

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Nine – Genesis 31:1-55

So far we have had eleven births so we spent most of our last study in the obstetrics ward with the birth of all of these kids. This is the twenty-year mark. This is the time now for Jacob to leave Paddan Aram and go back to the land.

So many ask the question, how do we know the Lord’s will in a given situation? Well, this is the best passage to turn to ascertain the ingredients of finding what God is trying to tell us to do and also how to pick the temperature and understand that we’re moving in the direction He would like us to go.

We have a house full of jealousy, competition, conflict and the birth of twelve kids, as the scene of our study opens. Now understand, as soon as Leah was married, in those first four years she had four kids—Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.

Remember Rachel was barren and so that created great havoc. As the scene of the last study opened she asked and begged Jacob emotionally for children or she would die. And of course,

she continued to be barren. But Bilhah, the handmaid, had two children—Dan and Naphtali.

Then jealous Leah put her handmaid in there. Not according to the law, because she'd already had four children. Zilpah had two kids—Gad and Asher. And then as fate would have it, Leah had two more— Issachar and Zebulun.

Then later Leah gave birth to a daughter by the name of Dinah. And we'll just mention her briefly in our episode.

And as the study closed, finally God remembered Rachel—it was so beautiful—and she gave birth to Joseph, begging God to give her another child.

So we spent most of our time in the obstetrics ward at the Haran Hospital, with children being born right and left.

Out of those twelve children will eventually come the twelve tribes of Israel. It helps us understand that God, even in our disobedience, even in our mistakes, even in conflict and frustration, can supersede all of that and accomplish His sovereign purpose. We're going to see that in the rest of the story.

But our hero still has a lot to learn and we'll see some of what he's been through in the twenty years, because he's going to get mad and he then gives a speech. And he's going to really let everybody know what he's been through over these twenty years.

Well, as fate would have it, as the scene of this study opens, Jacob is privy to the two boys of Laban having a conversation.

v. 1 Jacob heard that Laban’s sons were saying, “Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father.”

“Jacob heard that Laban’s sons were saying, ‘Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father.’”

When we’re looking for the will of God, first of all there is an inward desire. And we ended with that in our previous episode. After Joseph was born, the text tells us that Jacob longed to go home. It could be weariness, it could be heartache, or something else. He knew that his time there was done.

He came with nothing and now he’s leaving with twelve kids, four wives, all kinds of servants and flocks. And as the scene of the study opens, Reuben is probably 13 and Joseph would be about 6, and everybody else falls into that parameter. And he overhears the conversation.

The thing that makes us concerned, when we overhear a conversation of somebody who’s speaking negatively of us, or they’re saying things about us, that probably if they’re young they’re just restating what they’ve heard at the dinner table.

And so this makes it even worse because now he also is beginning to ascertain that it's not just the kids, Laban has changed his attitude toward him. And we're going to notice that in the next verse.

v. 2 And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.

“And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.”

So his friendliness, his openness, his transparency, now has turned to avoidance. It's turned to rejection.

It's been tough for him, because he's been calling the shots for twenty years. And now he's been whipped, big time, on this whole business of the livestock poker game that they've been playing for the last six years.

He's lost so much and Jacob has gained so much. So it's awkward for him, even to take—have an intelligent conversation with him.

So we have TWO THINGS:

1. he has some BOYS that are pretty upset, and then
2. his BOSS who's also changing his attitude. Six years ago he was so excited and wanted him to stay because he was being blessed by his being there.

Now that's all changed again.

Here comes the third one—and this is the big one:

v. 3 Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.”

“Then the Lord said to Jacob, ‘Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.’”

We're thinking God doesn't speak like that today. Oh yes, He does.

If we are faithfully reading the Word. One of the things we have emphasized is every day to read the Word, because we're going to miss our assignments if we don't.

The passage of scripture that we're reading now is very relevant.

It's phenomenal when we are faithful to read the Word, that we'll get it.

Well, here it is. Now granted, there's not the written word. So God speaks to him. And God basically says, “Go back to the land of your fathers, to your relatives, and I will be with you.”

Does that remind us of anything? That's exactly the message

that the Lord gave to him at Bethel when He told him that He was the God of Bethel, and that He would be with him, and He would prosper him, and He would kill for him and bring him back once again.

