

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Book of Genesis

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth - Genesis 1:1

WEEK 9

“He Will Take Care of You”

Study: Genesis 28:10-22

Reading: Philippians 4:10-20, James 4:13-17

Memory: James 1:8

For the first few years after I moved to Michigan, I supported myself and the ministry we were part of by fixing and selling ipads. This was an online business which had a great amount of ups and downs. One week in particular was very slow and the financial pressure was mounting. The stress level increased even more when I woke up to complaints about items which had been damaged in the mail and I had to scramble to take care of issues to keep the customers happy while taking a substantial financial loss. Waking up to the fact that you are losing money isn't the best way to start your morning. Though that day started out pretty bad, a few minutes later, I read the passage for today's devotional reading. At that time, God reminded me, just as He reminded Jacob, that He would be faithful and carry out His promises. Basically, God told Jacob he could be comforted and encouraged because He would meet all of Jacob's needs. God's Word was a great encouragement to me during that difficult time and as I look back I can see how God was truly faithful.

Today, we are going to see how God started to become the God of Jacob and not just the God of Abraham and Isaac. We will be reminded how God wants to be our God and desires as our God to take care of us, his children.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jacob did as his father and mother asked and headed towards Haran to Rebekah's family. He came to the area of Bethel where Abraham had originally offered a sacrifice unto the Lord when he first entered the land that God had promised him. He chose to stay the night there and laid down to sleep. He had a dream of a ladder that reached into heaven. Angels were moving up and down the ladder and God stood at the top of the ladder. God told Isaac that He was the God of Abraham and Isaac and that He wanted to give the land to Jacob and his descendants. Just as he told Abraham and Isaac, God told Jacob that his descendants would spread

out and fill the land that God had given them. All the families of the earth would be blessed through his line, which was a reference to the coming Messiah who would bring the hope of salvation to all men. God then declared that He was with Jacob and would bring Jacob back to the land. God would not depart from Jacob or leave him without fulfilling His promise. This must have been a great encouragement to Jacob because he was setting out on something completely unknown to him. Remember that Jacob was a home-body and now he was having to do something that was totally out of his comfort zone (vs 10-15).

After Jacob awoke from this dream he realized that the Lord was with him and that he hadn't realized the presence of God before. This was a tremendous experience for Jacob and he called the area Bethel which meant "house of God." Jacob set up a stone pillar and poured oil on top of it to mark the spot where he had experienced God. The oil was used in anointing people for special tasks or anointing places as special places. Jacob then made a vow to God. If God would bless him by giving him food and clothing and keeping him alive so that he could return to the house of his father, then he would make the God of Abraham and Isaac his God. He would worship God alone and would give him a tenth of everything that God blessed him with. We saw that giving a tenth was the response of Abraham with Melchizedek. Though giving a tithe isn't recorded as a command by God there must have been some thought that a tithe is something that God desired (vs 16-22).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Until this point in his life, Jacob had lived under the blessings of his father Isaac. Now, he was setting out on his own and needed to make God his God. This was going to be somewhat of a process for him and you read about the beginning of the process today. I don't believe this passage is teaching that you should only serve God if he blesses you as Jacob declared. You must remember, they did not have the Scripture and their understanding of things was much different than ours is today. What you can really learn from this passage is the love of God and the promise He made to Jacob. He told Jacob that He would be with him each step of the way and bring him safely back to the land that He had promised. Basically, God was telling him that "you can count on Me." You are given the same promise by God several places in Scripture and you can rest assured that when God promises you something, He will keep His promise. God doesn't just take you somewhere halfway and leave you there. He wants to complete the work He has started in you.

Where did Jacob start traveling (vs 10)? Why was he going there?

What did Jacob do when evening came (vs 11)?

****Most likely this was not the first night of Jacob's travels since Bethel was over 70 miles from Beersheba.*

Why do you think we are told that he used a stone as a pillow (vs 11)?

What did he see in his dream (vs 12)?

What do you think this dream symbolized (vs 12)?

How did God describe Himself (vs 13)?

What did God say He would give Jacob (vs 13)?

What did God say about Jacob's children (vs 14)?

