

First Southern Wednesday Night Bible Study
Genesis 31 - Jacob Leaves Laban

- 11-18-20

Introduction:

1. Inheritance/ money
2. Stealth - unexpected leaving... behind the back of Laban
3. Theft - gods
4. Esau is waiting

I. Go Home (1-16)

1. Heard Laban's sons - the "mood" of Laban encouraged him to leave
2. Heard the Lord's instruction (3, 13)
 - A. From God personally
 - B. From God in a dream, through an angel (13)
3. Jacob's defense - I've served your father (verse 5ff)
 - and God blessed me (in the midst of Laban's deception - 7-10)
 - changed my wages "ten times"
 - hyperbole - I've been there a "dozen times"
 - literally ten times?
4. A green light from his wives (14)
 - there is nothing here for us*
 - he "sold us" (15)
 - his daughters felt mistreated
 - he summons them to hear his plan - was that necessary?
 - God blessed the cattle and the children... to multiply (not the mandrakes or the peeled sticks - verse 9)
5. Would he ever have gone home if things were okay between he and F-I-L?
 - was he driven out, or called out? - both
 - God called him, and Laban drove him

Knowing God's will: Arthur Pink

 - A. Desire of one's heart (30:25)
 - B. Circumstances allowing - jealousy of sons and Laban
 - C. Clear word from the Lord - a special word

II. Jacob Leaves

1. Sons and wives on camels (17) - faster animals – speaks to prosperity
2. Laban shearing sheep on the backside of nowhere (19) - shearing usually occurred out in the country and required all their manpower
3. Discovered on the third day (22)
4. Overtook Jacob and family
5. God warns Laban not to speak to Jacob (24)

III. What Have You Done? (25-35)

1. You didn't let me kiss my grandsons
 - “what have you done” - the same words that Jacob said to Laban after he had deceived him about Rachel

- I would have given you a proper send off - Really?
- 2. If you were homesick... why did you take my gods? (30)
 - "Terapim" - word used in various ways
 - A. Household gods
 - B. Household idols
 - C. Resembled
 - a human torso
 - served a cultic function
 - probably small since Rachel could sit on them
 - used in divination
 - D. Some ancient texts show that the person who held the gods... were identified as the legal heir
 - E. Was this theft for the value of the gods? Was it for the legal rights to inheritance... was it for spiritual reasons (they actually believed in the gods)?
 - would he lose his blessing?
- 3. So... why did Rachel take the gods?
 - she believes that the gods will be used to determine which direction they went
 - inheritance... -she is getting what she believes is hers, and they are leaving after all
 - she believes that the possessor of the gods has the protection of the gods (they protect anyone who has them?)
 - the gold/ value of the gods
- 4. I could do you harm but God warned me not to
- 5. I was afraid (31)
- 6. I don't have your gods
 - A. Let the one who has your gods die (32)
 - B. Rachel had stolen the gods
 - C. Rachel's deception
 - "custom of women" and I can't rise
 - sitting on the "gods"
 - camels were considered unclean animals
- 7. Laban searches for the gods as if they were so very valuable - my gods, my gods... seems more concerned about them than his daughters
- 8. His own daughter swindles her swindling father - and disrespects his gods

IV. Jacob's Anger (36-42)

- 1. What is my sin? (36)
 - you are searching my things as if I'm a common criminal (37)
- 2. I've only served you faithfully
 - A. Twenty years - first time
 - B. Did not take any to eat - pilfer
 - C. Your flock did not miscarry
 - D. If you lost an animal by wild animals, I took the loss - turn in for credit
 - E. Served you in the elements - what shepherding is really like
 - F. Served you twenty years - second time
 - 14 for wives, and 6 for cattle**

3. Had it not been for God, I would have nothing (42)

V. A Covenant Between F-I-L and S-I-L (43-55)

1. These are my children and cattle
 - does not own the idea that his daughters and cattle are Jacob's
2. The covenant sounds a bit like Republicans and Democrats
 - both unwilling to yield
 - A. Gather stones - for a heap
 - Laban called it "Jegarsahadutha" - the heap of witness (Chaldean)
 - Jacob called it "Galeed" - the heap of witness (Hebrew)
 - B. They take oath
 - the stones are "witness" - the oath is witness
 - "Mizpah" - the word means "watchtower" or "beacon"
 - C. The "heap" stands as a border between the two (51-52)
 - D. May God watch between us**
 - E. Jacob offered sacrifice
3. Covenant between them:
 - A. Covenant to insure peace, ratified by sacrifice, and commemorated by a feast
 - B. When they left Egypt, God made a promise, a lamb was slain and eaten - commemorated by a feast
 - C. God made a covenant with us...
 - A sacrifice was made - Jesus (ratified)
 - Commemorated by a feast - Lord's Supper

VI. It Was God

1. Who told him to go home (3, 13)
 - who appeared to him in a dream (11-13)
2. Who protected Jacob from Laban on the return trip
3. Who blessed his cattle so that they multiplied... not to mention Jacob's kids (and wives)
4. Who would bless him as he returned to Esau - chapter 32