So, now who do we have? Well, we have kids that are not really very friendly anymore. We have the old man, the boss, who's pretty upset and his attitude's changed. But then the third thing that hits us is that we have an affirmation from the Lord, something that's come from Him.

When we're looking for God's will, we spend a lot of time in the Book. We spend a lot of time reading the Word. And the message is:

INWARDLY—we have a desire to go back because of these relationships,

OUTWARDLY—we're facing impossible circumstances,

UPWARDLY—now we have a divine message.

We think that should be enough. No, it isn't. We have to talk to our wife.

It is not worth damaging the relationship by bulldozing ahead and doing something that we're not in agreement on. That's the best way to get the devil in the midst of it and to bring all kinds of hurt and stress.

Isaiah 32:17

The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of it, quietness and assurance.

If one person goes ahead and leaves the other one behind, they're going to suffer for that. And here he does the coolest thing. He goes and talks, not to the handmaids, just Leah and Rachel—the wives.

And notice, as we get ready to move on in the text, that he's going to do this.

We need to trust God, that He knows exactly what He's doing. His deployment is perfect. We've got to be sensitive.

Samuel Rutherford in *The Loveliness of Christ* said:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

Let him make anything out of me, so being he be glorified in my salvation: for I know I [was] made for him.
p. 12

Proverbs 16:20

Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.

He's no dummy. He is not going to stay around the house where the boys can overhear any conversation, so he goes right out. He asks the women to come out and meet him in the field so this can be a private conversation.

v. 4 So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were.

“So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were.”

Now watch this. This is so beautiful.

v. 5 He said to them, “I see that your father’s attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me.

“He said to them, ‘I see that your father’s attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me.’”

So he’s still bearing witness to the providence of God and the blessing of God in his life, in spite of the way Laban has been treating him. And then he says to the wives:

v. 6 You know that I’ve worked for your father with all my strength,

“You know that I’ve worked for your father with all my strength,”

He lives by Colossians 3:23:

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than unto men;

What he's saying to that is, "You know, I've really poured myself into this thing. I've given it my best shot all the way through with your father."

v. 7 yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me.

"yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me."

What's been going on for the last six years? As soon as birth was given to the speckled, he voted for the spotted on the next one and ended up losing his shirt on that one. And he's never won one because every time he turned around, Jacob had a full house. He had complete control of the whole thing.

SPEECH #2 is to his sweethearts here, and in God's presence and protection:

"[He] has not allowed him to harm me."

v. 8 If he said, ‘The speckled ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, ‘The streaked ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked young.

“If he said, “The speckled ones will be your wages,” then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, “The streaked ones will be your wages,” then all the flocks bore streaked young.”

When God wants to get across a message, sometimes He won't let up. And Laban has sown so much deceit, so many lies, so much cheating, it's his time to learn. And he doesn't like it at all obviously, and that's what's changed the whole relationship.

Every time Jacob would be hearing from Laban as to what his wages would be, the whole flock turned out to be that way.

1. So the PROSPERITY AND THE BLESSING is #1 for Jacob and
2. It's the PERSONAL DEALING WITH LABAN through these experiences.

v. 9 So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.

“So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.”

That's DIVINE INTERVENTION. That is God at work in the situation and he's paying testimony to it.

Now, when we get to verse 10, sometimes when the scripture is magnifying the providence of God, there will be verses that will just be dropped in there to let us know why and how he prospered. And there it is in verse 10.

v. 10 “In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted.

“In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled and spotted.”

So it was out of that dream that all of those plans that he had in the last episode came into being.

v. 11 The angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob.’ I answered, ‘Here I am.’

“The angel of God said to me in the dream, “Jacob.” I answered, “Here I am.””

v. 12 And he said, ‘Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.

“And he said, “Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.”

There’s great comfort in that. The reason that God is giving him wisdom right now is because God is fully aware of what’s happening to him. And we need to be comforted by that fact. That when things aren’t working out the way we thought they should, maybe things are just turning sour, always remember that the Lord’s looking down and He is very much aware.

And at this point God is determined to bless and to prosper our hero Jacob in providing substantial livestock for his wealth and his future. He’s doing it because:

“I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.”

Are there any verses that tell us that? How about:

Hebrews 4:13

All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

2 Chronicles 16:9

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is completely his.

