

The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 52



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB LEAVES LABAN AND LABAN PURSUES HIM

Gen 31:1 "And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. ² And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. ³ And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. ⁴ And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, ⁵ And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. ⁶ And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. ⁷ And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. ⁸ If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstreaked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstreaked. 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 ringstreaked, speckled, and grised. 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 ringstreaked, speckled, and grised: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. 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. ¹⁶ For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do. 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." . . . (Genesis 31:1-25)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jacob overhears Laban's sons saying he had stolen all their father's goods and his glory. He also beholds how

Laban's face was different toward him. At that time, the Lord told him to return to the land of his fathers. He calls Rachel and Leah into the field, away

from their dwellings, and tells of the commanded impending departure. He also tells them how the Lord had taken their father's flocks from him and given

Laban's sons say Jacob has stolen his sheep. The Lord tells Jacob to return to his land. Jacob tells Rachel and Leah and tells them what he is going to do. – Given O. Blakely

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them to Jacob. Additionally, He relates to them a dream he had in which he was instructed by an angel. This is the first reference to this Divine communication. Rachel and Leah tell him to proceed to do what he has purposed, citing that they had nothing left, for their father had devoured all their money, and there was no further reason for them to remain with him. Gathering his wives, his children, and all of the wealth he had accumulated, Jacob commences his trek to Canaan. Laban finds out he has left, and that some of his idolatrous images have been stolen. He immediately sets out to find Jacob, finally overtaking him at Gilead.

THE RESPONSES OF JACOB

In view of what has been said about Jacob, it is good to consider his obedience – whether directly to the Lord Himself, an angel, or someone being used by God.

- ➔ Obedience to Rebekah regarding obtaining the blessing (Gen 27:6-14).
- ➔ Obedience to Rebekah when she told him to go to the house of her brother Laban (Gen 27:42-45).
- ➔ Obedience to Isaac when he told him

to obtain a wife from Laban's daughters (Gen 28:1-5).

- ➔ Responded in faith with thanksgiving and a vow to the revelation of God to him in a dream regarding his safety (Gen 28:11-22).
- ➔ He obeyed the Lord when He told him to return to the land of his fathers (Gen 31:3-20).

Thus Jacob is presented to us as a sensitive man. He did not want to be known as a deceiver, yet followed through with what Rebekah told him to do (Gen 27:12).

When God made remarkable promises to him, Jacob erected a pillar, gave thanks, and made a vow to the Lord (Gen 28:20-22). **There was a sense in which Jacob became another man after that initial contact with the God of heaven.** It constituted his personal call – Similar to that of Abraham (Gen 12:3) and Isaac (Gen 26:3-5).

THE CALL OF GOD

Throughout the Scriptural record of God's dealings with men, the call of God marked a new beginning for those whom He called. Here are some examples.

- ➔ NOAH (Gen 6:13-18).
- ➔ ABRAHAM (Gen 12:3; 15:18).
- ➔ ISAAC (Gen 26:3-5,24).
- ➔ JACOB (Gen 28:13-15).
- ➔ MOSES (Ex 3:4-20).
- ➔ JOSHUA (Josh 1:1-9).
- ➔ JESUS' DISCIPLES (Luke 6:13-16).
- ➔ PAUL (Acts 26:14-18).

These men were not the same after they were called of God. Their entire lives were altered. Their reason for living changed. The focus of life changed. Their priorities were modified. For them, the will of the Lord became

the preeminent thing. They looked at the world differently. They were more aware of the need to be acceptable before the Lord.

IT IS NO DIFFERENT NOW

Now, in Christ Jesus, it is no different. Whereas, prior to Christ, relatively few people were "called," now every person in Christ is described as "the called" (Rom 1:6; 8:28), and those who "are called" (1 Cor 1:24; Eph 4:1,4; Col 3:15; Rev 17:14).

There are objectives to our calling, just as there was for those saints of old. These objectives are reflected in the lives of the faithful.

- ➔ Called to be saints, or holy ones (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2).
- ➔ Called into fellowship with Christ Jesus (1 Cor 1:9).
- ➔ Called to liberty (Gal 5:13).
- ➔ Called to peace (1 Cor 7:15).
- ➔ Called to His kingdom and glory (1 Thess 2:12).
- ➔ Called to holiness (1 Cor 4:7).
- ➔ Called to eternal life (1 Tim 6:12).

THE CALL OF GOD

RESULTS IN A
DISTINCTION
OF CHARACTER

SEPARATION FROM
THE COURSE OF
THE WORLD



- ➔ Called to receive the promise of an eternal inheritance (Heb 9:15).
- ➔ Called out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet 2:9).
- ➔ Called to suffer for Christ (1 Pet 2:20-21).
- ➔ Called to inherit a blessing (1 Pet 3:9).
- ➔ Called to eternal glory (1 Pet 5:10).

Called Through the Gospel
 Our call came through the Gospel of Christ. As it is written, *“Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thess 2:14). The Gospel itself did not do the calling, but **HE** (God, 1 Thess 2:13) called us by means of the Gospel. That confirms that the Gospel is *“the power of God unto salvation”* (Rom 1:16). The fact that we are called by the Gospel does not

suggest the call is in any way impersonal.

It is not possible to **receive** this call and not be changed by it. Once the calling is perceived, there is an instant change of thinking – as when Saul of Tarsus was called, or apprehended (Acts 9:6). An immediate assessment of life takes place that provokes a dominating desire to know and do the will of the Lord.

JACOB HEARS THE WORDS OF LABAN’S SONS

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

HE HEARD THEIR WORDS

“And he heard the words of Laban’s sons . . .”

overheard Laban’s sons?” The text does not tell us of the circumstances.

I am inclined to think that Jacob had either taken the additions to his flock to where the rest of his flocks were being kept, or that Laban’s sons came and obtained them by agreement. At any rate, I do not know why they would have said the following if they

read, *“hath acquired all this wealth,”* ^{NKJV} *“and being enriched by his substance is become great”* ^{DOUAY} *“He has gotten rich at our father’s expense!”* ^{NET} *“he hath made all this honor”* ^{YLT} and *“All his wealth is at our father’s expense.”* ^{LIVING}

The claim of the sons was exaggerated, to say the least. Jacob had been keeping Laban’s flocks, which were appropriately called *“a multitude”* (Gen 30:30). Laban himself had separated the flocks he agreed would belong to Jacob (Gen 30:35-36). There is no indication that he was, at that time, alarmed at the number of the flocks he separated. When he gave Jacob’s flocks into the care of his sons, they gave no recorded indication that they were astounded at the number of them. It appears they saw nothing that could be called an abnormality – certainly nothing suggesting Jacob had stolen some of Laban’s flocks.

Now, however, after his flocks had increased so significantly, they made the claim that Jacob had taken away all that their father had, and had himself received all of the glory.