How was this similar to what God told Abraham when God spoke to Abraham at Bethel?

What three promises did God make to Jacob in verse 15?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What did Jacob realize when he woke up (vs 16)?

What did Jacob declare about the place (vs 17, 19)?

****The word Beth (Beit) in Hebrew means "house" and the word "El" means "God."*

What did Jacob do with the stone (vs 18)?

What vow did Jacob make to God (vs 20-22)?

How did Jacob use the stone as a symbol of the vow (vs 22)?

“The Deceiver is Deceived”

Study: Genesis 29:1-30

Reading: --

Memory: James 1:9

What Does the Bible Say?

Full of confidence and trust in the Lord, Jacob traveled to Haran, hoping to find his uncle and obtain a wife from his mother’s family. When he approached the area, he saw a well and flocks of sheep gathering beside the well. We are not told why, but for some reason they would wait for all the flocks to arrive before they would feed the sheep. This could have been to help preserve the water or perhaps they portioned the water off because it was very precious. Jacob asked the shepherds waiting there if they knew his uncle Laban and they told him they knew Laban and that he was healthy and prosperous. They also pointed Jacob to the shepherdess that was just coming and let Jacob know that her name was Rachel, the daughter of Laban. When she arrived, Jacob went to the well and opened the well for Rachel to water her flock. It appears that he saw her beauty and was thrilled to meet his relatives. He didn’t want her to have to wait for the others before she watered her sheep. The emotions of Jacob flooded out as he began to cry, realizing that his trip had been a success and he found his mother’s family. He explained to Rachel who he was and Rachel was also thrilled. She ran home to tell her father what had just taken place (vs 1-12).

Laban was also excited about this news. It had been 97 years since he had seen his sister and most likely had little news, if any, about what had happened to her. He embraced Jacob and wanted to know all about his sister and her family. He invited Jacob into his home to stay with him. Jacob stayed for a month. After the month, Laban offered to pay Jacob because Jacob had been working for him. When Laban asked Jacob what he wanted for payment, he didn’t want money but asked if he could marry Rachel. We are told that Rachel was the younger sister and was very beautiful while Leah was the older sister and had “weak eyes.” We are not sure of the exact meaning of this phrase but since it contrasts with the beauty of Rachel, we must assume that she was not very pleasant to look at or that her beauty paled in comparison to her sister Rachel. Laban agreed to allow Jacob to marry Rachel if he would work for him for seven years. Jacob willingly agreed and

the seven years flew by since he was so excited to marry Rachel (vs 13-20).

When the time came for Jacob to be married, Laban threw a feast and had a marriage ceremony. After the wedding night, Jacob woke up to realize that he had married Leah instead of Rachel. How this could have happened is something that I do not understand. I am assuming the actual ceremony must have happened towards dark and that there would have been little light in those days. However this happened, we are told that Jacob was quite upset after he had already consummated the marriage with Leah. Jacob went to Laban and Laban told him that it was their custom to have the oldest daughter married off first. Jacob was now stuck with Leah. He really wanted to marry Rachel so he asked Laban if there was anything he could do to have the wife that he wanted. Laban told him that after a week he could marry Rachel. Apparently, it was a custom for newlyweds to take a kind of honeymoon for a week to get to know each other. Laban also told Jacob that he would have to work for another seven years to pay for Rachel. Jacob agreed to this and after a week was married. Again he worked for Laban another seven years. Note that Laban also gave each one of his daughters one of his female servants to be a close friend and helper to his daughters. We will see these names come up again in our reading tomorrow (vs 21-29).

Jacob not only had one wife from his mother’s family but now had two wives. Though Bible characters are not directly rebuked for having more than one wife, a culturally accepted practice, almost every time we see a man with more than one wife in Scripture there are great family problems and conflicts. We see it starting here as Jacob loved Rachel more than he loved Leah, which must have caused great conflict from day one (vs 30).

How Does this Apply to Me?