Psalm 34:15

The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears are open to their cry.

Proverbs 15:3

The eyes of the Lord are in every place watching the evil and the good.

“Jacob, I’m giving you wisdom. I’m helping you win. I’m being faithful to My promises.” That’s laymen’s terminology of what’s going on here.

Now, when we get to verse 13 there’s a very important statement here because it’s going to play into the next couple of studies. Our hero is not going to stay on the victory slide.

v. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.”

“I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.””

Now He doesn’t say go back to Bethel, but He is “the God of Bethel.” And He said, “I will bring you back here to this place.” That’s where he saw the stairs on the first night out,

coming the other way twenty years before.

Now God has broken the silence of twenty years in speaking to him once again, telling him to go back to that place. And we're going to understand that he didn't get the message completely in the next episodes.

A. W. Tozer has written some great things. Listen to what he said:

(The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer)

As we begin to focus upon God, the things of the spirit will take shape before our inner eyes. Obedience to the word of Christ will bring an inward revelation of the...It will give acute perception enabling us to see God even as is promised to the pure in heart. A new God-consciousness will seize upon us and we shall begin to taste and hear and inwardly feel God, who is our life and our all. There will be seen the constant shining of "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" ... More and more, as our faculties grow sharper and more sure, God will become to us the great All, and His presence the glory and wonder of our lives.
pp. 58-59

And then he ends it with this great prayer:

(The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer)

O God, quicken to life every power within me, that I may

lay hold on eternal things. Open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception; enable me to taste Thee and know that [You are] good. Make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been. Amen.
pp. 58-59

Now we know why all the stuff he wrote outlived him and the personal relationship that he had.

Jacob's coming back to that. It's been twenty years and it's been rough, because all the decisions Jacob made during that time has been made in the flesh. And Laban too. It's been just as bad if not worse.

And so it's been a hard time. Maybe we've had that in our life. Joel calls it "the years that the locusts have eaten." And yet God is always faithful to make up for that if we'll simply trust Him and turn it over to Him.

Now watch this:

v. 14 Then Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate?"

"Then Rachel and Leah replied, 'Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate?'"

Both of those women are ticked off. He gave them away for seven years of work and they did not get any part from the revenue that was gained because Jacob served there for

fourteen years, basically is what they're saying.

“We didn't get anything from that. We've been treated as foreigners.”

v. 15 Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us.

“Did he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us.”

In other words, “Everything he gained from the two of us he's gone ahead and used it all up for himself.”

Now, look how the wives respond to this”

v. 16 Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you.”

“Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children.”

And that last statement is the greatest thing a wife can say to her husband when he's struggling with an issue:

“So do whatever God has told you.”

There is a sweetness, there's a peace about that. Maybe it's some big decision that's been weighing heavily upon us that

relates to the family or other circumstances that we're insecure about, and yet to have our sweetheart come up alongside, and we know that God is in it, saying, "So do whatever God has told you."

They are not going to stand in the way. They've heard all the evidence. They've heard the fact that the boys are criticizing. They've heard the fact that Laban's changed his attitude. They've heard the message that he has selfishly taken advantage of Jacob in changing his wages ten times. They're saying, "It's time for us to go. Do whatever the Lord has told you."

But these ladies come through, don't they, big time? They're supporting him. When Jacob gets the green flag with that much evidence, we're not surprised at verse 17—that he does not waste a minute.

v. 17 Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels,

"Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels,"

v. 18 and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

"and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father

Isaac in the land of Canaan.”

Now put all those ingredients together:

INWARD DESIRE—we saw that earlier, coupled with

OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES,

A WORD FROM THE LORD, and

PEACEFUL CONSENT OF THOSE INVOLVED.

He’s ready to depart.

Oswald Chambers says:

(One Month to Live: Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life by
Kerry & Chris Shook)

We have to pray with our eyes on God,
not on the difficulties.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS

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Mother Teresa said:

(One Month to Live: Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life by
Kerry & Chris Shook)

I know that God will not give me anything I can’t handle.

I just wish that he didn't trust me so much.
—MOTHER TERESA

p. 81

Now, isn't it interesting that the timing of all of this departure is when Laban is not on location? The sheep shearing time is about three days journey away and so it says:

v. 19 When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods.

“When Laban had gone to shear the sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods.”