When he gave Jacob’s flocks into the care of his sons, they gave no recorded indication that they were astounded at the number of them. It appears they saw nothing that could be called an abnormality – certainly nothing suggesting Jacob had stolen some of Laban’s flocks.

We do not know when this occurred, or how it was that Jacob, separated by three days’ journey from Laban’s sons, came to learn of this report. Had word reached him about what Laban’s sons had said? Had Jacob herded the additional animals that belonged to him to where his flocks were being kept, and at that time

had not in some way been confronted with the dramatic increase of Jacob’s flocks – an increase that was of God.

THE FALSE CLAIM

“ . . . saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father’s; and of that which was our father’s hath he gotten all this glory.” Other versions

THE LORD DIRECTS JACOB

“² And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.³ And

the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.”

JACOB BEHELD THE COUNTENANCE OF LABAN

“And Jacob beheld the

countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. . .” Other versions read, “it was not favorable toward him as before,” ^{NKJV} “it was not friendly” ^{NASB} “Laban’s attitude was not what it had been,” ^{NIV} “did not regard him with favor,” ^{RSV} “regarded him differently than before” ^{CJB} “he could tell his attitude toward him had changed” ^{NET} and “Laban’s manner towards him was not as it had been in the past.” ^{NJB}

God has made man so that his countenance often betrays his attitude. This is part of the Divine image within man that enables him to better understand the certain expressions concerning the Lord Himself.

- ➔ “The LORD lift up **His countenance** upon thee, and give thee peace.” (Num 6:26)
- ➔ “For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; **His countenance** doth behold the upright.” (Psa 11:7)
- ➔ “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of **His countenance** .” (Psa 42:5)

There is nothing quite so refreshing as sensing the pleasing countenance of the Lord. Equally true for the godly, there is nothing quite so disconcerting as sensing that the Lord is “displeased” with them (Gen 38:10; Num 11:1; 2 Sam 11:27; 1 Chron 21:7; Psa 60:1; Isa 59:15; Zech 1:2,15; Mk 10:14).

Familiarity with God brings a certain sensitivity of His pleasure and displeasure. Blessed is the person who cultures this sensitivity and does not allow it to die.

RETURN UNTO THE LAND OF THY FATHERS

“. . . And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred . . .”

Jacob had gone to Mesopotamia to obtain a wife. The chronicles of his

stay there reveal that **God also intended for Jacob to obtain a family and wealth in that place.**

Now that these objectives have been met, God instructs him to return to the land that was promised to Abraham. There is where the “great nation” God promised Abraham must begin its development.

The Lord had already revealed to Abraham that his people would enter another nation, and be oppressed for four hundred years (Gen 15:13-16). But in due time, they would come out of the nation

Previously we have read of what:

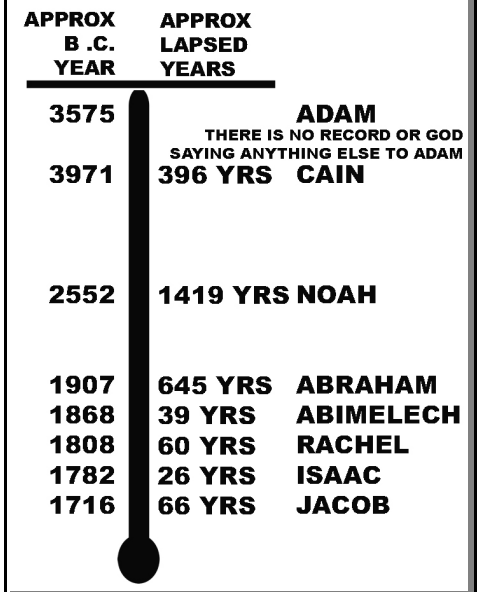
- ➔ “Esau said to Jacob” (Gen 25:30).
- ➔ “Isaac said unto Jacob.” (Gen 27:21)
- ➔ “Laban said unto Jacob” (Gen 29:15).
- ➔ “Rachel said unto Jacob” (Gen 30:1).

We read that the Lord stood above a ladder in Jacob’s vision, and talked to him: “And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” (Gen 28:13-15).

This is the first time we encounter the words “God said unto Jacob.” We will read them again in Genesis 35:1). Prior to this the words “God said” are mentioned twenty-four times. **This is the first time they refer to what was said to Jacob.**

The above incident occurred more than twenty years before the events of our text. At the time the separation of the animals was about to take place, “the angel of God” again spoke to Jacob (Gen 31:11).

GOD SPEAKS IN EARLY TIMES



SOMETHING TO NOTE

The infrequency of heavenly communication prior to the Law is staggering to consider. People who were addressed by the Lord Himself, or an angel, include:

- ➔ Adam and Eve (Gen 3:9-19). Approximate Year = 3575 BC
- ➔ Cain (Gen 4:6-15). Approximate year = 3971 B.C.,
- ➔ Noah (Gen 6:8-8:21), Approximate year = 2552 B.C.
- ➔ Abraham (Gen 12:3; 13:14; 15:1-21; 17:9-20; 18:13-15,23-33; 22:11-12). Approximate year = 1907 B.C.
- ➔ Abimelech (Gen 20:3-7). 1868 B.C.
- ➔ Rachel (Gen 25:23), Approximate year = 1808 B.C.
- ➔ Isaac (Gen 26:2). Approximate year = 1767 B.C.

→ Jacob (Gen 31:3). Approximate year = 1716 B.C.

This infrequency does not indicate a fundamental reluctance on God's part

way that had been darkened and cluttered by sin had to be cleared before anything related to eternity could be revealed.

be the place where the necessity of God-centeredness would be taught through the Temple service, and the concept of a representative of man before God would be taught in the priesthood.

If this postulate is accepted, then we have an obvious answer to the glaring absence of spiritual understanding in our time. **It is because sin is dominant, and men do not know God. I know of no other answer.**

AND I WILL BE WITH THEE
" . . . and I will be with thee."

God made this same promise to Isaac: "Sojourn in this land, and **I will be with thee**" (Gen 26:3). En route to Laban's house, God told Jacob, "*And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of*" (Gen 28:15). Once Abimelech and his captain said to Abraham, "**God is with thee in all that thou doest**" (Gen 21:22).

This is a most remarkable promise, for God is "*a great King over all the earth*" (Psa 47:2), and is "*the most High over all the earth*" (Psa 83:18). **This necessarily means that no one can effectively be against the person with whom God is identified.**

Now those in Christ "*may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*" (Heb 13:6). We have the example of the patriarchs that confirms this is the truth. **In them God demonstrated His own faithfulness and effectiveness in protecting those with whom, He is aligned.** O, that men were more convinced of this fact. May it be proclaimed with power!

