

Genesis 31:7-55



~ Our Spiritual Safari was looking into the window of Jacob's life in our last report, and we saw him in a very bad place. Unfortunately for Jacob, it's going to get worse before it gets better. This is a very long chapter God has given to minister to our needs. We need to embrace it. Even after everything that has happened, and is happening in Jacob's life, God wasn't willing to just give Jacob up - and that should be very comforting to us - I know it is to me.

As long as we continue to turn to Him and trust Christ in our lives then He will receive and deliver us. If God will use a man like Jacob - or Andrew C. Hunt - then I am of the opinion that God will use anyone who has an honest and willing heart. So, Jacob is coming off of twenty years hard labor, hardship, self-denial and being defrauded of wages, being deceived, entering a contract that was breached against him - and there were straight up lies by Laban to Jacob. Jacob is not in a good place in his life. He is quite cynical, you may be sure; and not only that, but he is now beginning to break under the pressure and stress that this arrangement with Laban has culminated into.

God has prospered Jacob - but in a way that, in turn, was really only a benefit to Uncle Laban - and now the Laban family has turned against Jacob! Laban's sons are jealous and angry with Jacob. Why? - Because Jacob has made them prosperous. Have you ever heard the phrase, "...no good deed goes unpunished?" This is it - make a family member - or another individual - wealthy and see what happens. Friends, I could give some famous examples, but you could also look them up! Remember, we labeled Lot the "Christian tragedy," - well, this is the "Christian Catastrophe" we're talking about now; and we're talking about Jacob! Here in our account, we pick up where God tells Jacob to get up, get out and go home. Jacob calls

Rachel and Leah together so he can talk it over with them, you know. Jacob tells them what's on his heart....

7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

~ Obviously, Jacob is complaining about being wronged. What's really confounding is the realization that, right after that complaining, Jacob goes on to explain to his two wives how he has "taken advantage" of certain loopholes in the law in his business dealings with Laban. It wasn't outright dishonest, but it wasn't totally above the board, ethically. This was a legitimate "grey area" of the business law that Jacob was abusing for gain, and it should not have been done this way. However, it's important to note that the Lord has blessed Jacob to, in turn, bless Laban; but that success was to the extent that Laban and his sons became very jealous – in fact, they hate him now....

8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled.

11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

~ Perhaps you were left feeling shortchanged in our last report from our so-called safari - and that a satisfactory answer had not been given to what

had taken place. There are several different commentaries on this animalistic matter. I suggest you read them all. I'm not going into them. I teach the Bible – not that stuff. What I will tell you is that I don't feel it was the best possible ethical practice, but guess what? – God said, "I did it!" Because God confesses He is responsible, I am not looking for some far-out explanation. I don't need to cut animals open in a laboratory looking for an answer that isn't there. All I know or need to know is packed away in one little Bible verse. I'll accept almost any explanation. It all appeared to these people as normal and natural life changes. I am of the opinion that – we just don't know! We're not told anything further - so we're moving on....

13 I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

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

15 Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.

~ God tells Jacob to move on, too. Jacob has twelve boys that have already learned many things in Laban's home that they shouldn't have learned; and which will all have to be un-learned. Idolatry and heathenism are rampant in this family and God wants them ALL out of Laban's house immediately. So, the wives talk this thing over and come to the conclusion that some of Laban's stuff is theirs, too. I mean, after all, the inheritance would go to both of them, at least, in part, any ways. Well, Laban is not to be trusted, either. Rachel and Leah know Laban could and would steal them away from Jacob and sell them because the money that was paid for them by Jacob is long since spent. There are more Christians than not that reveal they cannot be trusted by the Lord simply by the way they handle money. If you make a deal with Laban you are in for a real test of your individual Godly resilience; and you will soon part ways with your money. I could tell you personal business stories that would make one question the entire business world model. Phony Christian leaders are the worst perpetrators of this evil! We have no genuine spiritual Christian leadership on a national level

today. We do have a whole lot of the blind leading the blind – and they do it right on television all day long. The church and the pulpit are doing things and saying things they ought not to do and ought not to say....

