

# (Genesis) Genesis 28:16-31:55

by Joe Focht

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*Joe Focht explores Jacob's transformative journey as he encounters God and learns valuable lessons about faith and relationships.*

**Duration:** 55:54

**Scripture:** Genesis 28:10-22, Genesis 32:24-30, Genesis 35:1-15, Genesis 46:1-4, Exodus 3:1-6, Exodus 19:3-6, Deuteronomy 31:6

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Jacob and his encounter with God at the border of the land. Jacob wrestles with God and learns a remarkable lesson. The preacher encourages the audience to read ahead to learn more about this story. The sermon also mentions the story of Rebecca and how Abraham's servant came to find her as a wife for Isaac. Laban, Rebecca's brother, welcomes Jacob into their family and acknowledges their shared bloodline.

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## Transcript

Let's pick up reading in verse 10 of chapter 28. It says, And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went to Haran. And he happened upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set.

And he took up the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, the top of it reached to heaven. Behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and the north, and to the south.

And in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with thee. I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land.

For I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

So here again, Jacob fleeing from Esau, his conscience probably wrestling with him as he flees, and he comes to this area of Bethel. He needs to take a rock to make a pillow and to lay down, and as he is there, he has this dream. We looked at it last time we were together, of the Lord, and this ladder, it says, a stairway, the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and how Jesus, I believe, talked about that in John chapter 1. And now he's come into a confrontation with the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac.

He had heard about this God, and he knew of this God, but he did not know this God. He knew about him, and he had heard about him, and I believe he longed for higher things in his heart. He didn't know how to get them without conniving, but he was different than Esau in that he wanted the birthright.

He wanted the blessing. He believed. He looked for higher things, and yet his relationship with God was just a religious relationship.

It wasn't a genuine relationship yet. It was a legacy that had been passed. He believed in this God, but he didn't know this God.

And now for the first time, we have on record God revealing himself to Jacob, and Jacob, I'm sure, is overwhelmed as he looks up, and here's this stairway right next to him, and the angels of God, they must be wondrous enough to look at and to see ascending and descending, and at the top of the stairs, sitting at the top of the stairs is Yahweh God, Jehovah is there, and begins to speak to him. And I think probably before the Lord spoke, as Jacob looked up, he must have been thinking, my name is Mud. God's going to change my name now from Jacob to Mud.

Here I deceived my blind father. I took advantage of my hungry brother and got the birthright, and I stole his blessing, and putting the goat hair on my hands and on my neck, and here I am, and now God has got me. And yet when the Lord opens his mouth, there's not a word of rebuke.

It's amazing how he must have wondered. I'm the God of Abraham, the God of your father, the land that you liest on thee, to thee will I give it to thy seed forever, and through thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Look to the north, the south, the east, and the west, he says to him.

He says, I am with thee. I will keep thee, whithersoever thou goest. I will bring thee again to this place.

I will not leave off until I've accomplished all the things that I said unto thee. And Jacob wakes up in wonder, and he's afraid, it says. He's terrified, is the idea.

And he said, God was in this place, and I knew it not. And I think in my life of how many times God was in some place, and I knew it not. Now, I don't feel in bad company.

I think of Jeremiah. As the Lord spoke to him and said, your cousin, Hannah Neal, is going to come, and he's going to sell you this parcel of ground. And when he comes, I want you to buy it.

I want you to buy it in good faith, because it's an exercise of faith, demonstrating that after the seventy years of captivity, you believe that I'm going to restore the nation. So you buy this ground. Now, it's not worth anything now.

Nebuchadnezzar has the city surrounded. But you buy it. So sure enough, Hannah Neal comes marching in and says to Jeremiah, hey, how about buying this piece of ground? And Jeremiah says, then I knew that the Lord had spoken to me.

You know, it was kind of the same thing. The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not until it happened and it confirmed. And I think how many times something happens, and I turn around and I say, that was you, Lord, wasn't it? You set me up.

You know, you made that happen. And I enjoy that. I enjoy that, because I think it's probably many times when I'm just oblivious and don't catch any of it.

Well, Jacob says, the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not. This is none other, he says, than the house of God, and this is the very gate to heaven. It reminds me of one of these sci-fi movies.

Jacob thinks this is some portal that's opened up right by his head. He's thinking of all the places I could have crashed. I can't believe I did it right by this portal.

You know, here I laid down, opened my eyes, and as lucky as these angels didn't step on my head, they're going right up and down here. And this is the gate of all the places I could have slept. I could have been a mile that way, a mile this way.

I happened to lay down right at the gate to heaven. Well, he thinks it's localized. No, God's not localized.

