

STUDIES IN GENESIS CANDY SEALE

LESSON 18 CHAPTER 31-33:11

BACK TO CANAAN

It has been twenty years.

Jacob came to the land of his mother's family with only a staff in his hand. And in this time, God has more than abundantly blessed him. Now he has a large family and an abundance of livestock.

But it has also been twenty years of frustration. Jacob has been working for his father-in-law, Laban, who has more than met his match in wit and deceitfulness. Laban has consistently taken advantage of Jacob at every turn.

At the same time Jacob is "reaping what he has sown" in his own deceitfulness and manipulations. His whole family is quite dysfunctional. Laban is seen to be the "king" of liars and manipulators. He no doubt has raised his family to be of the same character, his daughters becoming Jacob's wives. Oh what a lovely family! One can only imagine how these children are being raised.

And so now it is time to leave this environment of Laban's household. These boys are one day to be the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel. They need to know the God of their fathers. They need to be familiar in how to walk in God's ways. They don't. They have already learned ways that will be a detriment to them later on in life. This is not where they need to grow up.

READ GENESIS 31.



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(Remember, pray before you start. Let this not just be an intellectual assignment. Only through God's Spirit can we even begin to understand God and his Word that He chooses to reveal to us. Pray with the Psalmist, "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from your law." Psalm 119:18

What new factors have developed that have confirmed in Jacob's mind that it is time to take the family and go home?

Genesis 31:1-2 _____

Genesis 31:3 _____

Genesis 31:11-13 _____

Notice Laban's behavior toward Jacob these past twenty years. How many times did Laban change his wages? (Genesis 31:7, 41) _____

Oh my goodness, that Laban. He is something else. He makes buying a birthright for a bowl of stew seem to be a small thing in comparison. But does Laban ever really win at his manipulations? (Genesis 31:8-13)

No matter what Laban does, it is God who is the one blessing Jacob. And God continues to bless Jacob.

How does Jacob leave? (Genesis 31:17-21) _____



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What does Rachel do before leaving? (Genesis 1:19) _____

Why do you think Jacob leaves without Laban knowing? _____

Yes, we read the noble things that Laban says about his family leaving (Genesis 31:27). However everyone knows that Laban cannot be trusted for anything that he says. Nevertheless, do you know what the most important reason why it is that Laban rushes to catch up with Jacob and family? (Genesis 31: 30) _____

You see, the household gods imply leadership of the family. This would mean that Jacob would inherit all that Laban has.

If only Rachel could understand who Jacob's God is and the promises he has given to Jacob. The last thing Jacob needs is Laban's stuff!

Nonetheless, Rachel has the gods and Laban is determined to find them. Does Laban get his gods back? Why? (Genesis 31:32-35) _____

Oh that Rachel! She is truly Laban's daughter. He has taught her well! The drama of this family continues.

THE COVENANT



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These two guys, Laban and Jacob; neither one can trust the other. Jacob just wants to be gone. But Laban is not going to let him go with the possibility of Jacob coming back and taking more from him. What solution do they come to? And what is their basic agreement? (Genesis 31: 43-55)

The basic idea is to keep these two rascals from stealing from each other or from harming each other from this point on. Neither one is to cross over his side of the boundary.

This covenant pretty much takes care of the idol that Rachel has stolen. The idol is now worthless in Laban's mind if Jacob is never able to come his way again.

ONE BEHIND, ONE IN FRONT

Jacob is free to move on; the past twenty years are behind him. But do you remember who he is moving forward toward? (Genesis 27:41)

The drama never ends.

READ CHAPTER 32

Jacob is leaving Laban and all that relationship behind. And now he is meeting up with another relationship that he has never resolved. Who is up ahead in Canaan? (Genesis 32:3)



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As Jacob moves forward, what is he feeling? And what does he do? (Genesis 32: 1-12)

Jacob is learning. He is greatly afraid and distressed and he goes to God. He pleads for mercy. He reminds God of the promises that God has made to him. This is exactly what God desires of him and of us all when we are afraid.

After Jacob prays, does he rest and wait for God to answer in God's way and in God's timing? What does he do? (Genesis 32:13-23)

Jacob just got a vision of angels from God. This is God's battle. He remembers that God promises to take care of him. And yet Jacob comes up with a scheme. He is still filled with fears and doubts. He has always fixed things with his manipulations and tactics. And so he comes with plans of gifts and flattery.

Jacob sets everything up for the night and then he plans to be alone. What happens? (Genesis 32:24)



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From Genesis 32:30, we see that this man is God himself. Jacob tells us that he saw God face to face. What takes place during this encounter with God?

Jacob is alone because he wants to be alone. He is not looking for a fight. God has different plans. It is time for Jacob to meet God face to face. It is time for Jacob to be broken so God can use him. How does God do this? (Genesis 32:25)

God touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh and he becomes helpless. The struggling and the striving are over and Jacob is clinging to God.

This is a very significant place in Jacob's life. What does he call this place and why? (Genesis 32:30)

Before Peniel, Jacob was strong and confident in himself. Many times life got hard for him, but he hung in there and worked things out. He lived by the flesh.

Now Jacob is a changed man. He will walk with a limp for the rest of his life and this limp will be a reminder to him and to everyone that knows him that



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he is a new person. Something wonderful happened that night on the way to Canaan! Jacob is now clinging to God. Jacob is now a man of faith.

MEET THE NEW JACOB (ISRAEL)

READ GENESIS 33: 1-11

What is different in the line-up of Jacob's family than it was the night before? (Genesis 33:1-3)

Jacob passes over before the family. He puts himself in the front to meet his brother. The night before Jacob was in the back, protecting himself. This is a different man.

And what do we see about Esau in Genesis 33:4? (Remember Genesis 27:41)

Esau is also a changed man!

Jacob was so worried. God had promised him that he would take care of him. Jacob knew that. What did Jacob have to worry about?

Nothing.

And what does God tell us that we should worry about? (Philippians 4:6)



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God is in control He called Jacob. He made promises to Jacob. He always keeps his promises. He always has. He always will. This is easy to see when it is hindsight. However the same is true for every one of us. God calls us all. He wants us to believe and come to him. He wants us to trust him. He makes promises to us. He always keeps his promises. He always has. He always will.



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