Now that troubles us, doesn't it? And it's going to need to because for the rest of this story we're going to see some things that are related to the idolatry in their family.

These idols evidently were just little, kind of like good luck charms. She wanted Jacob to be successful in his trip. They were like a journey fetish or something that they carried to give them security and safety as they travel, for prosperity and good luck. All of those things could be involved in this, but she stole them.

Now, 1 John 5:21 says, “Little children guard yourselves from idols,” doesn't it?

We read in 2 Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be bound together with unbelievers for what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness...

But remember who it was that deceived the first time? Laban substituted Rachel and put Leah in the bed. She's processed all that stuff but she's not gotten over it. And so this is "one up" on dad now. It's tit-for-tat.

We have to be so careful about that because the Lord's looking down and He knows all about what's going on. But we've got a daughter like her daddy here and she has stolen the "household gods" as they've gotten ready to flee. Jacob doesn't know anything about it, because he makes some statements here that are going to be very troublesome.

In the Samuel Rutherford book, he said:

(The Loveliness Of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

I am most gladly content that Christ [breaks] all my idols [into] pieces: it [has] put a new edge upon my blunted love to Christ. I see he is jealous of my love, and will have all [for] himself.

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And that truly is what He wants for us.

v. 20 Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away.

“Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was running away.”

So they’re a team. Rachel deceives her dad by stealing the gods and Jacob deceives Laban by taking off at an opportune time when they’re shearing sheep. And they get a good head start on the whole thing.

Kathy Herman has become quite a prolific author of Christian fiction. She makes the following statement:

(Ever Present Danger by Kathy Herman)

Compromises can start out small and escalate into tragedies with heartbreaking repercussions. At the very least, they weaken our spiritual defenses and our witness. And there seems to be no end to the excuses we invent to justify the unbiblical choices we make.

(page unknown)

Look what he does, verse 21.

v. 21 So he fled with all he had, and crossing the River, he headed for the hill country of Gilead.

“So he fled with all he had, and crossing the River, he headed for the hill country of Gilead.”

Now understand where he's going? He's coming out of the northeast, he's going down and he'll be on the eastern side of Jordan. The land of Gilead is on that eastern side. So this is a 450-mile trip and so they've made some ground over these weeks. Laban is ignorant of the fact that they've left.

v. 22 On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled.

“On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled.”

v. 23 Taking his relatives with him, he pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead.

“Taking his relatives with him, he pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead.”

Doesn't every story deserve a good chase?

Well, Laban is so mad and so ticked off that he pursues him and his family together. Isn't it great how God does stuff though? Look what happens in verse 24. Does God obligate Himself to protect us in impossible circumstances? There it is again!

v. 24 Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

“Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’”

In essence He’s saying, “You better be very careful in your anger about what you’re going to say and what you do.”

Proverbs 16:7

When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

God is doing that again in protecting him in this situation.

God is ALIVE,

He’s AWARE, and

He’s ACTIVE.

And sure enough, here He comes in a dream.

v. 25 Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives camped there too.

“Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives camped there too.”

v. 26 Then Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You’ve deceived me, and you’ve carried off my daughters like captives in war.

“Then Laban said to Jacob,”

He’s got to be the one that starts this whole thing.

THREE QUESTIONS—one “WHAT” and two “WHY’s”:

“What have you done? You’ve deceived me, and you’ve carried off my daughters like captives in war.”

Right on the **OFFENSIVE**, the “WHAT” question is:

“What have you done?”

Then the **ACCUSATION** follows:

“You’ve deceived me,” and

“you’ve carried off my daughters like captives at war.”

Remember when Leah was put in the bed instead of Rachel, what Jacob said to Laban the next morning? He uses the exact same words.

Genesis 29:25

“What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?”

Isn't it interesting how what goes around comes around? And we have the same scenario in this situation.

Laban would have made a good politician. He has an attitude of total innocence. It's filled with:

HYPOCRISY and

EXAGGERATION.

It's going to come out here.

Here come the TWO “WHY” QUESTIONS:

v. 27 Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps?

Question #2:

“Why did you run off secretly and deceive me?”

Question #3:

“Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps?”

Jacob is going to be more truthful about this.

“I was afraid I wasn’t even going to get away with my wives because of what you were going to do to me when I left.”

v. 28 You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-by. You have done a foolish thing.

