

W030114a – 04/29/26
Genesis 30-33
“The Life of Jacob-Part Two”

Introduction

- Tonight we will continue our study of the Old Testament and the Book of Genesis, remember

The word Genesis means “beginnings.”

- And truly so many things in scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
 - The universe, life in general
 - Man, marriage
 - Sin and evil, Language, government, nations
 - And specifically, we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact, understanding what this book is about is the beginning is really a good way to divide up our look at this book

Outline for the Book of Genesis

#1 – The Beginning of All Nations – Genesis 1-11

The Creation – Genesis 1-2

The Fall – Genesis 3-5

The Flood – Genesis 6-9

The Tables of Nations – Genesis 10-11

#2 – The Beginning of the Jewish Nation – Genesis 12-50

Abraham – Genesis 12-23

Isaac – Genesis 24-27

Jacob – Genesis 28-36

Joseph – Genesis 37-50

- And tonight we continue our study of the third patriarch of Israel, a man by the name of Jacob, a man as we have seen already in our studies of him, a man of many sides and many emotions

And we can relate because all of us can have many sides to our personality and sometimes they can turn on a dime

In fact, I was reading one commentator on this section and he was encouraging young men that just because Jacob had four wives, this was not something the Bible wanted us to follow

- In fact, he went on to say, you don't need four wives, one is enough, they will change personalities so often it will feel like you have four wives
 - Now that was what I was reading not what I say – don't get mad at me ladies..... don't prove my point

Anyway, of course this is true for many of us in the room, our moods and attitudes can change at any moment

- And Jacob was no exception
 - And so as we go through our text tonight, I want us to notice three different sides to Jacob, please write these down and think these through

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

#3 – Panic – Genesis 32:1-33:16

- Let's look at these one at a time tonight and pick it up where we left off last week, in chapter 30 of Genesis, verse 25 - Jacob at this time has had 11 sons and 1 daughter, from 4 different women, the family is growing and then we read...

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

- Fourteen years Jacob has served Laban for his two daughters, something like 20 times the normal bride price, and Jacob has had enough

I'm out of here, Uncle Laban, it is time for me to go

- But then Laban says, no – don't leave – I know I have been blessed because you have been with me, name your wages and stay, stay working for me so the blessings for me continues

The first thing I would like you to notice in the text is that when we work as unto the Lord, when we do things determined to please the Lord... people notice.

- Whether it is the world or a fellow Christians, people will notice when you are a diligent worker.
 - Laban says “I have learned by experience, the Lord has blessed you.”
 - He saw it personally
- Christians we ought to be the best workers our boss has. We should be the best student possible. – the best neighbors and friends

You see, here is a secret.

- God loves to bless those who are His people.
 - That was the original plan for the nation of Israel. – God would bless them as they followed His ways and then the other nations would say, hey, who is this God of Israel?
 - That was God’s plan with Israel, but friends, I believe that is what God wants to do with us as well
- We follow His Word, not to make Him love us anymore, not to make our salvation more secure, but just because it is the best way to live – and the world sees

The world says, hey I want to know this God that you serve, I want to live for Him like you do as He blesses you

- I have noticed that your life is a blessing
 - That is what is supposed to happen in our lives

That is what was happening between Jacob and Laban

- I have noticed, God has blessed me, because of you
 - Your work ethic, the way you live - So don’t leave, tell me what you want your wages to be

And Jacob then seems to mention a pretty bizarre request - it was normal for someone in his position in those days to ask for up to 20 percent of the flock as payment, no doubt that was what Laban was expecting

But then Jacob says, I want all the speckled and spotted sheep and goats

- now you combine his request with the knowledge that most sheep and goats come out all one solid color, the speckled and spotted are rare
 - more than that, the text seems to indicate that Jacob suggests that Laban remove all the speckled and spotted sheep and goats and that he only watches the solid color ones
 - so if you know anything about science, you know Jacob is making it harder on himself, Jacob must not know DNA, you need a little speckled and spotted sheep and goats to get speckled and spotted babies

And so when Jacob suggests this, Laban is overjoyed

- may it be according to your word, totally Jacob, deal, sign right here
 - it would be like today, a business executive up for a vice president position saying, can you pay me at least half of minimum wage, can you swing that? – can you pay me 8 bucks an hour?
 - Yes – we can swing that – sign right here

So Laban thinks Jacob is crazy and quickly agrees

- but then something bizarre happens
 - Jacob puts striped poles out in front of the mating sheep, and they produce striped babies. He puts rods out in front of the strong animals, and they conceive and he doesn't in front of the weak animals and they don't

And the result is the majority of the babies are spotted and so Jacob's herd gets bigger and healthier, while Laban flock gets weaker and smaller.

