

Commentary on Genesis 31 verses 1-30 by Chuck Smith 4.30.25

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

April memory verse

Commandment 1 Exodus 20:1&2

² I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

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And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and all that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory (Gen 31:1).

In other words, they are now saying, "Hey, that really belongs to our dad. Jacob's stolen it from us". Not so. Jacob made the deal. His dad made the deal, but now the brothers are jealous because Jacob has such a large flock. They're so strong and healthy and there's a great jealousy.

And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before (Gen 31:2).

It wasn't, "Oh, hi there", you know, and "son", and wasn't the old good buddy anymore but his father-in-law was really changing in his attitude.

And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to your family; and I will be with thee (Gen 31:3).

And so Jacob now hears from the Lord. He sees that the attitude is changing and God speaks to his heart and tells him to go back.

And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock (Gen 31:4),

Now he, rather than talking about it in the tent where he might be overheard, he calls them out in the field so that he can talk to them privately.

And he said unto them, I see that your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as it was before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And you know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father has deceived me, and he's changed my wages ten times; but God would not allow him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be your wages; then all the cattle bore speckled: and if he said

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thus, The ringstreaked shall be your hire; then the cattle all ringstreaked. And thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up my eyes, and I saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled (Gen 31:5-10).

In other words, God showed him really in a dream how and when and so forth to cause them to conceive.

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 your eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. And I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, and where you vowed a vow unto me: now arise, and get thee out from this land, and return to the land of thy family (Gen 31:11-13).

So it is interesting that God announces to him, "I am the God of Bethel. Come back to the place of your family. I am the God that met you there in Bethel".

And so Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house (Gen 31:14)?

In other words, our father has gone ahead and used up our dowry. He's not given us anything. We've got nothing there.

We are counted to him as strangers for he has sold us, and has devoured our money (Gen 31:15).

He spent the dowry. He sold them. He spent the dowry. We're just like a stranger to him.

For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, it's really ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto you, go ahead and do it. Then Jacob rose up, and he set his sons and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all of his cattle, and his goods which he had gotten, and the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen [the teraphims], the images that were her father's (Gen 31:16-19).

The little idols that they used.

And Jacob stole away unaware to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he was fleeing. So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and he passed over the river, and he set his face toward mount Gilead (Gen 31:20-21).

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Now Mount Gilead is about three hundred miles away and Mount Gilead is the mountain range that goes on the West Bank of the sea of Galilee and into that area there, about three hundred miles away. He fled with all of he had towards Mount Gilead. But of course, traveling with that many animals and the family and everything was slow travel. The best you could do would be about fifteen to twenty miles a day. And he had a good start.

Actually his father-in-law was out shearing the sheep and it was three days before Laban even found out that he was gone. He probably had worked his flocks down to the southern extremities anyhow. And probably put about ninety miles distance between at the start of the time before he started driving them away. And then he put three days more journey between him and Laban and Laban couldn't just leave the shearing of the sheep immediately. Probably finished up as fast as he could before he took off to catch Jacob. But because he was forced in a fast march to catch Jacob, he caught him down around the area of Mount Gilead. Just about three hundred miles distance.

So it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled. And so he gathered his brothers with him, and he pursued after him for seven days; until he overtook him at mount Gilead. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, Take heed that you speak not to Jacob either good or bad. Then Laban overtook Jacob. And now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brothers pitched in the mount of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What have you done, you stolen away unaware to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and did not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with parties, and songs, and the tabret, and the harp? And you've not allowed me to even kiss my grandchildren, my daughters? You've done foolishly in doing this (Gen 31:22-28).

Laban really had other ideas. He had really ideas of taking by force all that Jacob had. He had ideas of perhaps even killing Jacob. But God came to him in the night before and said, "Hey, don't you even talk to him good or bad". Well, that was a hard order and so Laban comes in and he puts on this whole hypocritical thing, you know. "Why did you steal off? I wanted to kiss my grandchildren. We could have had a big party", you know. In reality he would have never let Jacob go. He would have just ripped him off and sent him away without anything. But because God has now put the squeeze on him and won't let him do anything, he's just, you know, acting like he's been hurt and offended and all.

And he said,

It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me last night, saying, Take heed that you don't speak to Jacob either good or bad. And now, though you would needs be gone, because you long after your father's house, why have you stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said to Laban,