“You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-by. You have done a foolish thing.”

So the CHARGES are:

1. “You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren,”
2. “You didn’t even let me kiss...my daughters good-by,” and
3. “You’ve done a very foolish thing.”

But, we can say to him, “You’re reaping what you’ve sown.”
But then comes the big one:

v. 29 I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’

“I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob,

either good or bad.””

Now we take that ledger of accusation and we can just feel the temperature and the hatred.

“What have you done?”

“Why did you run off secretly?”

“Why didn’t you tell me so I could send you away with joy and singing?”

“You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren.”

“You’ve done a very foolish thing.”

But that’s building up to the big one.

v. 30 Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father’s house. But why did you steal my gods?”

“Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father’s house. But why did you steal my gods?”—
QUESTION.

Now see, he doesn’t know anything about this. So he’s going to make a statement that becomes prophetic, as far as Rachel’s concerned. In the last episode she’s going to die.

A lot of it can come out of statements like this. Like she said earlier, “Give me children or I’ll die.” Then Jacob says, “If anybody’s found with these gods of yours, they’ll die because we haven’t taken anything with us.”

Last QUESTION:

v. 31 Jacob answered Laban, “I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force.

“Jacob answered Laban,”—now he’s really upset—“I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force.”

See, this is more realistic to what he was thinking:

v. 32 But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it.” Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

“But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it.’ Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.”

v. 33 So Laban went into Jacob’s tent and into Leah’s tent and into the tent of the two maidservants, but

he found nothing. After he came out of Leah's tent, he entered Rachel's tent.

It's pretty dramatic, isn't it?

He goes into Jacob's tent and then he goes into Leah's tent and then he goes into the tent of the two maidservants, Bilhah and Zilpah—he found nothing.

“So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maidservants, but he found nothing. After he came out of Leah's tent, he entered Rachel's tent.”

v. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them inside her camel's saddle and was sitting on them. Laban searched through everything in the tent but found nothing.

“Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them inside her camel's saddle and was sitting on them. Laban searched through everything in the tent but he found nothing.”

Rachel's guilty conscience comes to the surface in verse 35.

v. 35 Rachel said to her father, “Don't be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I'm having my period.” So he searched but could not find the household gods.

“Rachel said to her father, ‘Don’t be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I’m having my period.’ So he searched but could not find the household gods.”

Here she is, sitting on these idols.

Want to know what happens to something when a woman who is menstruating? What it does to anything sacred? The book of Leviticus was very clear about that.

Leviticus 15:20

“Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean.

The one good thing about this is, that’s the way she feels about those household gods and idols because of the twenty years she’s seen in her husband Jacob. The God of heaven in responding and leading. And this is a rebuke to her father. And it could very well be part of the story.

Now Jacob’s had it up to here and he’s ready to leave. So when we get to verse 36, he’s going to give a speech that comes out of bitterness, hurt, pain, deception—all of the ugly things that happened.

Now when we see this and we see a person lose control, just realize every one of us are vulnerable if we don’t keep close ties and we don’t deal with things as they happen and we bury them. This is the kind of stuff that comes out of it. And it just

does damage beyond anything we can imagine.

This relationship is going to end right here and Jacob is so glad because he's heading home. Laban is going back the other way and that's wonderful. But listen to what he says. We can see the years of bitterness come out.

v. 36 Jacob was angry and took Laban to task. “What is my crime?” he asked Laban. “What sin have I committed that you hunt me down?”

“Jacob was angry”

When was the last time he was angry? In our last study with Rachel, remember? “Give me children or I die.”

“Jacob was angry and took Laban to task. ‘What is my crime?’ he asked Laban. ‘What sin have I committed that you hunt me down?’”

He opens with TWO “WHAT” QUESTIONS.

v. 37 Now that you have searched through all my goods, what have you found that belongs to your household? Put it here in front of your relatives and mine, and let them judge between the two of us.

“Now that you have searched through all my goods, what have you found that belongs to your household? Put it here in front

of your relatives and mine, and let them judge between the two of us.”

v. 38 “I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks.

“I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks.”

v. 39 I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night.

“I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night.”

Then look at what he says—verse 40.

v. 40 This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes.

“This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes.”

v. 41 It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your

two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times.