- Now what in the world is going on here?
 - Is this some new farming technique we are not aware of – Maybe? – some have speculated the sap got in the water and created a mutation... – I don't know...

One Commentator, Nahum Sarna argues that it was known in ancient times that more vigorous animals of the flock were single-colored hybrids. Therefore by careful observation as to which animals are more energetic, the breeder can determine which single colored animals carry recessive genes for spottiness.

- Sarna goes so far as to suggest that Jacob may have done the elaborate procedure of arranging the peeled sticks to disguise his empirical technique.

We don't really know in our day and age what Jacob was doing

- But whatever was happening we know it was the Lord, because we are told later in the chapter that Laban changes Jacob's wages 10 times
 - Meaning for a while Jacob got the speckled and spotted lambs and goats and then Laban changed it to the solid colored
 - And then yet the flocks started having solid color offspring
- In other words – it was just the Lord – in fact we are told in chapter 31 that Jacob was given insight by God to ask for the speckled and spotted animals, it says...

“And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted.” – Genesis 31:10

- So it could be the sap – I don't think so
 - It could be the Jacob had insight into the fact more vigorous animals were single-colored hybrids and developed this elaborate scheme of polls and rods to hide the fact he was just using selective breeding
 - But the best answer is it was just the Lord blessing Jacob no matter what

Jacob is determined to obey and honor what the Lord told him to do

- He knows most sheep and goat are solid colors and so when God gives him this vision, I'm sure he asked – are you sure Lord?
 - but for once Jacob is just trying to honor the Lord, to honor His plan and do it God's way

And whether the spotted poles had anything to do with it or not

- I think it is clear, God blesses Jacob's obedience and determination as He will bless our determination to follow Him – do it hardily for the Lord Paul tells the Corinthians
 - So God blesses Jacob, but as we continue on we notice, everyone is not so happy back at the ranch – Laban is upset and that brings out another side of Jacob

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

- The chapter opens up by saying the countenance of Laban had changed, meaning the look of his face was no longer favorable toward Jacob
 - Those who do public speaking like myself know that people's faces are not always positive – people don't always smile when they look at you, sometimes they look like (angry scowling face), which is why I often scan the tops of your heads looking for someone who is smiling, because honestly it is hard to preach when someone is looking at you like (angry scowling face)

Well I don't think Jacob was a public speaker, but he could tell Laban was no longer smiling, and so he realizes, the time is now for him to head back to the land of his father

- but first he must get his wives on board
 - and the reason is a cultural thing in Mesopotamia

From all the records we have from these societies, it seems clear that it was against the law in Mesopotamia for a man to take his wife out of the country without her permission

- I say this because we picture these gals back then were doormats and baby producers, but in ancient Babylon women had more rights than in some 3rd world countries today
 - So hence the meeting, Jacob is saying, we need to go and I need you to be on board
 - And the girls totally agree

In verse 14 when they say, “Is there any inheritance or portion left for us in our father’s house?”

- it is a reference to the 14 years Jacob had served for the two of them
 - if a young man traded work for a dowry, the father was supposed to take that money that he earned and put it away for the girls if the marriage went south
 - but Laban had done nothing of the sort

He hadn’t saved those wages, to him it was just 14 years of free labor and he got his girl’s expenses off the books – win, win for Laban

- So the girls are saying, there is nothing for us in his house, let’s go Jacob
 - And they were off

Now we saw that Jacob’s determinations were seen by the world, blessed and led by God, but now he is on the run, and Laban catches up, there is a confrontation and the frustration flows from Jacob’s heart

- and I want you to notice a couple of things about that

Notice 2 things about Jacob’s frustration

#1 – Jacob is getting upset about flaws in Laban’s character, but he has the same flaws in his life.

- Jacob is mad that Laban has deceived him
 - But that is what Jacob’s name meant and who he was

Remember his life – taking the Birthright?

- Remember the hairy arms?
 - This guy Jacob is a deceiver and he is mad at Laban for deceiving him? Do you see the disconnect?

But it is amazing how bad our sin looks on other people.