He's saying, Jacob, I'm with you. I'm going to be with you wherever you go. But Jacob thinks there's some opening here.

And he just happened to be there where God was working. And again, I think some Christians kind of get in that frame of mind sometimes where they think, you know, I just need to get in the place. You know, I've kind of been blown in, and God probably doesn't want to hang out with me at all.

But if I go to church and I get in a place where he's pouring out his blessing and blessing everybody else, even though he doesn't want to bless me, he won't stop blessing them. So I'll get the overflow as long as I'm there. I don't deserve it.

But Jacob thinking this is a localized thing. And again, I think sometimes we get in that trap. Now, some churches again, promote that idea that it's happening where they are, that the, you know, the oil's dripping from the ceiling, and everybody's shunned to Micaiah, and this is the place you need to come.

And it's not happening anywhere. Oh, it's happening everywhere. It's happening around the world.

If we knew it was happening, it would blow our minds. God is doing a mighty work. This is the last days.

And we're a small, teensy-weensy part of it. And God is working in many places. And I'm glad he's working here.

This is kind of the last stop. If he can't make it here, you're not going to make it anywhere. But I think in one sense, how wrong for us to think that.

You know, I got to go to church to get the blessing. I, you know, and you know what, I do get blessed when I come here. People don't understand that.

I'm as excited as I come as everybody else. I come and I think, okay, what's going to happen? Who's going to get saved? Who's going to cry? Is the worship going to be good? Is the worship going to be bad? You know, who's going to come up with strange things going to happen? You know, I'm coming here with

great anticipation because he's just doing something here right now. But again, I work here.

I walk in here during the week when this is empty, and it ain't like this. Because he's here when you're here. He doesn't just hang out here when you're not here.

This isn't just a localized place. And see, we can fall into that trap too. And you know, there are no doubt, women's retreats and men's retreats and places we go and God blesses and we get all excited.

But if we think it's just localized, and we have three women's retreats coming, the East Coast Pastors' Wives Conference, we have over 1,100 women from our church already registered to go on retreats. Now, you know what happens to this church when 1,000 women come back excited about Jesus. It's amazing what happens.

But don't fall into the trap of thinking that it's just there. Because if you do that, you know, ladies, then you come back to the endless pile of wash, to that man you're married to, to that house you clean, you know, and thinking, oh, I wish I was back there. And the girls say we need four retreats a year.

No, no. You need a retreat with just you and God. Every day, every moment, wherever you are.

Because His presence is just as precious as it is anywhere. And His fellowship is just as costly, the blood of Christ. And it is as much a miracle that He would talk to you in traffic, as He would at a retreat.

In fact, it's more of a miracle that He would talk to me in traffic than He would at a retreat. So Jacob's in wonder at this as he looks at this. He rose up early, it says, in the morning, verse 18.

He took the stone that he had put for his pillow and he set it up for a pillar and he poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel, which is the house of God. And Moses puts a note in, but the name of the ancient city was called Luz in the beginning, at that location.

And it is interesting, by the way, those of you who like to take note of these things, Abraham is a man who builds altars as we follow him. Jacob builds altars and digs wells. Jacob sets up pillars.

I don't know what it is with Jacob. No, a pillar is different than an altar. A pillar is somewhere where there's an oath made or it's a remembrance or it's like a place where you swear.

And I think Jacob is one of those, I swear God, if you do this, I'll do this. He does a lot of that. You know those kind of people.

I swear, if you give me 50 bucks this week, I'll give it back to you next week. I swear it. I swore on my mother's grave.

If you just give me this. And yet you know people that you can comfortably give 50 bucks to and you know you're going to get it back. You don't have to swear.

You worry about the guy who's always putting a pillar there saying, you give it to me. I swear, pour oil on this, you get your money back. Jacob is always making a deal.

So it's funny to not Abraham, not Isaac. In fact, the only pillar before Jacob starts this pillar stuff is Lot's wife. She just becomes a pillar of salt.

So he sets up this pillar. And Jacob vowed a vow to God saying, it's in regards to this pillar, if God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and clothes to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord gets to be my God. You can see the God in heaven going, such a deal.

Here's Jacob. God said I'm going to keep you, I'm going to be with you, I'm going to bring you to this place. Jacob goes over that.

Well, if you keep me and if you bring me back, and I'm going to throw in clothes and food. You didn't mention that, but that's important if you want to be my God. You feed me and clothe me.

And you bring me back to this place in peace. You didn't mention that. You didn't say whether you're going to bring me back dead or not.

If you bring me back in peace, then you get to be my God. All of heaven is going, yippee. And the Lord must be thinking, Jacob, I am already your God, whether you like it or not.