While men banter like little children about the extent of man's fall, and how depraved he is – if at all – we are faced with the arresting fact that God not only revealed very little during the period before the Law, but even those revelations were often separated by hundreds of years.

to communicate with fallen man. It rather reflects the impact that sin had upon the human race. **Men had been rendered incapable of any extensive communication with the Living God.** The very first man who was personally notified of God's gracious objective for humanity was Abraham. Even the revelation given to him was very abbreviated. He was told that God intended to bless "*all families*" and "*all the nations*" of the earth (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). He did the same to Isaac (Gen 26:4), and to Jacob (Gen 28:14). That is the most general view of God's "*eternal purpose*" in all of the Scriptures.

Men had to obtain a measured, yet accurate, knowledge of God before He could speak to them concerning His "*eternal purpose.*" Even then, the fulness of this purpose was not revealed until more than four thousand years after Adam, when it was made known to Paul the apostle (Eph 1:11; 3:4-11). **This confirms that more was required than the spiritual education of humanity.** Before God could unveil His purpose, sin had to be judged and taken away. Transgression had to be punished, and a due ransom paid. **The**

While men banter like little children about the extent of man's fall, and how depraved he is – if at all – we are faced with the arresting fact that God not only revealed very little during the period before the Law, but even those revelations were often separated by hundreds of years.

If it is true that God had a profound desire to reveal His will (Gal 1:16), and that He delights in men knowing Him (Jer 9:23-24), then we must see that the prevalence of sin, coupled with the spiritual obtuseness of men kept Him from making His marvelous purpose known to men. **Therefore, the burden of His revelation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had to do with the formation of a people, and the occupation of a land.** This had basically to do with an environment being provided in which the Son of God could be reared, advancing in wisdom, and stature, and favor with God and man (Lk 2:52).

The land would also be the locus in which the Savior would go about "*doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*" (Acts 10:38). It would also

JACOB CALLS RACHEL AND LEAH TO THE FIELD

"⁴ And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,⁵ And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.⁶ And ye

know that with all my power I have served your father. ⁷ And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. ⁸ If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstreaked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstreaked. 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 ringstreaked, speckled, and grised."

JACOB CALLS RACHEL AND LEAH

"And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock . . ."

This strongly suggests that Jacob had transported his animals, which he had sequestered from the rest of Laban's flock, to the place where Laban's sons had been keeping his flocks—i.e. the ones Laban had separated from his own, sending them with his sons three days' journey away.

The Lord has told him, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee" (Gen 31:3). Now, Jacob will prepare his wives (together with their maids and all the children) for the trip to Canaan. He will not leave them ignorant, but will divulge enough for them to see why this return was imperative. **For the first time, Rachel and Leah, together with their handmaidens, will be leaving their homeland to take up residence in Canaan.**

YE KNOW

" . . . And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; **but the God of my father hath been with me.** ⁶ And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. . ."

Three background facts are related. They will provide the context in which Jacob will present the necessity of him returning to Canaan, together with themselves, their children, and all

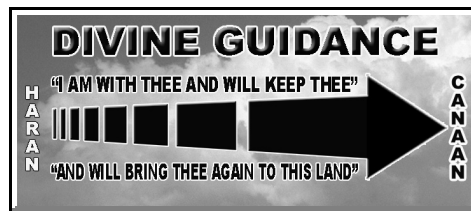
of his possessions. These will justify the move.

Your Father's Countenance

" . . . And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before. . ."

Jacob is no longer walking in the favor of Laban. What has happened is this: Jacob's time with Laban has come to an appointed end. He has secured a wife from his father's kindred, and has amassed wealth sufficient to support all of the people involved. There is no further reason to remain in Haran.

God has been with Me



" . . . but the God of my father hath been with me. . . " Even though Laban had been deceptive, and the way has been difficult, **yet Jacob had survived it all because God was with him, just as He had promised.** There really is no other way to account for Jacob's safety and success. In Jacob, this statement was spoken so the following could later be observed and thought upon: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

Now, the God who has kept him has commanded him to return to his homeland – and Jacob sees that he must do so. There really is no other acceptable response.

Have Served with All My Power

" . . . And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. . . " Other versions read, "with all my strength," ^{NASB} "as hard as I could," ^{CEB} "to the uttermost of my power," ^{DOUAY} and "I have worked as hard as I could," ^{GWN} "with all my heart." ^{ISV}

Although the circumstances were

not ideal, yet Jacob worked for Laban with all of his strength. **He doubtless did this trusting in the Lord's promise to be with him.** That promise kept him going, so to speak, enabling him to look beyond the circumstances to his ultimate return to Canaan. Lest we forget, we are speaking of a period of twenty years (Gen 31:28). Yet, just as God had promised, He kept Jacob "in all places," wherever he went (Gen 31:1). He kept him in his tent, and in the field; when he was keeping the sheep during the day, and when he kept them at night. In everything Jacob did, God was with him. **Knowing this, Jacob put all of his strength into what he did.** He did his work as thoroughly and consistently as possible. He took good care of Laban's flocks, and carefully increased his own according to his agreement with Laban. He was in no way half-hearted, slothful, or neglectful. Rachel and Leah were his witnesses, and could attest to the truth of what he said.

LABAN'S TREACHEROUS WAYS

"And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times..."

Now we learn something about Jacob's tenure with Laban that was not recorded prior to this time. We know that Laban deceived Jacob in giving him Leah instead of Rachel (Gen 29:23-25). This text suggests that was not the only time Laban deceived Jacob.

Laban "changed" Jacob's wages ten times, even though he never struck an agreement with Jacob that included a change in wages.

A Possibility

It is said that the goats and sheep had births twice a year – in the summer, and in the winter. At the time of our text, Jacob had been with Laban for twenty years (Gen 31:38). When he first met the conditions Laban had set to have Rachel; as his wife, he been there fourteen years – two seven-year periods. That means at the time of this text, he had spent six more years with Laban. During that time there would be at least ten periods during which

the flocks conceived and gave birth. If true, then each time Jacob's flock increased, Laban could very well have changed his wages. While this is really nothing more than an idea, it does introduce some interesting possibilities.

GOD DID NOT ALLOW LABAN TO HURT JACOB

" . . . but God suffered him not to hurt me . . ." Other versions read, *"God did not allow him to hurt me,"* ^{NKJV} *"God has not allowed him to harm me,"* ^{NRSV} *"God did not permit him to harm me,"* ^{RSV} *"God has kept him from doing me damage,"* ^{BBE} *"God, however, would not let him do me harm"* ^{TNK} *"[did not give to him the God of my father] the power to do evil,"* ^{ABP} and *"God protected me from all of Laban's tricks."* ^{ERV}

Laban, with all of his wiles, trickery, and evil intentions, was never able to do any harm to Jacob. It was not because Jacob outwitted him, but because God protected Jacob, just as He said He would: *"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest..."* (Gen 28:15).

Remember, God also kept Abimelech from defiling Sarai, when he had ignoble intentions all along. *"And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against Me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her"* (Gen 20:6). Later, when Jacob was traveling home, it is written, *"And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob"* (Gen 35:5). When God gave the Israelites instructions concerning three special feasts to be attended by all of the males, He promised, *"For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year"* (Ex 34:24).