It appears that Jacob learned his deception from others around him. You read in previous passages how Rebekah was a deceiver and now you read how her brother Laban was a deceiver. Deception can help you gain a personal advantage, but also hurts very hard when you are deceived. You often receive what you dish out to others. You can attempt to deceive to get your way and what you think you want, but that deception often leads you to things that you really don’t want. Deception never brings about positive results, no matter how hard you try. The great lesson for you today is a reminder once again to be perfectly honest in all that you do. Though you may find yourself in difficult situations, God will not leave you there. He will carry out what He has called you to do.

Where did Jacob travel to (vs 1)?

How is the well described (vs 2-3)?

What did Jacob want to know (vs 4-5)?

Who did the people at the well point out (vs 6)?

****Verses 7-8 provide information about the well and the time of day that are difficult to understand. It appears that Jacob was trying to get the other shepherds to leave so he could talk to Rachel alone after he saw her beauty.*

What response did Jacob have when he talked to Rachel (vs 9-12)?

Why do you think he responded this way?

How did Laban respond to news of Jacob coming to visit (vs 13-14)?

What did Laban want Jacob to do (vs 15)?

What was the difference between Laban's daughters (vs 16-17)?

What did Jacob want as his payment for working (vs 18)?

What is said about the seven years of work (vs 20)?

What did Jacob desire (vs 21)?

How did Laban deceive Jacob (vs 22-23)?

How do you think Jacob did not know it was Leah until the morning (vs 25)?

How did Jacob respond (vs 25)?

What promise did Laban make (vs 26-27)?

What happened at the end of the week (vs 28)?

What are we told about Jacob's view of his wives (vs 30)?

“The Saga”

Study: Genesis 29:31-30:24

Reading: --

Memory: James 1:9

What Does the Bible Say?

The difficulty of having more than one wife is clearly seen through the reading today. We are told that Jacob “hated” Leah and because of that, God chose to pour out His grace upon her and opened her womb up, allowing her to have a child. The term “hated” does not have the exact same meaning as it does today. When we think of hate, we often think of the fact that we can't even talk to a person or look at them. Yet, the plain fact that Leah became pregnant shows that the “hatred” that Jacob had for Leah was a different type of hatred. There are other places where the term “hate” is used and it simply compares how one person is liked more than the other person and that other person feels unloved, though they are just not loved as much.

While Leah was able to have children, Rachel was not. Leah named her first child Reuben because she felt the blessing of God upon her life in the middle of her marriage saga. She thought that her child would cause Jacob to love her more. Women in those days found their worth in the ability to bear children. Leah felt her worth was rising when she became pregnant again and had another son that she named Simeon. She named him that because she felt the blessing of God on her life though she was loved less. She then had another son named Levi and she named him that, thinking that this third son would draw her closer to Jacob. She became pregnant again and gave birth to Judah which meant “this time I will praise the Lord.” Following the birth of Judah, God closed the womb of Leah for a time and she stopped bearing children (vs 31-35).

Needless to say, Rachel wasn't very thrilled that her sister was able to have children when she wasn't. I am sure that she had felt a superiority over her sister because of her beauty and the choice of Jacob, yet this problem caused her great heartache. She became upset at Jacob for this and demanded that he give her children. Jacob told her that he was not God and it was pretty obvious that the problem was not with him since he had already fathered four children. As was custom in those days, Rachel chose to give her handmaid to Jacob to have children for her. Bilhah became the third wife of Jacob.

Not too long after that, Bilhah became pregnant with a son. Rachel did not despise this child as Sarah despised Ishmael since she looked at this child as a blessing from God and she thought she had become useful to Jacob because of this child. She called him Dan because she felt that God heard her desire for a son and answered her prayer through her handmaid. Bilhah then became pregnant again and gave Jacob another son that was named Naphtali because Rachel thought she was now gaining the upper hand on her sister (vs 1-8).

Leah didn't want to be outdone, so she gave Jacob her handmaid, Zilpah, to be his fourth wife. Zilpah became pregnant and gave Jacob two more sons, Gad and Asher. Leah named them their names because she felt the fortune of God on their lives and she thought these sons would bring happiness and fulfillment (vs 9-12).

