

Genesis: God and Man

I Will Be With You

Genesis 31:1-21

Previously

- Rachel being overdramatic, very burdened by the fact that she couldn't have kids
- Gives maid Bilhah - Dan, Naphtali
- Rivalry with her sister, still values giving children to her husband as a way to get his affection
- Leah had four previously, thinks she's done, gives Zilpah
- Zilpah - Gad and Asher
- Reuben finds mandrakes, Leah buys a night with Jacob for them
- God listens to her
- Two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and a DAUGHTER Dinah
- God remembers Rachel, opens her womb (this family dynamic of barrenness)
- Joseph, Rachel's firstborn (it's no wonder Jacob favored him later)
- Jacob wants his freedom, deal with uncle Laban, spotted and speckled
- God continues to favor Jacob and his hard work, becomes quite wealthy, servants, camels

This family at large has had quite the trials, drama, and problems.

But through it all God is continually reaching out to them, listening to them, caring for them, speaking to them. He has a plan for them.

1Pe 4:12-13 NKJV - Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Jas 1:2-4 NKJV - My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

In the midst of the things we go through, even in our closest relationships, our families, know that God is with you.

Pro 18:24 NKJV - A man [who has] friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend [who] sticks closer than a brother.

:1 - 13

Jacob overhears what Laban's sons are talking about

The guys who were taking care of the other flocks

They're mad and say that all that Jacob has is really their dad's. That without their dad, Jacob would be nothing. I think they're jealous they're not as blessed as he is.

Ecc 10:20 NKJV - Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter.

He considered the way Laban was acting

Ever wonder why someone is acting the way they do towards you? Maybe it's a bad day, maybe they're in a bad mood, maybe you offended them, or maybe it's something else. Step back, consider it.

I love that here is where the Lord speaks to him.

When you have life troubles going on, relationship issues, perplexing and difficult situations. Step back, consider and pray that God would give you His take on it all.

Gen 31:3 NKJV - Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

So wait, RETURN TO THE PLACE I RAN AWAY FROM?

I've got problems here, but where I came from Esau was going to kill me
But this situation was bad, he had a family and a fortune to consider, plus his desire to be on his own, out from Laban's hand

Jacob is wise...he calls Rachel and Leah (not the maidservant wives) out to the field

He discusses the important matters in secret, away from prying ears and Laban

It's ok to talk in secret. Not everyone needs to know your business.

Married couples...your friends, your family DON'T need to know your private business. If situations get bad with your spouse, do as Matthew 18 commands.

Laban's countenance was fair weather

God blessed Jacob and when it directly profited Laban, Laban liked Jacob
When God blessed Jacob and it didn't profit Laban, Laban hated Jacob

"But the God of my father has been with me"

Not the God of YOUR father, Laban

**With all my might I served Laban
Changed wages 10 times!**

First month, then work 7 years, then work 7 more, then work 7 more, speckled, spotted...so we know more than even all this happened

Your father has deceived me

The deceiver now knows what it's like to be an honest, hard-working Joe(cob)
And to be ripped off

How many of us know what that's like? Bad landlord? Bad boss? Corrupt government or legal outcome?

Laban would change the deal, and God would honor it

OK Jacob, take the speckled this time (thinking there wouldn't be much)

Everything is speckled.

OK Jacob, take the spotted this time...everything is spotted.

It's not Jacob's fault, God is blessing him!

V9 - God has taken away the livestock of your father and blessed me

God is the one who transferred the wealth properly, he's the only one who can truly be Robin Hood

Not the Democrats/Socialists (truly Communist)

Hard work should pay off. Hard work should not go to pay for someone else to not work. At least by force or deceit or corruption.

Jacob reveals another heavenly dream

Here I am - the key answer when God calls

This is how God spoke to Jacob

The dream, the word to go home. **The land of his family. The promised land.**

Laban's land was not the promised land

Sometimes we stay in situations we shouldn't stay in. We stay in a place we don't have to stick around it. We stay in a job where we just get taken advantage of.

This doesn't mean we need to quit, move or get out of a situation when it doesn't go our way or if we're taken advantage of. Perhaps God has you there for a reason, for a time, to learn something, to gain something, to reach someone.

However, there comes a time when we really must consider why we are where we are. Are we just sticking around because we're afraid? Are we just masking our own fear or inability or doubt with some good motive of staying involved in something or with someone? We must pray and let God give us the answer...whether to stay or go. And we must obey. It will only get more complicated, more convoluted, more disastrous if we don't.

God was telling him, assuring him, that everything he had didn't come from Laban (he might feel obligated, or guilty leaving then) but that indeed everything he had was because God gave it to him.