“It was like this for the twenty years I was in your household. I worked for you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, and you changed my wages ten times.”

v. 42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you.”

“If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you.”

That’s almost like, remember Daniel?

“MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN Belshazzar. You’re weighed in the balances and found wanting. God rendered a verdict last night. You’re going to die tonight.” (see Daniel 5:25-27)

That’s the picture here.

“Laban, God has protected me and you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting in the way that you have treated me.”

What courage it took for him to make those statements.

v. 43 Laban answered Jacob, “The women are my daughters, the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine. Yet what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about the children they have borne?”

“Laban answered Jacob,”

When we get pressed against a wall, are we humble enough and do we have enough integrity to acknowledge the fact that we have no more evidence and that what’s been said is right?

We’ll never find that from Laban. Look what he says—I, me and mine:

“Laban answered Jacob, “The women are my daughters, the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine. Yet what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about the children they have borne?”

“You want to know the answer Laban? Nothing. You’ve done enough. You painted yourself into a corner this time, big boy. And there’s no way out. Jacob’s leaving.”

So what are they going to do in that kind of deal? Jacob loved this.

“We’re going to make a COVENANT. It’s going to be a

covenant we're not ever going to see each other again and that is all good."

v. 44 Come now, let's make a covenant, you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us."

"Come now, let's make a covenant, between you and I, and let it serve as a witness between us."

v. 45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.

"So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar."

Do we kind of get the feeling that he's really in a hurry? He doesn't want to give Laban a chance to negotiate once again and change his mind on this, because it's almost too good to be true. Watch what he says here.

v. 46 He said to his relatives, "Gather some stones." So they took stones and piled them in a heap, and they ate there by the heap.

"He said to his relatives, 'Gather some stones.' So they took stones and they piled them in a heap, and they ate there by the heap."

They're getting ready to make a covenant.

Now when we get to verse 47, it's the only place in the Bible that we have ARAMAIC and HEBREW together.

v. 47 Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, and Jacob called it Galeed.

“Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha,”—that’s Aramaic for “witness monument.”

“and Jacob called it Galeed.”—which is Hebrew for “witness monument.”

“If this is what it’s going to take to get a peaceful resolution to this situation, then let’s get after it as quickly as possible,” is what Jacob is saying under his breath.

v. 48 Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” That is why it was called Galeed.

“Laban said, ‘This heap is a witness between you and me today.’ That is why it was called Galeed.”—or “witness monument.”

v. 49 It was also called Mizpah, because he said, “May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other.

“It was also called Mizpah,”

This means “watchtower.” This is “outlook point.” This is being aware that God is watching what’s going on so “Mizpah” was also used here.

“because he said, ‘May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other.’”

v. 50 If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me.”

“If you mistreat my daughters or if you take any wives besides my daughters, even though no one is with us, remember that God is a witness between you and me.”

“Don’t worry about that. I’ve had a tough time for twenty years surviving with four women. I’m not getting into that kind of a mess. I’ve had my belly full.”

We can almost hear him saying, “Don’t worry Laban, there’s not going to be anything like this.”

v. 51 Laban also said to Jacob, “Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me.

“Laban also said to Jacob, ‘Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me.’”

v. 52 This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap

and pillar to my side to harm me.

“This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to your side to harm you and that you will not go past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me.”

“Don’t worry, I’m not coming back.”

v. 53 May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.” So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac.

“May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.’ So Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac.”

v. 54 He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country and invited his relatives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

“He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country and invited his relatives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.”

Farewell sir!

v. 55 Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

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“Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.”

It’s amazing the timing in these situations and the lessons that come out of them.

Now there are just seven lessons that come out of this study. Understand the ingredients in ascertaining the will of God. Try to think of all of the things that Jacob did. He had the inward desire to go, he saw the change in the boys, he saw the change in Laban, he got a word from the Lord, and he got an affirmation from his wives. And so as a result, he moved right on track.

Lesson #1: The indicators for a new direction in the will of God are described in these verses: 1) there is the inward indicator which is the desire on the part of the one being led; 2) there is the outward indicator and that is the circumstances that surround us; and 3) there is the upward indicator and that is God speaking clearly to us through His Word.

Lesson #2: Oneness with your wife is a safeguard in knowing His will.

Lesson #3: God did not allow Laban to hurt Jacob because Jacob was in the center of God’s will.