And then for good measure, he kind of, this is an incentive he gives God. This stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that you give me, I will give you 10%. And God is going, I can't pass up this deal now.

Remember, God, the richer you make me, the better it is for you. Abraham, I'm sure, would have just been laying on his face before God. Lord, just give me your presence.

Jacob is not through with himself. Now, you know, it's interesting, though. God will work with this guy in an incredible way.

God will be content to be called the God of Jacob in the Old Testament. And all of this determination and conniving and drive, though it takes over 30 years, God will wear this man down and he will take all that and channel that and bring it into focus for the purposes of his kingdom. And, you know, maybe you've had a kid like that.

You know, when Mikey was born, the nurse walked by and said, you didn't name him Mikey, did you? We said, yeah. And she said, you haven't heard about Mikey's? We said, I don't know what you're talking about. You know, a year later, we're back at the hospital.

Are you sure we got the right kid? I mean, he was bad. You know, he is a great, great kid now. But all of that stuff that was cooking in there and you could see it in his eyes.

I mean, he was just always up to something. It was the kind of kid you smack his hand and look at and put it out for another one, you know? Well, Jacob's like that and God will take you. God's got all the time in the world.

He's not all the time in the universe, so he will take years to wear Jacob down. Now Jacob moves on his way. Then Jacob went on his journey.

He's headed to Padinarum now. He knows Esau's not going to follow him and kill him. His excuse is he's going there to get a wife.

Jacob and boy, does he. Jacob went on his journey and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked and behold a well in the field and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it.

And out of that well, they watered the flocks. And a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered.

And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the sheep. And then they put the stone again upon the well, the well's mouth. So no animal would fall down and die.

So it wouldn't get polluted. Just, you know, in that dry country, a well when it was found is a priceless commodity. So just to protect it.

So Jacob said to them, my brethren, whence be you? Where are you from? And they said of Haran are we. And he said to them, know ye Laban, the son of Nahor? Now, they said, we know him. Now, by the way, he's the grandson of Nahor.

He's the son of Bethuel. But in that language, they have any term for grandfather. If your grandfather was also your father, that would be called.

So do you know Laban, the son of Nahor? They said, we know him. He said to them, is he well? Is he doing good? They said, he is well. And behold, Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the sheep.

Now, this is no coincidence. The rabbis say coincidence is not a kosher word. And he says, lo, it is yet high day.

Neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together. Water ye the sheep and go and feed them. They said, well, we can until all the flocks are gathered together until they roll the stone from the well's mouth.

Then we will water the sheep. And while he had spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them. And it came to pass when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother, Rebekah's brother.

And then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept. Now, it kind of indicates that he kissed her hand, by the way. Just a strange guy walking up, laying one on you.

It seems to indicate that he walked up and he kissed her hand, bowed and kissed her hand and began to weep. Now, remember, Eleazar, when he found Rebekah, he began to praise God. He just opened up in prayer, just let it all loose.

Jacob, he breaks down and he weeps here. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's, her father's brother and that he was Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father.

Now, no doubt Rebekah was a famous story there in the area, because here's Rebekah growing up in Laban's house. And all of a sudden, one day, this guy Eleazar comes marching in from nowhere with camels and gold and silver and bracelets and jewels. And he comes into town and says, I'm Abraham's servant.

You remember everything? I said, oh, sure, Uncle Abe, what happened to him? You know, and he said, well, he's prospering. Amazing things are going on. And he has this only son.

The son was born when he was 100 years old and his wife was 90 years old. And back in Haran, they're saying, are you? Kid sounds like a story. No, it sounds like a story to us, too.

But it's true. We waited for years. It was a miraculous birth.

And the God of Abraham is blessed. And Sarah's womb was as good as dead. And this son of promise of a miraculous birth is back there.

And he's the sole heir. And he's wealthy. And Abraham has sent me here to find a wife.

So this was a remarkable story. Because here comes this servant in a town with all this wealth. And Rebecca says, I'll go.

And he loads up Rebecca. And she's gone. So it's big news amongst the family.

So as soon as Rachel hears this, she runs to tell her father, Laban. And it came to pass when Laban heard the things, Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet him and embraced him and kissed him and brought him into his house. And then Jacob told Laban all these things.

And Laban said to him, surely thou art my bone and my flesh. Look out, Jacob, because this is your family and your gene pool. Guard your back.

Surely you are my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month. So he's there for a month, evidently working with Laban, helping to take care of the flocks.

Laban said to Jacob, because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me what shall be thy wages. And Laban had two daughters. The name of the older one was Leah.

And the name of the younger was Rachel. And Leah was tender eyed. Now, in that culture, she probably had green or blue eyes, light eyes, the idea is.