It is no wonder that those in Christ Jesus are solemnly reminded, *"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is*

my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb 13:6).

Bring the Sovereignty of God Into Your Prayers and Desires

When you are praying for critical matters over which you have no control, in your thinking and petitions, bring the Sovereignty of God into the matter. He can stop people from doing what they want. He can protect the innocent. He can cause enemies to not desire to bring hardship upon His people. I do not doubt that most of us, given time for due reflection, will be able to perceive the hand of God in safety and protection from our enemies, and from our chief enemy, the devil.

THE SPECKLED SHALL BE MY WAGES

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

The judgment against Laban was initiated by his own words: *"If he said, The speckled shall be your wages, then all the flock bore speckled; and if he said, The streaked shall be your hire, then all the flock bore streaked."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

All of this was strictly owing to God causing all things to work together for the good of Jacob, and in judgment against Laban.

All of this was strictly owing to God causing all things to work together for the good of Jacob, and in judgment against Laban.

This was not something Jacob did. There was such a remarkable consistency in what happened that it could not be traced to human effort.

GOD TOOK THE CATTLE FROM LABAN

" . . . God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to

me. . . "

Here is the explanation of what took place – and it was written up hundreds of years latter by Moses, who had no personal knowledge of what took place during Jacob's stay in Haran. **What he wrote was given to him by the Holy Spirit of God, which means this is what God wanted us to understand about that circumstance.**

What took place is this: God took Laban's cattle away from him and gave them to Jacob. He did this by managing the process of conception, so that the flocks that were born met the criteria of becoming Jacob's wages – and it was all according to a voluntary agreement Laban made with Jacob,

Over and above desiring us to know Jacob in a correct way, the Lord desired for us to understand Himself – that He is everything He has declared Himself to be. Consequently. There is no valid reason for not trusting God to manage the affairs of our life by voluntarily placing ourselves at His disposal.

JACOB HAS A DREAM AT THE TIME THE CATTLE CONCEIVED

" . . . 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 ringstreaked, speckled, and grised" [spotted]. Other versions read, *"the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted,"* ^{NIV} and *"I looked up and saw that the rams which mated with the she-goats were streaked, speckled, and spotted."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

At this time, the cattle had not yet given birth. They were in the process of conceiving. **When the mating of the cattle was taking place Jacob was given a dream that provided a detailed picture of what was going on.** The

rams, or he-goats, which mated with the flock that were in heat were all *"streaked, speckled, and spotted."* The solid colored rams were apparently not attracted to the females, because God did not allow it. **Instead, He drew only**

the rams to the sheep who produce the kind of cattle that, by consent, would belong to Jacob.

That is the kind of God we are serving!

A MESSAGE FROM AN ANGEL OF GOD

"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 ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. 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."

THE ANGEL OF GOD SPEAKS TO JACOB

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

At the time the cattle were breeding, *"the angel, of God"* spoke unto Jacob in a dream.

Was This Jesus In A Preincarnate Form?

When the writings of Moses and the prophets refer to *"the angel of the Lord"* or *"the angel of God,"* some allege that this was an early manifestation of Jesus – what is called a Christophany. This is an alarmingly common view among Christian teachers, and is taught as though it was very obvious. **However, this is an erroneous view, and ought to be exposed with zeal.**

Angels, regardless of which one we are referring to are servants. They are described as God's *"angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word"* (Psa 103:20). In the book of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit describes angels this way: *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* (Heb 1:14).

Now, the question is whether or not such descriptions could in any way apply to Jesus Christ prior to His entry into the world in Bethlehem. It was precisely at that point that *"the Word"* (John 1:1) is said to have humbled Himself, taking on Himself *"the form of a servant"* (Phil 2:7). Prior to that time, He is declared to have been *"in the form of God"* (Phil 2:6). In fact, affirming His absolute Deity, it is written that He *"was with God and was God"* (John 1:1).

For there to be such a thing as the purported Christophany – Jesus appearing in the form of an angel – He would have had to humble Himself, for He was never known as either a *"servant"* (Isa 42:1-2; Phil 2:7) or a *"messenger"* (Mal 3:1) **until He came to earth as a Man, to lay down His life a ransom for many** (Matt 20:28).

Let me affirm this again. Prior to coming into the world as the miraculous child of the virgin Mary, Jesus was never clearly presented as either an angel or a messenger. That would have required Him to humble Himself and lay aside the prerogatives of His Deity. *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"* (Heb 1:14)

LIFT UP THINE EYES AND SEE

" . . . And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled . . ."

Being a messenger from God, the angel speaks the words of God. These words did not originate with the angel. He is, so to speak, quoting God.

COMMENTS ON "ANGEL OF GOD"

- (1) This angel is simply an angel with a special commission.
- (2) He may be a momentary descent of God into visibility.
- (3) He may be the Logos, a kind of temporary preincarnation of the second person of the Trinity. Each has its difficulties, but the last is certainly the most tempting to the mind. ^{ISBE}

No other angel is comparable to the "Angel of the Lord." He spoke with authority over life. That this is a theophany, or, more precisely, a Christophany, an appearance of the preincarnate Christ, is confirmed by v. 13 (cf. 18:2; 32:24; Jash. 5:13-15; Judg. 13:18, notes). ^{BELIEVERS STUDY}

This was not a created angel, but the eternal one, the Son of God. ^{JOHN GILL}

The angel draws Jacob's attention to what he has witnessed in his dream, and he will see it with his own eyes. As the breeding is going on, it is **only** the rams that are *"ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled"* [spotted] that are mating. The solid colored animals that belonged to Laban are not even involved.

Thus God has so orchestrated the events so that the total increase of the herd will belong to Jacob. This work was not done by the rods that Jacob placed before the rams. Those rods were primarily for Jacob's benefit, used of God to draw his attention to what was going to take place at the watering troughs.

The Experience of Those in Christ

Often, if not always, the experiences of the saints are not ends of themselves. **They can be seen as an appointed means of drawing their attention to the working of the Lord.** For this reason, we should be more attentive to note the outcome of our experiences, rather than dote on the

experiences themselves.

I HAVE SEEN

“ . . . for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee . . . ” Other versions read *“all that Laban is doing to you,”*^{NKJV} *“all that Laban has been doing to you,”*^{NASB} *“I have seen everything that Laban is doing to you”*^{GWN} *“I have observed all that Laban has done to you”*^{NET} *“I too have noted all the things that Laban has been doing to you”*^{NJB} *“I have seen how Laban has treated you”*^{NLT} *“I have seen all the wrong things Laban has been doing to you. I am doing this so that you can have all the new baby goats,”*^{ERV} and *“I know what Laban’s been doing to you.”*^{MESSAGE}

According to appearance, it may

required to journey through the desert to the promised land. There was also the development of a discontent for living in a land that was not their own.