Lesson #4: God is faithful to prosper when we are willing to trust Him and do it His way.

Lesson #5: Keep yourself from idols.

Lesson #6: Bitter and resentful feelings will often come to the surface at a time of confrontation.

Lesson #7: God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night.

Carol Kent says this:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

I want to insist that my prayers get answered with the favorable resolution I have requested. But God says, Carol, I have a bigger plan than you envisioned for this situation. You think your life has fallen apart, but I have a salvage operation in motion that will reach way beyond your family. Trust me. And while you wait, you will experience that I am very close to the brokenhearted. I will not leave you or walk away from You. Keep holding on to hope.

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Father, it's amazing the things we learn as we open the scriptures and allow the Spirit of God to speak to us. Lord, there's been a deep awareness that Your Spirit is here and that in the quietness of this moment You're speaking to us.

And we thank You that You're so patient. Lord, maybe we need to execute a U-turn. Father, we thank You that Your faithfulness, Your goodness, Your kindness, never runs out. And in Your grace You forgive, You bring healing, and You move us forward in significant directions toward the ministry that You purposed in the first place. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Nine – Genesis 31:1-55

NOTES

v. 1 Jacob heard that Laban’s sons were saying, “Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father.”

v. 2 And Jacob noticed that Laban’s attitude toward him was not what it had been.

v. 3 Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.”

v. 4 So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were.

v. 5 He said to them, “I see that your father’s attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me.

v. 6 You know that I’ve worked for your father with all my strength,

v. 7 yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me.

v. 8 If he said, ‘The speckled ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, ‘The streaked ones will be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked young.

v. 9 So God has taken away your father’s livestock and has given them to me.

v. 10 “In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted.

v. 11 The angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob.’ I answered, ‘Here I am.’

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v. 12 And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.

v. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land."

v. 14 Then Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate?

v. 15 Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us.

v. 16 Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you."

v. 17 Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels,

v. 18 and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

v. 19 When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods.

v. 20 Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away.

v. 21 So he fled with all he had, and crossing the River, he headed for the hill country of Gilead.

v. 22 On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled.

v. 23 Taking his relatives with him, he pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead.

v. 24 Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

v. 25 Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives camped there too.

v. 26 Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You've deceived me, and you've carried off my daughters like captives in war.

v. 27 Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps?

v. 28 You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-by. You have done a foolish thing.

v. 29 I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.'

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v. 30 Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father's house. But why did you steal my gods?"

v. 31 Jacob answered Laban, "I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force.

v. 32 But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

v. 33 So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maidservants, but he found nothing. After he came out of Leah's tent, he entered Rachel's tent.

v. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them inside her camel's saddle and was sitting on them. Laban searched through everything in the tent but found nothing.

v. 35 Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I'm having my period." So he searched but could not find the household gods.

v. 36 Jacob was angry and took Laban to task. "What is my crime?" he asked Laban. "What sin have I committed that you hunt me down?"

v. 37 Now that you have searched through all my goods, what have you found that belongs to your household? Put it here in front of your relatives and mine, and let them judge between the two of us.

v. 38 "I have been with you for twenty years now. Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks.

v. 39 I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself. And you demanded payment from me for whatever was stolen by day or night.

v. 40 This was my situation: The heat consumed me in the daytime and the cold at night, and sleep fled from my eyes.

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v. 45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.

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v. 49 It was also called Mizpah, because he said, “May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other.

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v. 51 Laban also said to Jacob, “Here is this heap, and here is this pillar I have set up between you and me.

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v. 55 Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 31:1-55 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What message does Jacob receive from the Lord, according to verse 3?

3. Describe Jacob's and Laban's relationship, according to verses 5-9.

4. How do Rachel and Leah respond to the message of the Lord which has been given to Jacob, according to verses 14-16?

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5. Where is Jacob heading with all of his possessions and family, according to verse 18?

6. Describe Laban's response to their departure.

7. What had Rachel done that caused Laban to search all of their belongings?

8. How does Jacob respond to Laban, according to verses 36-42?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The indicators for a new direction in the will of God are described in these verses: 1) there is the inward indicator which is the desire on the part of the one being led; 2) there is the outward indicator and that is the circumstances that surround us; and 3) there is the upward indicator and that is God speaking clearly to us through His Word.

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