We are told of an instance when Reuben was out in the field and found some mandrakes. Mandrakes were a type of fruit, and in the ancient world it was thought that they had some type of ability to help women become pregnant. When Rachel found out that Reuben found these, she asked Leah for some, but Leah refused because she didn't want to do anything to give Rachel an upper hand. Leah told her that if she would let Jacob sleep with her that night then she would give her some mandrakes. Rachel agreed and Jacob had sexual relations with Leah that night and Leah became pregnant once again. She thought that this was a payment from God for the suffering she had gone through so she named him Issachar. Leah then had another child and named him Zebulun thinking that Jacob will surely exalt her now that she had given him six males. Following that, Leah had one more child, a girl which she named Dinah (vs 13-21).

Rachel must have been heart broken during this time and was continually pleading to God for a child. God finally answered and gave her a child, which she named Joseph, because she felt that God had taken away the negative stigma that came with being barren. She also desired to have another son, and eventually did, though she would have to wait a little while between babies (vs 22-24).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you see why God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman? As I have mentioned before, the Bible does not rebuke men for having multiple wives, but the examples in the Bible reveal the problems that came as a result of a polygamous marriage. I can only imagine the emotional turmoil that went on day after day in the family of Jacob.

What did God do for Leah (vs 31)?

Why did He do this (vs 31)?

What does this reveal to you about God?

Why did Leah name her first child Reuben (vs 32)?

What does this show you about the relationship between Jacob and Leah?

What were the names of the next three sons Leah gave birth to (vs 33-34)?

Genesis 30

How did Rachel respond to Leah giving birth to four children (vs 1)?

Why was Jacob not happy with Rachel (vs 2)?

What did Rachel do to try to solve the problem of being barren (vs 3-6)?

Why was Rachel happy when Bilhah gave birth to children (vs 7-8)?

How did Leah respond (vs 9)?

Why did Leah name Zilpah's second son Asher (vs 13)?

What deal did Rachel make with Leah (vs 14-16)?

Why did Leah name her fifth son Issachar (vs 18)?

What did Leah think would happen after her sixth son (vs 19-20)?

What did God do for Rachel (vs 23)?

What did Rachel want after Joseph was born (vs 23)?

What does this reveal about the control that God has over the affairs of men?

What do you think Jacob was thinking through these many years?

“Strange and Mighty Working”

Study: Genesis 30:25-43

Reading: Jeremiah 33:1-26

Memory: James 1:9

One year, when we were preparing to take a missions trip to Africa as a church, a few of those going on the trip could not afford it. During that time, a man who I did not know personally called me on the phone and asked if I could use money for anything. I knew of this man through a mutual friend, but had never met him. I told him that we could use \$5,000 for those planning to go on our missions trip and he said he would give it to us. I really didn't expect it, but sure enough, a few days later, the church received a check for \$5,000. A few months later I found out that the man sent me the money because he wanted me to give him some information about our mutual friend. He was trying to win my friendship so I would share the private information I had about this friend. Though I never gave this man that information, I was very thankful to the Lord for providing for our trip.

Today, we are going to read how God works in mysterious ways.

What Does the Bible Say?

Once Jacob had the son that he desired to have from his wife Rachel, he felt it was time for him to travel back to his homeland of Canaan. He told Laban about this and asked for his blessing to leave and take his family with him. Laban didn't want Jacob to go. We have to assume that he wanted his children and grandchildren to stay in the area, but we are told that one of the main reasons that Laban didn't want Jacob to leave is because he had prospered while Jacob was working for him. Laban said he was able to find out by “divination,” (ESV) or some type of witchcraft, that the Lord blessed him because of Jacob (vs 25-27).

Laban wanted Jacob to stay and told Jacob he would increase his wages and give him whatever he wanted if he chose to stay. Jacob responded by telling Laban that he knew the blessing of God was on his life and that is why Laban's flock grew abundantly while Jacob was there, but Jacob felt that it was time to start accumulating flocks and possessions for himself and be the provider for his household. Jacob didn't want to take advantage of Laban,

but made a deal with him. Jacob asked Laban if he could have every speckled, spotted and black lamb and white goat from the flock. Apparently, Jacob was asking for a small minority of the flock of Laban and the speckled, spotted or striped animals would have had a much lower value. Laban agreed to this deal but before Jacob could get the spotted, speckled and striped flock, Laban took them and gave them to his other sons. There were very few left, if any, for Jacob to have and take with him. It appears that, once again, Jacob had been deceived by Laban since Laban had taken the animals that he had promised to Jacob and then traveled three days away so Jacob could not argue (vs 28-36).

