 41 "Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. 42 "Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked [you] last night." 43**

And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "[These] daughters [are] my daughters, and [these] children [are] my children, and [this] flock [is] my flock; all that you see [is] mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? 44 "Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." 45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up [as] a pillar. 46 Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. 47 Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, "This heap [is] a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, 49 also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. 50 "If you afflict my daughters, or if you take [other] wives besides my daughters, [although] no man [is] with us--see, God [is] witness between you and me!" 51 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is [this] pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52 "This heap [is] a witness, and [this] pillar [is] a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to

me, for harm. 53 "The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. 55 And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

The covenant that they come up can be pretty much summed up as you stay on your side of your line and I will stay on this side of the line.

They didn't trust each other so this is how they made sure that they never crossed paths again.

The key to this last section is verse 42.

42 "Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked [you] last night."

We can be assured that God watches over everything that we do. He knows our afflictions and is fully aware of those who are trying to do us harm.

Our job is to full place our trust in Him.

In the same way He looked after Jacob, He will look after us.

Amen.

Let's pray...