Similarly, Jacob was increasing his possessions so he would be able to provide for his family. He was also seeing more clearly the advantages of living in Canaan.

With both Israel and Jacob there was another factor that required an extensive period of time. In the case of Israel, Pharaoh and Egypt were heaping up wrath for a day of judgment. With Jacob, Laban’s trickery was earning for him a shifting of a considerable portion of his wealth to Jacob. **God does not judge people without a just and**

commitments to Jacob, and Jacob responded by pledging to give a tenth of all he had to the Lord (Gen 28:12-22). **Now, God recalls that occasion.** He refers to Himself as *“the God of Bethel,”* which is where the confrontation took place.

Then, confirming the validity of vows, and the fact that God pays attention to them, Jacob is told, *“where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.”*^{NIV} That is the place where Jacob *“took the stone he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.”* After calling the name of that place *“Bethel,”* Jacob then made this vow: *“If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee”* (Gen 28:20-22).

Now, twenty years have passed, God has been with him, giving him *“bread to eat and raiment to put on.”* The Lord will therefore assure him that the rest of his request will now be honored – he will return to his father’s house in peace.

RETURN UNTO THE LAND

“ . . . now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.”

The time has come to leave Haran and return to Canaan. Jacob will return with sufficient goods to establish a place of residence and support his family. At this time, after taking them into his confidence, Rachel and Leah will respond to Jacob’s report.

God does not judge people without a just and apparent reason for doing so. This is in order that He might be better understood and glorified. He gives the wicked time to display their wickedness, and He give the righteous time to adequately prepare for deliverance.

not have seemed as though God was beholding what Laban was doing to Jacob. Now, however, Jacob is assured that nothing of his experience with Laban has been overlooked.

A Critical Part of Divine Working

In the workings of the Lord, the accomplishment of His purpose is not always apparent. For a period of four hundred years, it seemed as though God was ignoring the oppression of His people in Egypt. However, this was not the case at all. **During that period of time they were increasing in number so there would be enough of them to take Canaan.** They were also developing the kind of toughness that would be

apparent reason for doing so. This is in order that He might be better understood and glorified. **He gives the wicked time to display their wickedness, and He give the righteous time to adequately prepare for deliverance.**

I AM THE GOD OF BETHEL

I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me . . . ”

More than twenty years before the time of our text, Jacob was visited by God en route to Haran. That was his first direct encounter with the Lord. During that time, God made certain

RACHEL AND LEAH REPLY

“¹⁴And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? ¹⁵Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our

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

Rachel and Leah will now speak of their experience during the past twenty years. There is no record of them saying anything about these things prior to this. Now, however, we learn they had comprehended a lot of what had been going on.

IS THERE ANY INHERITANCE FOR US?

"And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? . . ." Other versions read, *"What part or heritage is there for us in our father's house?"* ^{BBE} *"We no longer have any inheritance from our father's possessions?"* ^{CJB} *"Have we any thing left among the goods and inheritance of our father's house?"* ^{DOUAY} and *"There's nothing for us here—none of our father's wealth will come to us anyway!"* ^{LIVING}

Their answer suggests that the spotted, speckled, and ringstreaked animals were designated for them. Now, nothing is left in their father's house for them to inherit. To them, there was no further reason for remaining with Laban.

ARE WE NOT COUNTED AS STRANGERS?

" . . . Are we not counted of him strangers? . . ." Other versions read, *"Are we not reckoned to him as foreigners?"* ^{NASB} *"Are we not as people from a strange country to him?"* ^{BBE} *"Are we not regarded by him as outsiders?"* ^{CSB} *"He has reduced our rights to those of foreign women"* ^{NLT} and *"Are not we as the aliens regarded?"* ^{ABP}

Laban had treated them as he did Bilhah and Zilpah – as slaves rather than as daughters. While there is no record of Rachel and Leah responding to this perceived treatment, it is apparent they had noted it, and had been offended by it.

HE HAS SOLD US

" . . . for he hath sold us . . ." Other versions read, and *"for he took a price for us."* ^{BBE}

Unbeknown to Leah, he had sold her for seven years of labor from Jacob. He had then sold Rachel for seven more years of labor. **Ordinarily, daughters were given to a husband with an accompanying dowry, which was often money** (Ex 22:17). In this case, however, Laban received something for his daughters, rather than giving them with an accompanying dowry. That is, **he treated them like slaves instead of like daughters.** This was fully known to both Rachel and Leah.

As seen here, God does balance the accounts, so to speak. He did the same for Job, Joseph, and others. Faith will induce the saints to be patient in this regard.

HE HAS DEVoured OUR MONEY

" . . . and hath quite devoured also our money. . ." Other versions read, *"completely consumed our money,"* ^{NKJV} *"entirely consumed our purchase price,"* ^{NASB} *"used up what was paid for us,"* ^{NIV} *"using up the money that was given for us,"* ^{NRSV} and *"has also quite devoured our money [the price you paid for us]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

I gather that this had particular regard to the significant increase of Laban's flocks that were realized through Jacob's labors. Nothing had been left for Laban's daughters. He had attempted to take everything for himself, giving Jacob what he thought to be the unusual increase of the flocks, and leaving nothing for his daughters.

ALL THE RICHES THAT WERE OURS

" . . . For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's . . ."

The *"riches"* were all of the spotted, speckled, and ringstreaked cattle. Because Laban had sold his daughters, that increase rightfully

belonged to them: *"that is ours, and our children's."*

Rachel and Leah now affirm that it is God who has taken the increase from Laban, and has given it to Jacob. By virtue of being Jacob's wives, they now will receive what rightfully belongs to them. God settled the accounts!

Trusting God To Do What Is Right

Often, the people of God are maligned and treated unjustly. According to the flesh, there is every reason to retaliate to such treatment. However, God does not allow such action on our part. We are admonished,

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom 12:19). As seen here, God does balance the accounts, so to speak. He did the same for Job, Joseph, and others. Faith will induce the saints to be patient in this regard.

WHATSOEVER GOD HATH SAID, DO

" . . . now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do." Other versions read, *"do whatever God has said to you,"* ^{NASB} *"So do whatever God has told you,"* ^{NIV} *"do everything God told you to do"* ^{CEB} and *"do all that God hath commanded thee."* ^{DRA}

Both Rachel and Leah are used by God to confirm the need to do what God has commanded: *"get thee out of this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."* **Those who are experienced in matters of the Kingdom know that there are generally confirmations of various kinds to Divine inclinations.** A sensitive heart will detect these confirmations. When Jacob heard Rachel and Leah say,

“Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do,” it was as though the words came from heaven. **No further inquiry would be made concerning the necessity of the move at that time. His sensitive heart confirmed this to be the case.**

Return to Thy Kindred

Notice that God told Jacob to

return to his *“kindred.”* It might be argued that he was with some of his kindred. Technically, however, this was **not** the case. His true kindred were Abraham and Isaac. **Laban and his household were Rebekah’s kindred.** They were traced to Nahor, not Abraham (Gen 22:23; 24:15. Repeatedly Laban is referred to as

Rebekah’s *“brother”* (Gen 24:29; 27:43; 28:2,5; 29:10). Both Laban and Rebekah were traced back to Nahor, not Abraham. The proper lineage, however, must be in association with Abraham. Further, the land of Canaan was promised to Abraham, not Nahor, and it was the intended environment in which God would work His purpose.