Instead of going after Laban, trying to find the flocks he was promised, he did something very unique and created his own flock. We are not sure why he did what he did and the results can really only be explained by a supernatural act of God. Many people have come up with all types of theories about this, but it is something we simply cannot fully understand. What Jacob did was peel bark of certain types of sticks and put those in front of the animals when they came to drink and breed. All the flocks that bred in front of the sticks produced offspring that were speckled, spotted and striped. Jacob specifically put the sticks out when the stronger of the flock were breeding so that the colored flocks that would be his would be the best of the animals. For some reason, again it must have been because of God, this worked and Jacob was building a flock of his own. Instead of letting these animals grow with Laban's flock, he continually separated them out so Laban could not steal them. The herd of Jacob quickly grew and he had to hire servants to help take care of his flock and household (vs 37-43).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Though this passage is full of deception and unexplainable acts, there is one thing that is clear. God had promised to bless Jacob and that is exactly what was happening. In our Western culture, we tend to want an explanation for everything that takes place since our desire is always to understand why and how things work. This attitude can often lead you to trust in yourself, your human reasoning and your human power. You do not need to understand how God does something. What God chooses to do does not need to make sense. You are called to trust God and rely on His promises and let Him fulfill the promises He has given you. One thing you can take away from the passage today is that God keeps His Word. The results may not always be what you think they should be, but you can trust God to do what He says.

What did Jacob want to do (vs 25)?

What did Jacob feel he had earned (vs 26)?

What did Laban realize (vs 27)?

What offer did Laban make (vs 28)?

What did Jacob understand about the blessings of God (vs 29-30)?

What did Jacob ask Laban to let him have (vs 31-32)?

What agreement did Laban and Jacob come to (vs 33-34)?

What did Laban do after the deal was made (vs 35)?

Why do you think Laban went away from Jacob for a few days (vs 36)?

What did Jacob do (vs 37-43)?

Why do you think he did this?

****As mentioned in the writing above, no one really knows why he did this. Because he had been a shepherd for many years perhaps there were some special tricks and observations he learned along the way. He was obviously attempting to be genetically selective and breeding the strongest animals for himself. That would have been a choice learned from experience. It could be that the certain type of sticks also attributed to the desire of certain animals wanting to breed more. Ultimately, it was a mix of him doing his part and God doing His part.*

What were the results of Jacob's actions (vs 37-43)?

What do you see about the blessing of God on Jacob's life from this passage?

Why do you think God was blessing Jacob?

Why do you think God chooses to bless you?

“God Is Working”

Study: Genesis 31:1-16

Reading: Esther 5:9-7:10

Memory: James 1:9

After my pastor in Wisconsin retired, I was asked to consider taking on the role of senior pastor. There were a few people who didn't like me and were out to do whatever it took to keep me from becoming pastor. These individuals sent letters full of half-truths to the congregation and even stood up in meetings and blatantly opposed me. I was still young in the ministry and made my share of mistakes, but through the whole event, I saw how God was using the attempts of my opponents to endear many others to me. He gave them the boldness and desire to stand up for me. The overwhelming majority of the church voted for me to become the senior pastor. Though this was a very challenging time in my life and I faced many discouragements along the way, most of the people were very encouraging and God used that time in a great way in my life.

Today, we are going to see that when God is on our side we don't have to fear or worry about others because God can take evil and turn it for good.

What Does the Bible Say?

Because God was blessing Jacob, the sons of Laban were becoming quite jealous. They were afraid that Jacob was stealing all the animals from Laban and taking away their inheritance. This was causing conflict and Jacob could see that Laban didn't love having Jacob around as he once did. We are not told that Jacob sought God for direction, but we are told that God gave him direction by telling him that it was time to return to the land that He had promised to Abraham. God also promised that He would be with Jacob which had to be reassuring because the thought of going back home and facing Esau must have been a scary one (vs 1-3).