- That is why Jesus exhorted us to examine the plank in our own eye, before removing the speck in our neighbor's.
 - Because I am hardheaded, one-way God deals with my sin, is to show me that sin in others.
 - I am learning that when I am frustrated with someone, to look at my life, and see what I see.

Notice 2 things about Jacob's frustration

#1 – Jacob is getting upset about flaws in Laban's character, but he has the same flaws in his life.

#2 – Jacob's anger, though it appears justified, is not based on all the facts.

- Laban is so upset because he thinks Jacob has stolen his gods
 - Now right there stop a second - if your God can be stolen, that is not a very good God
 - If your God can be hidden by sitting on it – that is not a good God

But all of that aside, Jacob is frustrated, how can you say, I stole your gods – He is so mad, but...

- Rachel did have the idol!

Now why would she do such a thing?

- Well something called the Nuzi tablets, which are writings from this time that give us insight into the culture, suggests possession of the family gods strengthened your claim to the inheritance
 - So it could be that Rachel stole them, so that someday, once her Dad was dead, she could come back and say, all of his wealth is mine, look I have the household gods
 - That could be what is going on or...

It could be just she was having a hard time letting go of her past

- And I think all of us to one degree or another can understand

Some things we were into when we got saved, man, the hold they had on us was gone instantly but some things that we clung to in our rebellion before God, well, they still have a hold on us after we meet God – right?

- I know none of this applies to you any of you here tonight, but those watching at home can relate right?

I mean, whatever the reason, what was Rachel thinking?

- what would have happened if they had been discovered?

Death? The penalty for stealing household gods in that culture was death, Jacob actually says “whoever has them, go ahead and kill them” he has no idea it is his favorite wife

- Jacob passed the sentence of death, but it was already a death sentence to steal someone’s gods (I still can’t get over that) and I’m sure that is why Laban is trying to find them with Jacob – but it wasn’t Jacob, it was his daughter - Would her father have killed her?
 - I don’t know, and we will never know because she deceives her deceitful father

But the point is Jacob is angry, angry without all the facts

- This is a problem we can run into all the time

We get angry without having all the facts

- Has anyone every thrown you a surprise birthday party and you were upset because you thought everyone forgot you?

And you have your little pity party – and all the time, people are going to extremes to bless you

- That is what is happening with Jacob
 - He is frustrated, without all the facts
- That is why it is so important to be slow to wrath like the book of James says

I think one of the greatest pictures of this is Jesus cleansing the temple in Mark's gospel

- Mark's gospel lets us know something about this famous and often misunderstood story that is so often used to justify "flying off the handle in anger, because you Jesus did that one time" well that is making a decision without all of the facts, because Mark's gospel tells us, Jesus goes to the temple, sees the wickedness, but then go to away for the night – no doubt praying, "God what do you want me to do about this?"
 - And the next day, Jesus comes back and verse 15 of the same chapter – starts turning over tables

But without Mark's insight – we picture Jesus losing it like we do

- and doesn't it make you feel a little better, wow, Jesus got upset, so do I – that's good!
 - but when we really see the story, we see that He was right on like always, slow to anger, slow to wrath
- So we too precious church – we need all the facts, we need to slow down and pray
 - to hear it all out before overreacting.

Well the chapter ends with these two deceivers – Jacob and Laban making a covenant with one another

- they gather stones and make a covenant
 - and Laban calls the pile of stone "Jegar Sahadutha" which is Aramaic, in fact it is the only Aramaic in all of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, it is all Hebrew except this one name
 - And Laban uses Aramaic because that is the language of Haran or really what is modern day Iraq

Jacob calls it "Mizpah" but both Mizpha and "Jegar Shadudtha" mean the exact same thing, it means

"Mizpah" = "The Lord watch over us while we are apart"

- And sometimes I see this in Christian bookstores, oh this is so sweet, the Lord watch over us while we are apart

It sounds nice, but the intent of the Hebrew and Aramaic phrase is “I don’t trust you, you rat, so God watch you while I can’t”

- So next time your Christian neighbor says, Mizpah, you will know what they really mean!

Well one more section tonight

- Jacob is going to leave Laban and really the nation of modern-day Iraq, and head back to the promise land, right toward his brother Esau, who last he saw him, Esau wanted to kill Jacob
 - So we could really call chapter 32, you remember “between Iraq and a hard place” – sorry I just had to throw that in one more time... chapter 32...