And they considered that a weakness, a tender eyed or weak eyed. It says Leah here was tender eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. No doubt, well built, dark guys, beautiful black hair like a raven, you know, all that they would esteem.

So Rachel is beautiful in that sense. Now, Jacob is walking into a situation where God is going to teach him a few things. He's going to teach him about the firstborn in another land, because he didn't give much heed to the first born in his own family and what that was all about.

God is going to teach him what it feels like to find out that somebody put goat's hair on and tricked you. And he's kind of in this process of reaping what he's sown. And we'll find that as it goes on.

Even in his old age, they'll bring Joseph's coat to him all bloody and say, you know, he was torn apart by animals, almost like he deceived his father with the goat's hair. You know, we see it with Pharaoh giving a command that all of the male children in Israel should be drowned in the river. And we see the whole Egyptian army then drowned in the river.

I mean, there is a process of sowing and reaping. Now, because we are God's own children, he governs that in our lives. We don't ever get the full brunt of it.

Certainly he will use that to teach us. And Jacob will have a lesson in sowing and reaping now. So Jacob loved Rachel, verse 18, and said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel, thy younger daughter.

Now, Jacob's about 70, so she must be a real looker. I'll tell you that. This guy's going to be 77 by the time he gets his wife.

And Laban said, it is better for me to give her to you than that I should give her to some other man. So sounds like a deal. He says, abide with me.

And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days because of the love he had for her. So he was really in love with Rachel. And Jacob said unto Laban, OK, give me my wife, because my days are fulfilled.

I've worked seven years that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and he made a big feast. And no doubt, it doesn't say it, but you can read between the lines, he got Jacob half pickled, no doubt, at this feast, this wedding feast.

So it came to pass in the evening, as it was getting dark, that he, Laban, took Leah, not Rachel, and he put hairy skin on her arms and on her, you know, Jacob's getting it back now. He took Leah, his daughter, and it's dark, no street lights, you don't flip the switch there, and he brought her to Jacob. And Jacob said, Rachel, this is wonderful.

I've waited and I've waited. I've dreamed of this moment for seven years. So he goes in unto her.

And Laban gave unto his daughter, Leah, also Zilpah, his maid, for a handmaid to care for her, no doubt fairly wealthy. And it came to pass that in the morning, Jacob yawned and rolled over and looked and it was Leah, because it's like a movie, you know. In the morning, behold, it was Leah.

And he said to Laban, what have you done to me? Jacob, you can't take a little bit of your own medicine? Did not I serve thee for Rachel? Why have you beguiled me? Besides the gene pool, what's going on here? Laban said, I didn't tell you. It's a custom. I, oh, I knew I forgot something.

You know, I just, everybody's from here, so I just thought, you know, we have this custom in our country that you always give your older daughter away for, you mean, I didn't tell you? Oh, I can't believe it. You mean you're surprised to wake up and see Leah there? I can't believe it. Laban said, well, it must not be done in our country to give the younger before the older.

So fulfill her week also. Why don't you work another seven years for me now? And give me that service, and thou shalt serve me seven more years. And Jacob did so and fulfilled her week, her seven years.

And he gave him Rachel, his daughter, to be his wife also. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah, his handmaid, to be with her. And he went in also unto Rachel.

And he loved also Rachel more than Leah and served with him yet seven other years. Now, talk about stress. This family is headed into it now.

Now, when the Lord saw, and this is going to give us the origin of the twelve tribes. That's why we have this detail. It isn't just to explain a dysfunctional family to us.

When the Lord saw, Leah was hated. The idea is she's unloved. Well, the Lord opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

And Leah conceived, and she bore a son. For she said, surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction. Now, therefore, my husband will love me.

And she conceived again. Now, the first one's named Reuben. She conceived again.

She bore another son and said, because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also. And she called his name Simeon. And she conceived again and bore a son and said, now this time will my husband be joined to me because I have borne him these three sons.

My three sons. Therefore, was his name called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son.

And she said, now Jacob's 84. She conceived again and bore a son. And she said, now will I praise the Lord.

Therefore, she called his name Judah. Now, as we follow this along, now take notice. Leah here bears Levi, who, of course, the tribe of Levi and the Levites and Aaron and those that will minister before the Lord.

She bears Judah, the line from which the Messiah will come. It's the name today that we use when we talk. When you speak of a Jew, it's just an abbreviation for Judah, because the northern tribes were carried away.

Benjamin was small and the southern area was called Judah. And those that survived became called Jews. So Leah, though she is not loved like Rachel by Jacob, is the one who gives birth to Levi and to Judah.