Jacob called for Rachel and Leah and told them that he had fallen out of favor with their father. At the same time, he had experienced the favor of God and God had blessed him. He told them that he had served their father faithfully, though their father had cheated him several times. He stated that God had always protected him from the deception of Laban. He told them how when Laban tried to deceive him and take away the animals they agreed

to, God gave him the animals and more. During this time, an angel had come to Jacob and told him not to be afraid because God was on his side and God would prosper him. This also helps us see that the whole thing with the striped wood was probably directed by God (vs 4-12).

The choice to leave Laban was not one that Jacob made by himself, but it was one that was directed by God. God declared that He was the God of Bethel. Bethel was the place where Jacob had the vision of the ladder to heaven and the place where God had promised to take care of him. This same God wanted him to move back to the land of his parents and to take his family with him. Leah and Rachel both responded by declaring that there was little left for them in the land they were in. Their father had cheated them out of their inheritance and basically made them to be like foreigners in their own homeland. They felt that they were no longer part of their father's household but they were united with Jacob and wanted to go with him as he followed His God (vs 13-16).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that when God says He is on your side that He really means it? God can take the evil thoughts and desires of others and turn them around to benefit you. It is easy to get bothered and panic when evil men and deceptive people take advantage of you, but God is in control of all the events of your life. Even when people try to take advantage of you, God can take that and turn it around for your favor. Take time today to read the story of Haman and Mordecai to be reminded of God's wonderful working. Choose to trust God, listen to his voice and yield yourself to Him and His plan. When you live in the favor of God, though others may not favor you, you will be in the best position in life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for constantly working for you.
- * Ask God to help you yield to his plan and obey him.
- * Praise God because He has the power to turn evil into good.

Thought for the day

What were the sons of Laban saying (vs 1)?

What had happened to the relationship between Laban and Jacob (vs 2)?

Why do you think this happened to their relationship?

What did God tell Jacob to do (vs 3)?

What did Jacob explain to his wives (vs 4-5)?

What did Jacob reveal about God (vs 6-7)?

What does this show you about God's control over the attempts of men?

How did Jacob give glory to God (vs 8-9)?

Why do you think it was vitally important that Jacob recognized this?

What happened in Jacob's dream (vs 10)?

Why do you think verse 11 is included here?

What did the angel reveal about God's working (vs 12)?

Why is it important to realize that God knows how others may mistreat you?

Why do you think that God pointed out that He was the one who appeared to Jacob at Bethel (vs 13)?

****It must be remembered that they lived in a polytheistic culture which believed in many gods. This is hard for us to understand in our culture today since most people growing up in the western culture have some type of monotheistic view. Gods in those days were often viewed as regional gods or gods of certain people groups.*

What did God tell Jacob to do (vs 13)?

How did Rachel and Leah respond (vs 14-16)?

“God’s Protecting Power”

Study: Genesis 31:17-55

Reading: --

Memory: James 1:9

What Does the Bible Say?

The choice to head back home was not an easy one for Jacob, but he knew that it was something that he had to do. He loaded up all his possessions and headed with his family south towards Canaan. Laban was not around at the time since he had taken his sheep to be shorn and was unaware that Jacob was leaving. Rachel knew that her father was gone and she went into his house and took some of her father’s idols. Along with being trusted in for protection and prosperity, household idols were passed on as proof of inheritance after the head of the household died (vs 17-20).

Jacob tricked Laban by not telling him that he was leaving and had already traveled for three days before Laban found out that they had left. When the news reached Laban, he wasn’t happy, and he and a few of his men went to catch up with Jacob. It took Laban seven days, but he was able to track down Jacob and his family in the land of Gilead, which would have been northeast of the land of Canaan. Before Laban reached Jacob to confront him, God appeared to him in a dream and warned Laban to be careful in how he treated Jacob. He was not supposed to do anything good or bad to Jacob. Essentially, God was telling Laban that he could say goodbye to his family, but he was to leave Jacob alone (vs 21-24).