16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, which is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

~ I completely admire the way Leah and Rachel both stand behind Jacob all the way. They are finally trusting God now - and they're beginning to trust their husband because he is finally calling on the name of the Lord - but, most importantly, they are all trusting God. They feel that their father, Laban, had robbed them – and he had - but hang on, because Rachel is, apparently, a little thief here, too. It happened - and it will have consequences. We need to realize there are consequences to sins for the believer IN THIS LIFE. The Lord will deal with His children in the real time of right here and now - and He has no problem correcting and reproofing anyone. Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth betimes. Notice how Jacob leaves Laban the same way he left home before – in a hurry! This time, at least, Jacob has prepared a little bit better for leaving by having the camels watered up and the cattle ready to drive....

17 Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;

18 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 Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

19 And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.

20 And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

21 So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead.

22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

23 And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.

24 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.

25 Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

26 And the ever clever and overly dramatic rat that is Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?

27 Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly , and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?

28 And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.

~ If you have a good Bible with a map you'll see they've traveled a long way really fast. Laban had to be riding as hard as he could to overtake Jacob with three days head start; so, Laban isn't concerned with Jacob's well being. He's angry enough to kill Jacob – and all twelve of his sons – and then sell the girls. Laban is overly dramatic and a huge liar. None of this is true as Laban says he 'would have made a feast to send them off properly' - because in the same breath Laban says he 'would and should kill them' - but God was preventing that, according to Jacob. Does Laban seem a tad conflicted in his mind to you? It's our WORDS that give us away, friends. It's the tongue that identifies YOU and ME. The bucket of the mouth will always bring up what is in the well of the heart – sooner or later. So, our entire so-called Christian life lives and dies by our words; and, by the way, we are masters of the unspoken thought – but we are the slave of a spoken word....

29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

30 And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?

31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.

32 With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

~ This is the way of idolatry, friends. This is how it works. God didn't want Jacob to raise his sons in Laban's home environment; but, ironically, Rachel was brought up in his home. This is a primitive, heathen notion she has when she decided to steal the gods of Laban. It's a pretty small and ineffective – and warped god - that can even be stolen, isn't it? More than likely, they were stolen mostly out of spite and meanness. These images had been in Rachel's home her entire life - and she liked them. She probably wanted to decorate the new place with them, you know? I have to wonder if they used some of the "images" to consume mandrake? Notice how Jacob didn't answer immediately about the gods - because he honestly didn't know anything about them. Jacob was totally sure, at this time, that no one in his family would do this sort of thing – but – if you think Laban trusts Jacob, you're entirely wrong! Laban also knows what these girls were up to. Notice what happens next here. Do you think this twenty-year business relationship has been pleasant and fruitful? ~

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched the entire tent, but found them not.

35 And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.

38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.

40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

~ Laban knew it was one of the girl's who had stolen the idols. Finding the stolen gods would have given Laban an opportunity to really hurt Jacob by killing the thief – and you can bet your life he would have, too! After twenty years of service, Laban wanted to send Jacob away with nothing. Laban represents the godless capital businessman today; but, moreover, Jacob didn't submit in his father's home – but now the Lord has made Jacob to submit to his uncle. That's harsh! Jacob thought he was coming in to

receive Rachel with pride and dignity – but Laban made Jacob his servant. Jacob had deceived his father Isaac so long ago; and he was deceived by his mother's brother in exactly the same way....

42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

43 And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.

46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

47 And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.

48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

49 And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

51 And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee;

52 This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.

54 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.

55 And early in the morning Laban rose up , and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed , and returned unto his place.

~ Verse forty-eight is the contract between two thieves that they agree to stop stealing from each other. I guess they are only going to steal from someone else from here on out. These guys are each asking the Lord to keep an eye on the other. Sound familiar? So, Laban and Jacob now part ways permanently in our Spiritual Safari. Jacob was deceived by Laban the same way he had deceived his own father. Remember, Jacobs's mom had given Jacob the goat fur to trick Isaac with - and it worked. Jacob will receive the same trickery from his sons with the coat of Joseph's. Deception, lies, usury, cheating and a total disregard for others is how the account ends today. Unfortunately, more of the same continues in this section of the Word of God as we continue on. Well, God says, "whatsoever a man shall sow, that shall he also reap" ~