Very, very important. Now, it's interesting, and you can do this on your own. As you study through these tribes and their names, there are those who feel that in the names of the 12 sons, we have a kind of a description of the life of a believer and the things that we go through.

And there are those who feel when they give the reasons here why she named the sons the way she named them, that it gives you the history of the nation of Israel. Because she said, the Lord hath looked upon my affliction, which reminds us of Egypt. Then she says, the Lord hath heard that I was aided.

And God said to Moses, I've heard the cry of my people. Then she said, the Lord, you know, my husband will be joined to me. And that's what God did.

And then now I will praise the Lord, you know. So there's almost this beautiful succession of meaning as you follow the names along. And then the names themselves, you know, Reuben, because God sees, God hears, and you go along.

Then the Lord joined to us as a believer, then praising God. It's interesting. I don't know if it means a whole lot or not, but it's sure, I love those kind of things because it always reminds me how beautiful and how deep the Word of God is.

And no doubt, even in heaven, we will discover things that were hidden there that we had no idea of. Now, when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister and said unto Jacob, give me children or I'm going to die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel.

Jacob flipped out. He said, am I God? Who's the one who's withheld the fruit of your womb? You know, Rach, I don't have a problem. Lena and I, we already have four sons.

What are you giving me a hard time for? Maybe you need to pray. God's the one that seems to be, you know. And she said, well, behold, here's my handmaid Bilhah.

Go into her and she shall bear upon my knees that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah, her handmaid, to wife. And Jacob went into her.

And Bilhah conceived and bared Jacob a son. And Rachel said, God hath judged me and hath also heard my voice and hath given me a son. Therefore, she called his name Dan.

And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, with great wrestling have I wrestled with my sister and I have prevailed. And she called his name Naphtali, which means wrestling.

And when Leah saw then that she had left off bearing and that Rachel was giving her handmaid to Jacob and having children on Rachel's side, then Leah took Zilpah, her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to be his wife. Notice Jacob's not a complainer here as we're reading through this. I mean, everywhere else she gripes and makes deals, you know.

And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bared Jacob a son. And Leah said, a troop cometh. I'm not sure if I understand that.

And she called his name Gad. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bared Jacob a second son. And Leah said, happy am I for the daughters will call me blessed.

And she called his name Asher. Now, one day Reuben is in the field during the wheat harvest and he found mandrakes growing there. In the field.

And he brought them in unto his mother, Leah. Now, when Rachel said to Leah, give me, I pray thee, of thy mandrakes, because in the culture they felt that mandrakes would help with infertility. That they helped with ovulation, that they helped with fertility.

So the herb, the mandrake, came in from the field and Rachel's barren. Now she's asking Leah for the mandrakes. And Leah says to her, is it a small matter that you've taken my husband? He loves you more than he loves me.

And now you want my son's mandrakes too? And Rachel said, well, look, how about if I let him sleep with you tonight for the mandrakes? Okay, deal. Jacob comes out of the field that evening. And Leah went out to meet him, said, I have you tonight.

You must come into me, for surely I have hired you with my son's mandrakes. And he laid with her that night. And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived and bared Jacob a fifth son.

And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband. And she called his name Issachar. And Leah conceived again and bared Jacob a sixth.

So half the tribes come from Leah. And Leah said, God hath endowed me with a good dowry. Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons.

And she called his name Zebulun, which means dwelling. Each one of these names have to do with the way that the wife is thinking as she goes through these things. And afterwards, she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.

And God remembered Rachel and hearkened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bared a son and said, God hath taken away my reproach. And she called his name Joseph and said, the Lord shall add to me another son.

Joseph he shall add. And it came to pass when Rachel had born Joseph that Jacob said unto Laban, send me away. Now he doesn't mean away from his wives.

Send me away that I may go to my own country, my own place. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee and let me go. For thou knowest my service with which I have served thee.

I have worked hard for Laban. Laban said unto Jacob, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry. For I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake.

Jacob, since you have been here under my roof laboring for me, my own material gain has been great. And it is my observation, and this is a remarkable observation on the part of Laban, that Jacob, since you have been here, God is blessing me because of my hospitality to you and because you're here. And he said unto him, thou knowest how I have served you.

Jacob wants to get out of there. And how thy cattle were with me. And it was little which thou hast before I came.

You didn't have that much. And it is now increased unto a multitude. And the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming.

And now, when shall I provide for my own house? I mean, okay, you've got all the blessing, all this good stuff's going on for you. Let me move on. And he said, well, what shall I give you? Now he's going to barter with Jacob again.

And Jacob said, thou shalt not give me anything. If thou will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep the flock. You know, he says, you recognize that God is blessing you because of me.

