

Genesis 31

Genesis 31.1-13

V1 – Review:

-Who was Jacob?

-Who was Esau?

-Who was Laban?

-What were the sons of Laban saying about Jacob? That he had stolen Laban's wealth

Note: Laban was just a "sore loser" – the blame was placed on Jacob

V2 – Why was Laban friendly toward Jacob at first? A way to unload his daughters, in exchange for cheap labor from Jacob

V3 – What message did God give Jacob? "It is time you return to Canaan and your family"

-How long had Jacob been away from home? At least 14 years (worked for each wife 7 years)

-20 years – v 38

V4 – Why did Jacob want Rachel and Leah in the field? Probably not too safe for them in Laban's camp

V5 – What did Jacob say to Rachel and Leah? Their father didn't like him anymore; dangerous

-Whom did Jacob give credit for his prosperity? The God of his father

-This shows that Jacob is maturing as a servant of God

V6 – Had Jacob been a good worker for Laban? Yes

V7 – How had Laban treated Jacob? Cheated him – kept changing his wages

-Had Laban physically injured Jacob? No

-Why not? God had not allowed him to

V8 – Apparently, a lot of the special breeding success that Jacob had in *Gen. 30* was due to God's blessings on Jacob

V9 – What was Jacob's conclusion? That God was blessing him

V10 – Jacob had a dream

-What did he see in the dream? That only the spotted and "off-color" sheep were mating

-In other words, God was controlling this

V11 – Response of Jacob to the angel? "Here I am"

-Significance? Obedient attitude of Jacob

V12 – God had been watching how Laban was cheating Jacob

-What does this tell us about the nature of God? Omnipresent – always watching

-we can't cheat people without God seeing us

- The writer of these notes has a neighbor who is stealing electricity from Commonwealth Edison
- Commonwealth Edison has been called, but nothing was done
- The only consolation in a case like this is to realize that God is watching and will end the problem in time and punish the evil doer

V 13 – A reference to *Chapter 28.18*

- Instructions of God?** Time to go home

Genesis 31.14-16

V 14 – Did Rachel and Leah defend their father? No

V 15 – How did Laban treat his daughters? As foreigners

- Specifically?** He had “sold” them to Jacob (in return for 14 years work from Jacob)

Note: You don’t normally “charge” someone to marry your daughter

- Also?** Laban had wasted the money

V 16 – The conclusion of Rachel and Leah? “Jacob – do whatever you think is right”

Genesis 31.17-21

V 17 – How did Jacob prepare to leave? Put his children and wives on camels

V 18 – Next? Got the livestock moving

V 19 – Where was Laban all this time? Out shearing sheep (good timing on part of Jacob?)

V 20 – Did Jacob trick Laban? Yes – didn’t tell him where he was going

V 21 – What river did he cross? Euphrates River – headed for land of Canaan

- What did Rachel do?** Stole her father's idols
- What does this indicate?** She was still pagan in her thinking
- Remember: she is the one who wanted the mandrakes

Genesis 31.22-32

V 22 – When did Laban hear that they had fled? Three days later (pretty good head-start)

V 23 – How long did it take Laban to catch up with Jacob and company? 7 days

- How was he able to catch up with him?** Jacob had all the flocks to move (slow)
- Gilead – just east of Sea of Galilee (Jacob had been making good time)

V 24 – What did God say to Laban in a dream? "Don’t say anything good or bad about Jacob"

- Interesting – “Laban – just keep your big mouth shut about Jacob.”
- That is usually good advice for us today

V 25 – Apparently they were camped on opposite hills

V 26 – **Describe Laban's opening remarks:** You have stolen my daughter's idols
-Comments: He disobeyed God's command (v 24) and exaggerated things

V 27-28 – **What else did Laban say?** "I wanted to give you a big send-off" (a lie)

V 29 – **Laban's empty boast?** "I could hurt you, but God told me not too" (the boast of a bully)
Today: "I would hit you, but you're wearing glasses."

V 30 – **What was Laban most concerned about?** Someone had stolen his idols (he didn't worry too much over losing his daughters)

V 31 – Jacob was worried about Laban trying to take Rachel and Leah back
Note: a little confusing here (maybe Jacob didn't understand Laban's question)

V 32 – **What offer did Jacob make?** We will kill whoever stole your idols
-**Did Jacob know who had stolen them?** No
-A rash promise
-Remember that Jacob did not have the Bible, only oral history from Adam to himself and the direct messages of God to the Patriarchs

Genesis 31.33-35

V 33 – **What did Laban start doing?** Searching the tents (Leah's and maids')

V 34 – **Where were the household idols?** Rachel had them in her saddle and was sitting in the saddle

V 35 – Rachel told Laban that she couldn't move, because her monthly menstrual period was taking place (probably a lie)
-**Did Laban find them?** No

Genesis 31.36-42

V 36 – **Who got mad next?** Jacob – "What have I done that has made you so mad?"

V 37 – **Jacob?** "Produce the evidence, and let the kinsmen decide between us"

V 38 – **What had the 20 years been like for Laban?** God had blessed his flock due to Jacob (no miscarriages, etc.)

V 39 – **What had Jacob done for Laban?** Born loss of sheep killed by wild animals and stolen sheep

V 40 – **Other problems Jacob dealt with?** Heat of the day and the frost of night

V 41 – A good summary of the past 20 years

V 42 – Very beautiful – God had been watching over Jacob

Genesis 31.43-55

V 43 – Laban – tried to claim that the women and children were all his

Note: In wedding ceremony today, “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” “Her mother and I”

-The father gives away the bride (still a custom today)

V 44 – Laban’s anger seems to have subsided

-**Laban’s suggestion?** A covenant

V 45 – **What did Jacob do?** Set a stone upright

V 46 – **What did kinsmen do?** Gathered stones

-Remember no statues allowed under Old Testament – they just made a pile of stones in commemoration

V 47 – Laban gave it an Aramaic name; Jacob gave it a Hebrew name

V 48 – **What would the pile of rock be for?** A witness between Laban and Jacob

V 49 – **What was it called?** Mizpah = watchtower

-Very famous verse – couples often say this to each other before separation (going off on a trip or to the army, etc.)

-**What is the basic meaning of v 49?**

V 50-51 – Very interesting – Laban knew that God was watching Jacob

V 52 – **What else did the pile of stones signify?** Neither one could go pass that point to do harm to the other one

V 53 – **Nahor?** -Father of Terah (father of Abraham)

-**By whom did Jacob swear?** The God of his father Isaac

V 54 – **How was the covenant sealed?** Animal sacrifice – they shared the food and had a meal on the mountain

V 55 – Laban was sort of an unpredictable man – he seems to have left in peace

Note: Laban tried to take advantage of Jacob

-Yet Laban lost his two daughters, his grandchildren, much of his flocks, and the hardest working

shepherd he ever had (Jacob)

-When we mistreat others, we will bear the consequences ourselves

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