Different Sides to Jacob – Genesis 30-33

#1 – Determination – Genesis 30:25 – 43

#2 – Frustration – Genesis 31:1-55

#3 – Panic – Genesis 32:1-33:20 – Just read chapter 32

- When Jacob first leaves the promise land he is met by angels, at Bethel in the dream we call Jacob’s latter, and as he comes back to the promise land, he is met again my angels
 - He calls the name of the place “God’s camp”
- What a security Jacob must have felt, God was with him
 - But then he finds out Esau is coming with 400 men!!!

You remember how Esau and Jacob left one another

- Jacob deceiving his father
 - Esau wanting to kill him
- Now, his brother is coming with 400 men

Jacob panics – what is he going to do?

- The first thing Jacob does, when he thinks he is in trouble is he begins to panic and then he plots
 - He panics – what am I going to do?

Then he plots – I know I’ll divide into two groups, and then Esau will only destroy the one, and the rest can escape - And I want you to notice this is all after God shows him that He is with him, he still panics and he still plots

I bring this up, because we can do the same thing

- We are moving along, smooth sailing in our lives
 - And then bam here comes trouble
 - Something unexpected, some disappointment, some trial

And immediately we begin to panic

- What am I going to do, I thought she was the one?
 - I guess I am going to be old and single, its over
- What am I going to do, I lost my job - The Bills, my car?

We panic, and then we plot

- I know, I'm going to win him back
 - He won't be able to resist me
- I'll take a loan out or get a second job for that car, it will work

And all the while we, just like Jacob, have the promise that God is with us, He is working for our good

- But somehow that is not enough
 - So we panic and we plot

But what we really should do, is what happens next – He prays

- And even though he blames God at first which is so typical – God you said you would be with me, but Esau is coming
 - Yeah – you know it wasn't my plan for you to glue all the goat hair to you? Right?
 - He blames God for the effects of what he did wrong, but then Jacob prays some pretty important things

He reminds himself of God's past faithfulness

- "I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies."
 - When I came to this land, I owned a stick, and they are free, that is pretty sad – what do you own? - I own a stick
 - And yet now God has made him two companies – God you have been faithful

Friends it is so important when we are panicking, to remind ourselves of God's past faithfulness

- because God's past faithfulness is evidence, He will be faithful in the future

He remembers God's faithfulness and He repeats God's promises

- You said "to come home"
 - You said – "you would be with me"
 - You said – "you would take care of me"
- Nehemiah did the same thing, reminding himself of the promises of God in Nehemiah chapter one

"Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.'" – Nehemiah 1:8-9

- It is very important that we reiterate or repeat the promises of God in our prayers
 - Not to remind God or convince Him that He needs to bless us
 - It is not like reminding your boss or your parents of what they said
- The reason we are reminding God is to remind us!
 - We reiterate the promises of God to strengthen us

You see it builds our faith to remember what God has said

- God you told me you would provide all of my needs
 - So when an unexpected bill comes in, I pray, "Lord you said you would provide"
- Now, does that make God respond? – oh you are right
 - No, but it builds my faith and I trust in Him

Understand God has made some rich promises to you in His Word, and in a world of uncertainty they are about the only thing you can depend on, God will back up His Word – this is why we must have consistent times in the Word so you can know those promises and pray them in Well we see Jacob, reminding himself of God’s promises, giving it all over to the Lord, but then something interesting happens.

- Jacob panics, then he plots, then he gets to what he really should be doing, he prays, but then, what next??
 - He is not praying and resting in God to help him
 - He is not praying and trusting the Lord knows best

No, he is taking the matter back into his own hands - You ever do that?

- before we criticize Jacob, we need to examine our own hearts to see if we’ve ever been guilty of praying piously and then depending on our own schemes and resources.
 - There is something about us that will run to prayer but then take the situation back into our own hands

Something in us is convinced that we know what’s right - Something in us is sure we can do it better

- And I fear we can be like that, I know I have, where I get on my face and pour out my heart, and give an issue totally over to the Lord, and then take it right back again
 - Let God guard us against that
 - And teach us to trust in you

Jacob is going to learn, but He is going to learn the hard way

- He has sent the gifts ahead, separated his family
 - He has no idea how Esau will respond
 - And now he will have one of the two most important nights of his life.