Then listen to this. I will pass through all thy flock today. And I will remove from there all the speckled and spotted cattle and all the brown cattle among the sheep and the spotted and speckled among the goats.

And of such shall be mine. And they were less occasionally. Normally, the animals were solid colored.

Occasionally, they were born speckled with spots. And usually that was a recessive gene. So Jacob says, well, how about because there were less of them? How about when these are born? And it was probably the great minority.

How about if you give me these animals that are speckled and spotted? So shall my righteousness answer for me, Jacob says, in time to come when it shall come for my hire before thy face. Everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen. If I have an animal that doesn't look like that, then it's stolen.

This is the way we'll tell the difference between my animals and your animals. And Laban said, behold, I would that it might be according to thy word. Jacob, I mean, Laban thinks is a good deal.

So he removed that day the he goats that were ring straked and spotted and all the goats that were speckled and spotted. And everyone that had some white in it and all the brown among the sheep and gave them into the hand of his sons. And he set three days journey between himself and Jacob.

And Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. Now, Jacob took him rods of green poplar and of the hazel and chestnut tree. And he pilled white strikes in them, peeling back the bark and made the white appear, which was in the rods.

Now, I think he's setting this up to blow the minds of Laban and his family. And he set the rods which had filled before the flocks in the gutters and in the watering troughs when the flocks came in to drink that they should conceive when they came to drink. Now, I don't know.

You know, there's there's no biological force here in putting stripes in front of animals to make them have striped offspring. You know, that's like if your wife sees a cat while she's been with all these stories of your wife, she's a cat while she's pregnant. Your baby will meow or something.

And the flocks conceived before the rods and brought forth cattle, ring strake and speckle and spotted. Now, no doubt that was the hand of God. It wasn't the branches.

And Jacob did separate the lambs and set the faces of the flocks towards the ring straked and all the brown of the flock of Laban. And he put his own flocks by themselves and put them not unto Laban's cattle. And it came to pass whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters that they might conceive among the rods.

But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in so that the feebler were Laban's and the stronger were Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly and had much cattle and the maid servants and men servants and camels and asses. So Jacob is conniving.

He's in this. He's taking the healthy animals and making sure when they breed that they breed in front of these sticks, hoping that then the stronger animals will be ring straked and spotted because of the sticks. It's God's hand.

God will tell him, Jacob, I blessed you. I kept you. And he's taking the weaker animals and bringing them somewhere else and giving them to Laban.

Now, he's filled with all kinds of schemes, this guy. And he heard the words of Laban's sons. Now, notice this.

Laban has sons now at this point. He heard the words of Laban's sons saying, Jacob has taken away all that was our father's and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all of his glory. Now, they're discontent because they're going to be heirs.

It's going to be theirs. It's not going to go to Rachel and to Leah. It's going to go to these sons now.

And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban and behold, it was not towards him as before. Now, what it says, he looked at his face and he could see something was wrong. You know how when somebody's bugged at you, even though they try to be nice, you come away and you say, oh, man, something's wrong there.

Man, what an attitude. And the Lord said unto Jacob, now, look at verse three. The Lord said unto Jacob, return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee.

Now, we have no record over this 20 years of Jacob building a single altar, of Jacob praying, of Jacob offering sacrifice, though he was rich in cattle and lambs. The amazing thing that's 20 years ago, you know, when Rachel comes to him and says, give me children or I'm going to die, he screams at her. When Rebecca came to Isaac and said, I'm barren, it says that Isaac sought the Lord for Rebecca, and God granted that her womb would be opened.

Of course, she had the twins. Jacob, in all of this, working in the natural. There's no building altars.

There's no seeking out. We don't hear anything about prayer. And yet, here's God faithful now, coming to him after 20 years.

Somewhere around 90 years old now. And he says to Jacob, Jacob, return now. To the land of thy fathers, to thy kindred, and I will be with thee.

And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah from the field and the flock. And he said to them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before. But the God of my father hath been with me.

And you know that with all my power, I have served your father. I've done my best. Except that I've connived a little bit with the animals.

And your father hath deceived me and changed my wages ten times. Now, this family's really something. But God suffered him not to hurt me.

Now, that's a good lesson, by the way, if your boss is picking on you. None of you here are telling me, you know, my boss changed my wages ten times. Now, Jacob's saying, you know, it's your father.

He's a relative. He's my uncle ten times along the way. Now, he's changed my salary.

But God did not suffer that to hurt me. Important lesson for us. And if he said thus, the speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bear speckled.

And if he said thus, the ring strake shall be your hire, then bear all the cattle ring strake. So now it's telling us it was God because in how he was changing the wages, he saw all of a sudden all of the all of these ring strake animals being born to Jacob. So he went to Jacob and said, let's change this.