JACOB DEPARTS WITH ALL OF HIS GOODS

“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.”

Doing the will of the Lord requires both thought and action. For us, this has been somewhat simplified because of our access to the written word of God. By means of that Word – the Scriptures – we can become *“thoroughly furnished to every good work”* (2 Ti, 3:17). However, Jacob did not have this advantage. Further, there was no spiritually wise man with whom he could consult at this time.

Isaac Had Delivered Words to Jacob

Isaac had delivered prophetic words to Jacob which provided a basis for godly reasoning.

- ➔ God would give him the dew of heaven, the fatness of the earth, and plenty of wine (Gen 27:28).
- ➔ People would serve him, and nations bow down to him (Gen 27:29a).
- ➔ He would be lord of his brothers, and his mothers sons would bow down to him (Gen 27:29b).
- ➔ God would curse anyone who cursed him (27:29c).
- ➔ God would bless anyone who blessed him (Gen 27:29d).
- ➔ God would bless him and make him

fruitful (Gen 28:3a).

- ➔ God would multiply him that he might be a multitude of people (Gen 29:3b).
- ➔ God would give him the blessing of Abraham, and to his seed that he might inherit the land God gave to Abraham (Gen 28:4).

God Had Spoken to Jacob

- ➔ God would give the land of Canaan to Jacob (Gen 28:13).
- ➔ Jacob’s seed would be as the dust of the earth, and he would spread to the west, east, north, and south (Gen 28:14a).
- ➔ In Jacob and his seed all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 28:14c).
- ➔ God would be with him every place he went (Gen 28:15a).
- ➔ God would bring him back to Canaan (Gen 28:15b).
- ➔ God would not leave him until He had done everything He said He would do (Gen 28:15c).
- ➔ God told him to return to the land of his fathers and to his kindred, promising He would be with him (Gen 28:15d).

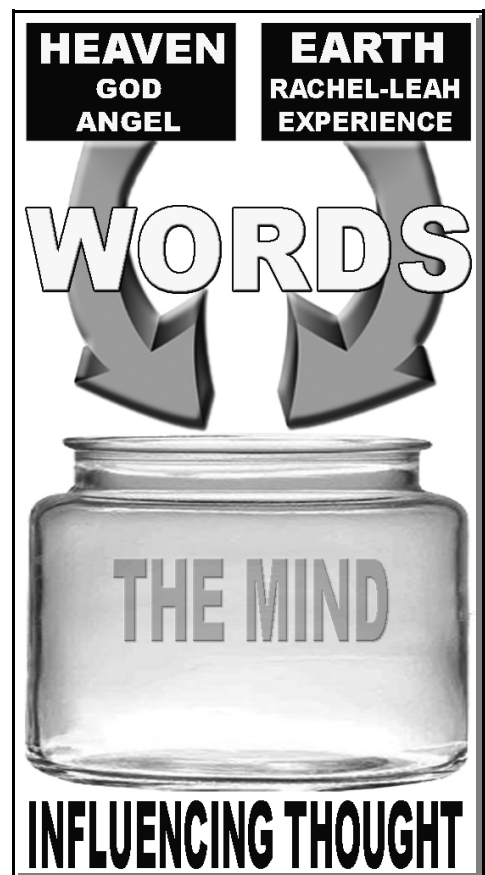
The Angel of God Spoke to Jacob

- ➔ All that Laban had done unto him has been seen by the Lord (Gen 31:12).

- ➔ Through the angel God told Jacob, *“get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred”* (Gen 31:13).

Rachel and Leah Spoke to Him

- ➔ God had taken Laban’s flocks away from him (Gen 31:16).



Points of Reason

Heaven had spoken to Jacob, providing reference points for reasoning: God and a holy angel. From

earth there came confirmations: Jacob’s experience, and the words of Rachel and Leah. **It was necessary for Jacob to pay attention to what he heard, think upon what was said, and then act upon it.** However, the point here is not that this is what Jacob should do, but what he actually did. **When covering the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Holy Spirit never had to say any of them missed the significance of what God said, or failed to act upon it.** To me, the record is obviously shaped to face us with the nature and consistency of faith.

These things to which Jacob was exposed, both in words and in experience, were funneled, so to speak, into his mind, where they had influence upon the thoughts of Jacob. He listened to the words, and observed the experiences, digesting them, so to speak. **In fact, as he lived by faith, the recollection of these words played a key role in the direction his manner of life.**

It is to be remembered that with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the will of the Lord was the sole focus of their lives. When God spoke to them, they immediately obeyed and shaped their lives around what they comprehended. In this, there is a remarkable consistency in all of their lives

Our Times

We are living in a period of time when thought is far less productive than it can be – particularly for those who profess to be in Christ Jesus. As a general rule, professing Christians are very weak in the area of thought. There is more of an emphasis on feeling and experiences in the body. As a result problem-solvers and innovators in areas that can be seen have risen to the top of the theological heap. **The fruit of this distorted emphasis is a nominal church that is riddled with moral failures and an ignorance of God and His ways.**

There are several reasons for this uncomely circumstance.

- ➔ The current penchant for religious entertainment.

- ➔ The carnalization of religion.
- ➔ The influence of Babylon the Great.
- ➔ A minimal exposure to the Word of God.
- ➔ The dominance of self-interest.

Let it be clear that where the Word of God is spoken, believed, and acted upon, the above results are not possible. They are all the result of alienation from God and the domination of the flesh.

THEN JACOB ROSE UP

JACOB ROSE UP

“Then (literally, and) Jacob rose up (expressive of the vigor and alacrity with which, having obtained the concurrence of his wives, Jacob set about fulfilling the Divine instructions).” PULPIT COMMENTARY

“And went with them to Laban’s house, where his children were.” JOHN GILL

“The departure of Jacob Moses afterwards more fully relates, he now only briefly says that “he rose up:” by which he means, that as soon as he could obtain the consent of his wives to go with him, he yielded to no other obstacles. Herein appears the manly strength and constancy of his mind.” JOHN CALVIN

“Jacob makes all the needful preparations for a hasty and secret flight.” ALBERT BARNES

“Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels . . .” Other versions read “got up,” CEB “arose,” ESV “proceeded,” NAB “immediately,” NET “riseth,” YLT “rising up,” ABP “prepared,” ERV “got ready,” GNB “did it.” MESSAGE

The words “rose up” are omitted from most modern versions (NIV/BBE/GWN/NIB/NJB/NLT/TNK/LIVING/CEV/ERV/GNB/MESSAGE).