Not a self-righteous argument, it's mine, i worked for it. But a righteousness imputed argument - you worked for it, but God blessed it 100x over.

"For I have seen all that Laban is doing to you."

Oh man, do we ever want God to be the one who sees what is being done to us.

Deu 32:35-36 NKJV - Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in [due] time; For the day of their calamity [is] at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.' "For the LORD will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that [their] power is gone, And [there is] no one [remaining], bond or free.

Rom 12:16-21 NKJV - Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but [rather] give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance [is] Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Mat 5:38-42 NKJV - "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have [your] cloak also. "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Let God be the one who determines the injustice in your life. Don't try to fight for yourself in an unrighteous manner. Let God sort it out. He is the only one who can truly serve up justice and blessing and reparation.

All of the blessing of the flock, is in part, God's response to Jacob's being taken advantage of. Laban, the man is trying to defraud his nephew.

But God is so much bigger than that, he uses the effort to defraud as an opportunity to bless.

Mat 10:27-31 NKJV - "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

The government may tax you unjustly, your employer might not pay you what your worth or overlook your dedication and talent and take advantage of your meekness, your spouse or family might put you down and not love you, but God sees.

You may think God is not acting...Jacob was working for decades for Laban... but look for the blessings and the word from God in the midst of it all. Are there blessings that you haven't taken note of? Things you have that God provided for you, even through those people? Know that God sees, and they have an end. It may not be in this life, but

Mat 6:19-21 NKJV - "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

If the tax man wants your money, let him have it. God will sort it out and give you more wealth in life and the next that money can't buy.

If your boss is taking advantage of you, know that he's the real slave to his own desires, and you're free in Christ to serve all.

If your family hates you, know that Jesus' brothers thought he was insane until after the resurrection. Joseph's family sold him up a river, and God used him to save them.

'I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.

Get out of this land. It's time to go Jacob.
Lot, flee. Abram, go. Get out, Jacob.

God reminds him of the pillar, the altar, the vow.

Look, I'm still with you Jacob. I've blessed you this whole time. Now let's go back, let's you and me God back together. I've always been with you, be with me now.

:14 - 21

Rachel and Leah answered

- We don't have any inheritance left with our dad
- Considered strangers by him...how sad. He treats them this way too, probably because of his feelings about Jacob
- He has sold us...they realize that their dad used them as currency to get Jacob's labor. That their dad truly didn't value them. My I never treat my children like that, I pray they always sense their immense worth
- Completely consumed our money...he just takes advantage of us. Any dowry we had he used because he kept us all under him

This guy Laban...way worse than I thought as a kid

"For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

Our dad is so corrupt, we know that all that we have is from God and that anything he thinks is his is really ours because God is taking care of it.

Obey God. You don't need to worry about us. We are with you. We know firsthand what our dad is like and there's no reason for us to stick around. He's not changing. He's only going to continue to take advantage of us...and with his countenance now, he might even harm us and take it all away.

Jacob packs it all up. Puts his family in the cars, and heads back.

To his father Isaac. Isaac was still alive (until chapter 35)
These many, many, many years, decades later.

While Laban was out sheering the sheep...Rachel steals his idols, his gods

Her motive? Maybe she wanted the blessing of them? Maybe she wasn't totally set on the true God? Maybe she wanted to really stick it to her dad who trusted in these things? He loved these false gods of wood and stone so much yet he cared less for his living, breathing family.

That should be a lesson to us all, to value those who are living more than the things people worship in this world, prosperity, careers, education, cars, possessions, notoriety, etc.

Jacob stole away...unknown to Laban the Syrian

The distinction that Laban was truly a Syrian. He wouldn't have inheritance in the promised land. He was set in his ways, his culture, his idolatry. He was not interested in the living God, even though the living God was interested in him.

Jacob leaves quietly, secretly.

He's running away, not like an upset adolescent, but because God was leading him out, and he knew that he couldn't announce it to his godless family.

What should have been a joyous time. Of blessing. Of Feasting. Of celebration and thanks, because his family was not following God, it would be a fearful, on the run, stealing away in the night (so to speak) event.

People moving on, moving out, following God. The way it happens can be a real litmus test to the spiritual condition of a place and a family.

Crossed the river and went to the mountains.

This was not an easy journey with all that they had, but it was necessary.

In your situations, what are they? What is God leading you to do?

Don't move until you have the sure word of God about them. But when you do, go at any cost. It's best for you, your family, and even those you might be leaving behind.

Because if God is telling you to, God will be with you.