How about you get the speckled animals? And then Jacob said, then all of a sudden they all stopped bearing ring strake. They all start bearing speckled. And then Laban came back and said, you know, instead of you getting the speckled, why don't you get the ring strake? And then it says, then they all start bearing ring strake.

And Jacob's saying, you know, it's God has nothing to do with the branches. It's switching back and forth as Laban is switching the salary. God is switching the animals.

And God has taken away the cattle of your father and have given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ring straked and speckled and grizzled. And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream saying, Jacob.

And I said, here am I. And he said, lift up now thine eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ring straked and speckled and grizzled. For I have seen all that Laban has done unto you. Had nothing to do with the sticks.

I am the God of Bethel. Now, that's a very important statement because he's calling Jacob back to Bethel. And there will be great harm that comes to Jacob and his family, great difficulty because he does not respond to that.

Again, I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointest the pillar, where thou vowest a vow unto me. Now arise, get thee out from this land and return unto the land of thy kindred. And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there any portion in our inheritance for us in our father's house? You know, they said, Hey, Jacob, we're with you.

You know, now that our brothers are here, there's another. We don't get nothing out of this. We want to go.

Are we not counted of him as strangers? For he has sold us and hath devoured our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours and our children's. Whatsoever God has said unto you, we will do.

Now, by the way, I like it when your wife confirms the fact that you want to get up and move somewhere. You know, it's a great thing for husbands who feel called to ministry to have a wife that will say to them, Whatever you want to do, I think this is the Lord. My wife is always smarter than I am.

She's more sensitive than I am. And wisdom is always in the feminine gender in the Old Testament. I appreciate it greatly when my wife says to me, OK, do that.

I think this is the Lord. Well, honey, what I want to do is I want to pack up and I want to move 700 miles with our 11 kids and all of our flocks. OK, that sounds good to me.

You know, you got God confirming here. And Jacob rose up, set his sons and his wives upon camels, and he carried away all his cattle and all his goods, which he had gotten the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padinarum to go to Isaac, his father, in the land of Canaan. Now Laban went to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the idols that were her father's.

Now, the Code of Hammurabi tells us it was a capital crime to steal somebody's God. You know, if somebody can steal your God, you've got the wrong God. But in those days, if somebody stole your God, it was a capital crime.

And maybe Rachel's mad, figuring, well, I don't get any inheritance. You know, he doesn't have anything to do with us. And he favors the sons.

I'm going to take the gods with me, you know. So Laban goes in one direction to shear sheep. And Jacob figures this is a good time to vamoose.

So he loads everybody up and he heads out. And Rachel now has stolen the family idols. And Jacob stole away, unaware, to Laban, the Syrian, and that he told him not that he was leaving.

This is Jacob. So he fled with all that he had. And he rose up and passed over the river and set his face toward Mount Gilead.

And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob fled. Now he's miles away by now. And he took his brethren with him and pursued after him seven days journey.

And they overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. Now Jacob's making time to cross this much territory. And God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night and said unto him, take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

Now God comes to Laban and says, don't mess with him. Don't mess with him. And Laban overtook Jacob.

Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountain. And Laban with his brethren pitched in Mount Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, what have you done? Thou hast stolen away, unaware, to me.

You've carried away my daughters as captives, taken with the sword. Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly? You know, now Laban doesn't like it either. It was okay when he put Leah in the tent.

But he doesn't like it that this guy's doing something. Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly and steal away from me? Didst thou not tell me that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs and with instruments? Sure. And hast thou not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? And thou hast done foolishly in doing this thing.

It is in the power of my hand to hurt you. But the God of your father spake unto me yesterday night, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not unto Jacob good or bad. Now, I don't know what he thought that was when he said, it's in my power to hurt you if I want to.

I guess he thought that wasn't good or bad. Now, though thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longest after your father, though you know you're homesick and I understand that, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? OK, I understand you're leaving, you're homesick. What's the big idea of stealing my gods? And Jacob answered and said unto Laban, Well, the reason I didn't tell you is because I was afraid, because I said perhaps you would take me by force and take my daughters, take thy daughters from me.

With whomsoever thou findest your gods, let him not live. Before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me and take it to thee. If you find your gods here, he's saying, for Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

So he says, look, if you find your gods here with anybody in this party, whoever you find your gods with, you can kill them. They can be in your hand. And Laban went in to Jacob's tent.

That's the first place he went. That tells us what he thinks of Jacob. And into Leah's tent and into the two maidservant's tents, but he found them not.

Then went he out of Leah's tent and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images and put them in the camel's saddle and sat upon them. And Laban searched all over the tent, but he found them not.