It seems to me that the omission of the words “rose up” is inappropriate. They refer to an intermediate action that stands between knowing what is to be done, and beginning to actually do it. When examining what some historical students of Scripture observed concerning this text, I found I was not alone in this persuasion. Additionally, the Hebrew word from which “rose up”

is translated means: “QUWM” {KOOM} **MEANING:** 1) TO RISE, ARISE, STAND, RISE UP, STAND UP. . . TO BE ESTABLISHED, BE CONFIRMED. . . TO CARRY OUT, GIVE EFFECT . . .” STRONG’S

An Observation

There are several things that separate growing “Christians” from stagnant ones. At the root of the difference we find faith, or a lack thereof. However, in the practical outworking of faith there is this marked distinction between those who are being “changed” into the image of Christ and those who are not. **It is found in the matter of their response to the word of the Lord.** Faith responds immediately, going about to do what the person possessing it knows should be done.

- ➔ We see this in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Heb 11:8; Gen 26:2-6; 31:13-18).
- ➔ When Moses recognized that he was being called to liberate Israel, he set out to do so (Ex 4:18-20).
- ➔ When Joshua was called to lead the people into Canaan, he responded immediately (Josh 1:2-11).
- ➔ When God told Isaiah to walk naked and barefoot through the land for three years, Isaiah did so (Isa 20:2-3).
- ➔ When the apostles were called, they had this kind of response (Matt 4:18-22; Mk 10:28; Lk 5:27-28).
- ➔ When Saul of Tarsus was “apprehended” (Phil 2:12-13) by Jesus, his response was immediate (Acts 9:6-7).
- ➔ When the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul to a special work, the church yielded immediately, setting them apart for the work (Acts 13:2-4).
- ➔ When Paul and company were called to go into Macedonia, they responded immediately (Acts 16:9-10).

Ignoble Examples

It is true that there are examples of a lack of such response – such as:

- ➔ Jonah, in balking at going to Nineveh (Jonah 1:2-3).
- ➔ King Saul, in failing to destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:17-25).
- ➔ Solomon, in marrying heathen women, setting up idols, and providing places for idol worship (1 Kgs 11:4-10).

Then again, these men are not set forth as examples of faith. They are never presented as men that were to be followed. It is not necessary for us to consign such people to hell. That is not our prerogative. **But they are never to be held forth as justification for leading a slovenly spiritual life.**

Attempting to Justify Unacceptable Conditions and Behavior

Unfortunately, men still attempt to justify unacceptable behavior by pointing to flawed people in Scripture. For example, when faced with the glaring absence of spirituality in the modern church, some point out that there were seriously flawed people in the Corinthian church that were called "brethren" (1 Cor 1:10), "sanctified" (1 Cor 2:2), and being placed "in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor 1:30). However, this is taking too much liberty with the text of Scripture. **When Paul uses such expressions, it is not to be understood that he intended to include those who gave no evidence of being so described.** Is it not possible that he was, in fact, writing to those kind of people. In such a case, those who were living in unbelief like the Israelites (1 Cor 10:1-12) were described as thinking they stood, then forthrightly told they were on the brink of falling (1 Cor 10:11).

You will search the Scriptures in vain for any example of those in an immoral or spiritually unacceptable state being comforted with the knowledge that they are the children of God. Rather, when speaking of these unacceptable conditions, Paul would say:

- ➔ "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators,

nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:10).

- ➔ ". . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:21).

- ➔ "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Eph 5:5-6)

Affiliation with Christ Is Not to be Taken for Granted

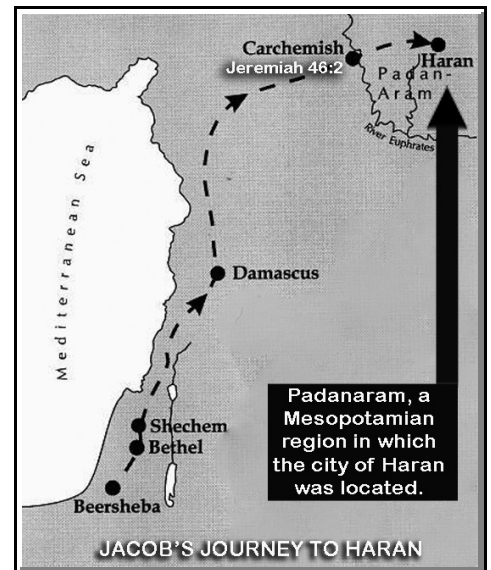
The modern church is too casual about this matter. If not said outrightly, it is being suggested that we take for granted that questionable people are identified with Christ Jesus, and are in His fold. But this is not proper. John reminded us, "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that **doeth** righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2:29). And again, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that **doeth** righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John 3:7). Without any equivocation he also said, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:8-9). Men cannot speak or act as though these were not written in the Scriptures. If they are difficult for some to understand, they do well to get to the business of understanding them.

Spiritual retardation is lethal. Every believer should culture the ability to respond to God instantly, and without delay. In order to do this, they must cease to yield to unnecessary distractions.

HE CARRIED AWAY HIS CATTLE AND ALL HIS GOODS

" . . . 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 . . ."

When Jacob came into the area in which Laban lived, he did not have any known possessions. So far as the record is concerned, he had left Canaan by himself, and without any wealth. The record of the commencement of his journey is stated simply: "And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother." (Gen 28:5). When he arrived at Laban's house, he did not give anyone gifts as Abraham's servant did when he obtained Rebekah for a wife for Isaac. After fourteen years he had no known possessions for his family. He worked during the next six years to provide for his family. And now he had "all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, **which he had gotten in Padanaram.**"



After a journey of from 550-700 miles, and a stay of twenty years, Jacob had obtained a significant amount of wealth. All of it, with the exception of his wives and children, appears to have been gained during the last six years of his stay.

The size of Jacob's flocks can be partially measured by the gifts that he offered to Esau on the trip back. The gifts consisted of "Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she

She goats	200
He goats	... 20
Ewes 200
Rams 20
Milk camels	.30
Camel colts	.30
Kine 40
Bulls 10
She asses	.. 20
Foals 10
Total 580

asses, and ten foals." (Gen 32:14-15). We know from the agreement Jacob made with Laban that sheep and goats were involved. There is no record of how he obtained the camels, kine, bulls, and the asses.

I do not doubt that Divine direction and wisdom entered into the obtainment of these additional herds of animals. It is possible that he had some camels for travel, and asses for bearing burdens when he went from Bethel to Haran. If so, then he cared for them while he maintained Laban's flocks, attending to all of their needs.

