

recap of two weeks ago: Jacob grabs his wives, kids and stuff and sneaks away from Laban's greedy hold (85)

on him after possibly around three decades of being used by Laban. Laban is not happy about losing the only source of his being blessed and the basically free labor that came from Jacob's being there. So Laban chases after him. Laban had two motives in mind on his pursuit of Jacob: (1) kill him (31:5) and (2) retrieve his false idols (gods).

Genesis 31:31-32 Jacob is not an idol worshipper so he righteously says, "I don't care about your 'gods' so, if you do find them here go ahead and kill the person that took them. (He had no clue that Rachel had taken them).

Genesis 31:33-35 Laban searches everyone's tents but does not find the "idols" that Rachel is hiding.

Genesis 31:36-38 Jacob is rightfully angry with Laban. He says point blank, "I have only taken that which rightfully belongs to me. Here, verse 38 identifies that Jacob has worked for Laban for 20 years. This could blow a hole in my presumption of Jacob being there for @ 30 years. It could also be that Jacob did not "work" for Laban until after his labor for both Leah and Rachel had been completed ( $7+7=14$  years).

In any event Jacob spent a long time there.

Genesis 31:39 This statement bears explanation: A sheep herder, or any herder for that matter, was responsible for the safety of the herd. That is why he had a rod and a staff. The staff would hook the stray animal and pull it back to the safety of the herd. The rod on the other hand was used to beat off any advancing predator. Now, if a shepherd were to have had one of his flock attacked he would have to bring the

carcass back as proof that he did not sell, or eat it. Here Jacob is declaring that even those <sup>(86)</sup> who were lost due to attack were replaced by him. Jacob also calls out Laban for his greed by saying to him, "Even if an animal were stolen outside of my watch, you would still have charged me with its loss!" (In the same shepherd mindset let's read about the True Shepherd, Jesus: see printout John 17 + John 10)

Genesis 31: 40-42 Jacob corrects my math in verse 41! And Jacob once again blasts Laban to his face by telling him that God, and the fear of Isaac, kept Laban somewhat just. Otherwise he would have been swindled out of everything.

Genesis 31: 43-44 Laban is delusional in that he thinks everything belongs to him even though he has "sold" all of it to Jacob in the form of Dowry for the daughters and wages for the labor.

Genesis 31: 45-50 The heap of stones had two names. The first was in Aramaic (Laban's language) and the second was in Hebrew (Jacob's language), both mean "witness" or "watch over". Furthermore, Laban continues to spout nonsense in saying that Jacob would be dealt harshly with if he were to take other wives (and concubines) outside of his two daughters. He said this because if Jacob died then he could stake some claim to the wealth of the widow's Leah and Rachel. Also, the saying "Mizpah" is not a term of endearment from Laban to Jacob by saying, "may God lay a protective watch over you" but rather, "may God watch you, you rotten scoundrel".

Genesis 31: 51-55 Finally, Jacob severs from Laban!

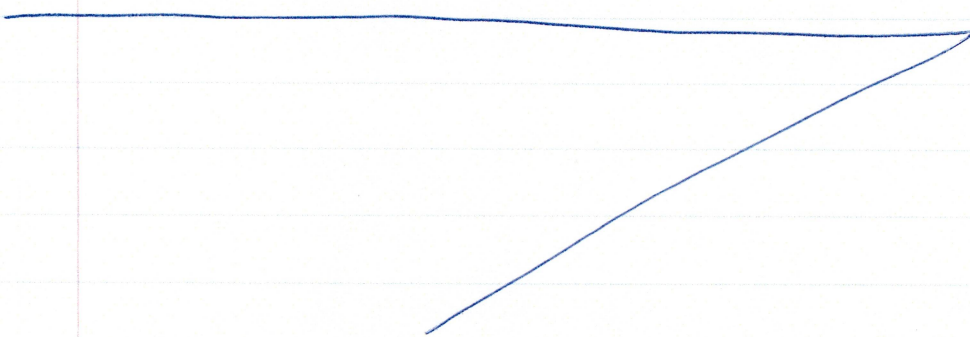
Genesis 32: 1-2 On Jacob's way back to home country he meets some angels of God. These are actual angels, not preincarnate Jesus. Jacob names the place Mahanaim, or God's camp because angelic hosts are there. It is also a place where Jacob gets some peace knowing that he has some angelic hosts near him especially as he heads back home to where his brother Esau surely is!

Genesis 32: 3-5 Jacob sends out messengers to let Esau know he is humbly coming to greet his brother. The word lord means master. And Lord means Jesus. And LORD means Jehova Yaweh. He also lets the messengers share that he (the servant) brings with him wealth that he acquired while at Laban's.

Genesis 32: 6-8 Jacob assumes that he is running away from one person that wants to do him harm only to fall right into the hands of his brother Esau that also wants to do him harm. So, he divides his people and flocks into two companies figuring that if one is captured the other will escape. That doesn't sound too righteous to me. Especially that he sees God is working many many things in his favor. During his decades at Laban's Scripture tells us that he is blessed. Then God warns Laban to watch his step when he confronts Jacob. Now he sees angels around him directly as he starts his journey! Would God have blessed and delivered him all those times only to abandon him now? No, of course not. And neither will God who has brought you and I thus far abandon us! God saying, "I have lost none of those that you have given me" or "I will never leave you nor forsake you" is a guarantee of His continued hedge

of protection on our lives right up to that last second where we have completed every last thing that He had pre-ordained us to do. (88)

Genesis 32:9-12 Reading these verses I am even more confused about Jacob's lack of faith, and more concerned about my moments of lack of faith! Here we read that Jacob was told by God that he should go back home, and that God would be with him. (Side note: I have these moments as well! Times when I know it is God's will that I do this or that but I hesitate, or I negotiate. Sometimes I catch myself and say, "Lord I believe help my unbelief". And after I have prayed that often enough in a situation, I see God's grace pour over the situation. (see printout Mark 9)



Intentionally left blank, We'll pick up verse 13 on next week