One was at Bethel

- He was running away, had nothing

**And God revealed that He was with him, in that place,
and God told him He would bless him**

Well Jacob is about to have another encounter with God

- In Jacob's two meetings with God
 - One he walks away with literally happy feet
 - This one he leaves limping

The reason as we saw on Sunday is God hurts Jacob

- We don't like to think about that, but that is exactly what happens
 - And it is not because God does not love us, but precisely because He does
- From God hurting him, Jacob gets a new name, a new nature and a new legacy
 - And when God allows you and me to go through difficult times it is often for the same reasons
- You have a nature of not trusting, or being angry or bitter all the time – and whether you know it or not, other people know that about you – it is what marks you
 - But so often as we walk through difficulties, God softens our hearts toward others, our priorities shift, and change

**And all of sudden we have a new nature, a new character
that marks who we are**

- And more than just a blessing to us, it will also leave us with a lasting legacy to pass on to our children and grandchildren
 - As was the case with Jacob, it was not his craftiness his children remember – it was not his ability to be a can do man
- What the next generation remembered was his brokenness before the Lord
 - God touched his hip, God hurt Jacob if you will

And generations of his children and grandchildren would not eat that same muscle on a cow or goat or sheep from that day forward

- Because of who their dad was after God broke him, it was that which stuck in their memories, it was that which marked them

**Jacob wrestles with God all night and gets a new name and a new nature, but then Esau is still coming – let's see what happens before we go our way tonight – [chapter 33](#)
[As you are reading...](#)**

- Image what Esau sees, last he remembers his brother, he was stealing a blessing – but now Jacob had given him all these gifts and he is bowing before him seven times

Jacob and Esau are reunited and instead of killing him like Jacob thought he was coming to do – Esau runs (I wonder in that moment what Jacob thought, “this is it”)

- But Esau hugs Jacob and meets his family
 - And then Esau asks what is up with all the gifts and he says, I don't want them Jacob I have enough
 - It was a substantial gift of 550 animals
- But then Jacob insists and says, no, Esau take them, I have enough

**Now what is not clear in English but so insightful in the original language is when Esau uses the word enough
The word translated into English as “enough” in verse 9 is the Hebrew word “rab,” and it means “much or many.”**

- But when Jacob says “I have enough” in English the same word is used
 - But Jacob uses a different Hebrew word

The Hebrew word Jacob uses in verse 11 is “Kol,” and it means “everything or all things.”

- And you see, by this, the growth in Jacob's life
 - He spends the first half of his life thinking he has got to deceive and trick to get all he can for himself

But now he has met with God and he realizes, take the sheep and the goats – I have everything and what is implied is, because I have the Lord

- I hope you feel that way

Paul said to his friend Timothy..

“Godliness with contentment is great gain.” – 1 Timothy 6:6

Well after receiving the gift, Esau says come with me to Mount Seir

- And Jacob probably because he doesn't want to go from being under the influence of Laban, one worldly man, to now under the influence of another worldly guy, his brother Esau, Jacob tells Esau, “I can't go with you, the flocks and the children cannot be driven that hard, I will meet you there later”
 - And Jacob really has no intention of following his brother to Mount Seir because as you can see on this map

Jacob and Esau different directions map (the full map and cropped map side by side).

- Esau heads far south and as soon as Esau is out of sight, Jacob goes right back across the river Jabbok and stays there for what will be 8 years

And all of this panic and not trusting the Lord instead of as Jacob did at times of praying and trusting really makes this chapter end pretty sad

- For remember God was calling Jacob back to Bethel, the place he first met the Lord
 - And Jacob wastes 8 years in “Sucketh” well Succoth
 - And then when he finally does move toward the promise land, toward Bethel the house of God, he stops in Shechem

And what is really sad about that is Shechem is just 12 miles short of the city of Bethel

- Less than a day's journey

It was close but it was not where the Lord wanted Jacob, and we will discover next Wednesday night the horrific ramifications to Jacob and his family, all because this guy stopped 12 miles short of where God called him to be

- As we leave tonight = what has God called you to do?
 - What is your reaction to it?
 - Are you determined to do your best and trust the Lord with the rest

Or are you frustrated and agitated

- Have you begun to panic, I don't know how this is going to work out? – or are you praying? – reminding yourself of the past faithfulness of God and His promises to you
 - Have you gone all the way, have you obeyed completely?
 - Or do you find yourself 12 miles short, so to speak, of what has called you to
- Realize precious ones – God still loves you in Shechem, He still loves you when you are 12 miles short – but you will suffer and have a hard time
 - Go all in – go all for it
 - God loves you and wants to bless you
 - You need to believe that is true and obey!
 - Amen? Amen!