So he goes into Rachel's tent. Rachel's sitting in there on the saddle going. And here's her dad tearing everything up.

And she's sitting on the gods. And if anybody can sit on your god, you've got the wrong god. Laban searched the entire tent.

And she said to her father, dad, don't let this displease you. I can't stand up because the custom of women is upon me. I'm having my period.

He said, OK, I'm not going to start with her. You stay right there. Now she's a chip off the old block.

What a family. This is amazing. And so then what happens is Laban comes out.

He didn't find the gods. He tore up everybody's tent. No doubt he threw everything around.

Now Jacob is wrathful. He's angry. And now he's chiding with Laban.

Jacob answered and said to Laban, what is my trespass? What is my sin that thou has so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou has searched all my stuff. Has thou found of all thy household stuff, set it here before me and my brother. Anything you found that yours put it here in front of me and thy brethren that they may judge between us both.

This 20 years have I been with thee. Thy hues and thy she goats have not cast their young and the rams of thy flock. Have I not eaten that which was torn of beast? I brought not unto thee.

I bear the loss of it myself. My hand disrequire it whether stolen by day or stolen by night. I didn't put any of that on you.

I took responsibility for myself. Thus I was in the day, in the drought it consumed me and the frost by night. My sleep departed from my eyes.

I've worked day and night. I was cold. I was hot.

I had insomnia. Thus have I been 20 years in thy house. I've served thee 14 years for your two daughters.

Six years for your cattle. And that doesn't say much for the daughters. And thou has changed my wages 10 times.

Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham. And isn't this interesting? The fear of Isaac had been with me. Surely thou had sent me away empty without anything.

But God's blessed me. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked thee last night. Jacob is angry.

And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, these daughters are my daughters. These children are my children. Now in that culture, he was the patriarch.

They would call Laban father, though he was the grandfather. He says, these children are my children. And these cattle are my cattle.

And all that you see is mine. And what can I do this day unto these my daughters or unto their children which they have born? Now therefore, cometh thou, let us make a covenant. You and me.

Now with these two guys, I can't imagine what good a covenant was. And let it be for a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone and he set it up for a pillar.

And Jacob said to his brethren, gather stones. They took stones and they made a big heap. And then they sat down and they ate on the heap.

I kind of like this covenant. And Laban called it Jaigar Shahaduthah. And Jacob called it Galid.

That was much smarter. Two different languages. Both words mean the heap of witness.

And Laban said, this heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galid and Mizpah, or a beacon or a watchtower. For he said, the Lord watched between you and me when we were absent from one another.

Now let me tell you something. As we go here, we hear people talk about Mizpah. And sometimes they wear like this half a coin and somebody else has the half a coin.

And then they do this Mizpah thing. No, this Mizpah thing is Laban does not trust Jacob. Jacob does not trust Laban.

So they set up this pillar and they call it a beacon or a witness. And it's to be, this is a witness against you on your side. And the other one says, this is a witness against you on your side.

This is something they have because they don't trust each other. That's what it is. And he says this, this Mizpah, he said, is a watchtower between us when we're absent from one another.

If thou shalt afflict my daughters or, you know, you abuse my daughters or you take otherwise besides my daughters, no man is with us to see, but God will be the witness between us. And Laban said to Jacob, behold this heap and behold this pillar, which I have cast between me and you. This heap be a witness.

This pillar be a witness. I will not pass over this heap to you and that thou shalt not pass over this pillar unto me for harm. Now, the bottom line is don't pass over this thing to harm with evil intention towards one.

It doesn't say evidently they could never visit one another. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of their father judge between us and Jacob swear by the fear of his father, Isaac. Isn't it interesting that he keeps calling the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac.

And then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount and called his brethren to eat bread and they did eat bread and tarried all night in the mount and early in the morning Laban rose up and kissed his sons and his daughters. Rachel said, I'd love to stand up and kiss you that I can't. You know what's going on and bless them and Laban departed and returned unto his place.

So we have now Jacob long journey, long chapter, a lot of territory recovered, but we have to get these 12 tribes of Israel, 11 of them. Now, Benjamin will still be born. We have to put all this in place.

Jacob is coming back to the land. God will change his name to Israel. When you hear of the 12 tribes of Israel, that's because God changed his name to Israel.

They are the 12 tribes of Jacob. Or when you hear of the children of Israel, it's the children of Jacob. But God changed his name.

He had these 12 sons and now we read ahead. We come to this remarkable story now where he is on the border of the land and he comes to Jabbok and there he wrestles with God and God teaching him another lesson, a remarkable lesson. So read ahead next week.

We will come to that place. Let's stand and pray together and have the musicians come.

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