It appears that Laban heeded the warning of God, but did confront Jacob a little when he reached him. He asked Jacob why he left in such a hurry and didn’t permit him to say goodbye and to throw a party for his family. He told Jacob that he intended to cause harm to him, but he was going to listen to God and chose not to do any harm to him or his family. Laban understood that Jacob wanted to be back in his home country and I think he knew why Jacob left in a hurry, but he wasn’t about to leave without a little conflict. He accused Jacob of stealing his gods from his house. Jacob explained to Laban that he left secretly since he knew that Laban would not want him to leave and would try to hinder him. Jacob had no idea that idols had been stolen and declared that anyone found with the idols would lose his or her life. Little did Jacob know that it was his favorite wife, Rachel, who had taken the idols

(vs 25-32).

Laban searched all the tents and could not find his idols. Rachel had hidden them in her camel’s saddle and was in her tent sitting on her saddle which was most likely covered by her dress and blankets. When her father came to her tent, she told him that she didn’t want to stand up because she was on her period at the time and didn’t want to be embarrassed. Her father understood, but didn’t realize that she was deceiving him (vs 33-35).

When Laban found nothing, Jacob became angry at him for his false accusations. He related how he had done nothing but serve and sacrifice for Laban, though Laban continually took advantage of him. Jacob declared that the only reason he had accumulated any livestock was through the blessing of God because Laban never allowed Jacob to gain anything for himself. God’s blessings had overcome Laban’s deception, and, even at that time, God was watching out for him (vs 36-42).

Laban decided to make an agreement with Jacob and they both gathered stones together to commemorate this covenant. Laban told Jacob that if he hurt his daughters or took other wives, then God would judge him for it (since Laban would be unable to do anything). Laban promised that he would not pass the heap of stones and interfere in Jacob’s life. They named the place Galeed and Mizpah which meant “heap of witnesses” and “watchtower.” Basically, Laban was giving up control and asking the God of Abraham to watch over his family. Jacob erected an altar and offered a sacrifice there to God (vs 43-54).

The next day, Laban and his men said their goodbyes and left, leaving Jacob and his family to head to Canaan with his blessing (vs 55).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize how God protects you and takes care of you even when you can’t see that He is working? You read about how God appeared to Laban in a dream and caused Laban to change his mind about doing harm to Jacob. I can imagine that for the seven days it took for Laban to catch Jacob that he must have been stewing with anger and planning the harm he was going to do. Yet, God didn’t allow anything hurtful to happen to Jacob, and instead, Laban left Jacob with a covenant and his blessing. This reveals to you that God is working for your favor even in ways that you can’t see. Simply trust Him and let Him do His job. I do wonder how many times God has protected me from things that could do me harm that I will never know about. I have found out about things at time, and I wonder how many more things God has done that have gone unnoticed.

What did Jacob set out to do (vs 17-18)?

What did Rachel take (vs 19)? Why do you think she took these things?

How did Jacob trick Laban (vs 20-21)?

What did Laban decide to do (vs 22-23)?

What did God do for Jacob (vs 24)?

What did Laban want to know (vs 26-28)?

What did Laban say he had the power to do (vs 29)? Why didn't he do it?

What would happen to the person who stole Laban's idols (vs 32)?

Why was Laban not able to find the idols (vs 33-35)?

How did Jacob respond after Laban could not find the idols (vs 36-37)?

What did Jacob explain to Laban (vs 38-42)?

Why do you think Laban felt that his daughters were still his (vs 43)?

What did they decide to make (vs 44)? What did they use as a sign (vs 46-49)?

What did Laban not want Jacob to do (vs 50)?

What did Laban say he would not do (vs 51-52)?

Why did Laban invoke the name of God (vs 53)?

Why do you think Jacob offered a sacrifice (vs 54)?

What did Laban do the next day (vs 55)?

How does this reveal that Laban was not an "evil" man? How do you balance the deceptive actions of Laban with the loving acts he displayed?

MEMORY VERSES

Matthew 5

26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. 31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. 33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?