TO GO TO HIS FATHER ISAAC IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

"... for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan." The phraseology is important. He is not said to have returned to Rebekah, although she was the original one who instructed him to go to her brother's house (Gen 27:43-44). Rebekah did not send Jacob to Laban's house to obtain a wife, but to escape from Esau. Isaac, on the other hand, did not send Jacob there so escape Esau's wrath, but to obtain a wife (Gen 28:1-2). Rebekah thought Jacob would remain with Laban only a few days (Gen 27:44). Isaac told Jacob to obtain a wife there, and also said, "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham" (Gen 28:3-4). His words suggest that the multiplication of reference would commence while Jacob

was in Padanaram.

Therefore, this scenario is presented to us. Jacob is sent away to obtain a wife. He lingers for twenty years in that area, allowing him to amass a significant amount of wealth. He then returns to Canaan with sufficient resources to sustain his family and continue to prosper.

A Picture of Pilgrimage

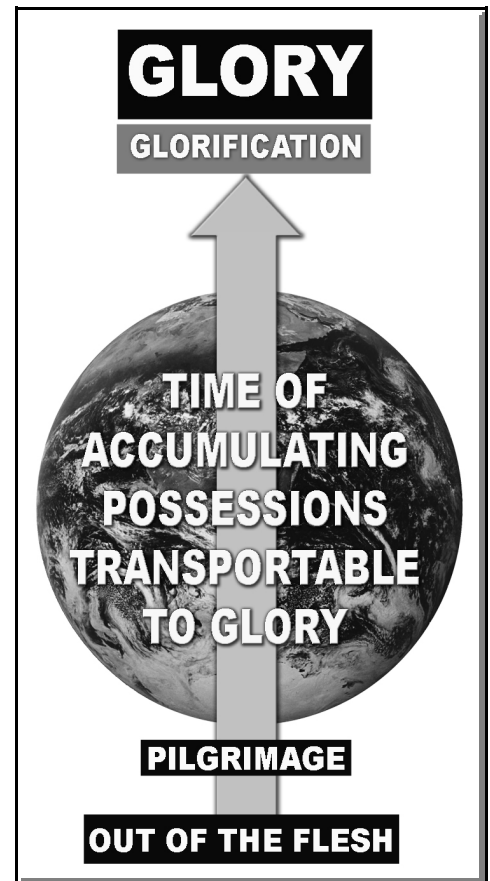
In all of this we see a marvelous picture of the pilgrimage of the believer to glory. He is required to spend some time in an alien land, and to labor there in expectation. Due arrangements are to be made for his ultimate marriage, and goods that are transportable to the homeland are to be collected. When the time comes for the pilgrim to leave the world, he must have enough goods to establish residence in the "better country" (Heb 11:16) to which he will go. Thus we read such admonitions as:

- ➔ "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt 6:19-21).
- ➔ "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke 12:33).
- ➔ "Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).
- ➔ "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good

works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim 6:17-19).

- ➔ "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb 10:34).

The treasures and substance of reference have all been accrued to the believer's account while they were in the world. Like Jacob, they were accumulating riches that were, from one point of view, transportable to glory.



While in the alien country, it is also essential that the pilgrim live among, and spend time with, the proper people, as Jacob did. These are to be those who are properly related to people in the homeland. The pilgrim

must not intermingle with the natives of the foreign land, but must maintain a certain separateness. For Jacob, this was the family of Nahor, Abraham's brother. For us, it is identity with the saints (Eph 2:19), the brethren (1 Pet 1:22), the household of faith (Gal 6:10), and the house of God (1 Tim 3:15). Unequal yokes are not to be made with those of this present evil world (2 Cor 6:14). Therefore we read.

➔ "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the

Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Cor 6:17).

➔ "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; **only in the Lord**" (1 Cor 7:39).

➔ "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor 15:33)

➔ "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

The nominal church has not done well in making the people aware of these requirements. There is too much worldliness in the professed church, and it covers everything from appearance to the way people think. That indicates a misplaced emphasis.

JACOB IS GONE AND SOME IMAGES ARE STOLEN

"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."

The scene now shifts to Laban, who is completely unaware of all that has happened.

LABAN WENT TO SHEAR HIS SHEEP

"And Laban went to shear his sheep . . ." Other versions read, "Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep [possibly to the feast of sheepshearing]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

These were the sheep for which Jacob was caring. At the time of shearing, Laban would also see that all of his sheep had solid colors, according to his agreement with Jacob. The sheep that were spotted, speckled, and ringstreaked, by agreement, belonged to Jacob. None of those animals should be in Laban's flocks, and no solid-colored animals were to be found in Jacob's flock (Gen 30:32-33).

Scriptures indicate that there was a special time when the sheep were sheared. Some commentators allege that this was also a time of special feasting, citing the following proof-texts

(1 Samuel 25:4; 8:36; 2 Kings 10:12, 14; 2 Sam 13:23,24). Some even make a point of Jacob being absent from the festivities. ^{PULPIT COMMENTARY} None of those texts indicate such a feast. I only draw your attention to this in order to underscore the godly caution that must attend the reading of men. This does not suggest it is wrong to consult what thoughtful men have said concerning Scripture. It does mean that their words must be tested and tried (Isa 8:20; 1 Cor 14:29; 1 John 4:1).

The sheep were apparently very submissive to this process, when their wool was cut away from them. In Isaiah's prophesy of Jesus being delivered up for our sins, he wrote, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa 53:7).

RACHEL HAD STOLEN HIS IMAGES

" . . . and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's. . ." Other versions read, "Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's," ^{NKJV} "her father's household gods," ^{NIV} "the teraphim that were her father's," ^{ASV} "the household's divine images," ^{CEB} "stole her father's household idols and took them with her," ^{NLT} and "While he was away, Rachel stole her father's personal

idols." ^{ISV}

Several versions use the word "teraphim" in the place of "idols" or "images" (ASV, JPS, YLT). This is a transliteration of the Hebrew word used.

ON THE WORD "TERAPHIM"

The "household idols" (teraphim, Heb.) appear to have been figurines, usually constructed of wood, but sometimes of silver (cf. Judg. 17:4). Believed to be the custodians of human happiness, they were often worshipped as gods and consulted as mediums (Ezek. 21:21; Zech. 10:2). The worship of teraphim was later denounced as idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23). ^{BIBLE STUDY BIBLE}

As to the reason Rachel stole the images, a variety of interpretations are

VIEWS OF RACHEL'S THEFT

"Rachel's motive for abstracting her father's teraphim has been variously ascribed to a desire to prevent her father from discovering, by inquiring at his gods, the direction of their flight (Aben Ezra, Rosenmüller), to protect herself, in case, of being overtaken, by an appeal to her father's gods (Josephus), to draw her father from the practice of idolatry (Basil, Gregory, Naziszen, Theodoret), to obtain children for herself through their assistance (Lengerke, Gerlach), to preserve a memorial of her ancestors, whose pictures these teraphim were (Lightfoot); but was probably due to avarice, if the images were made of precious metals (Pererius), or to a taint of superstition which still adhered to her otherwise religious nature (Chrysostom, Calvin, 'Speaker's Commentary'), causing her to look to these idols for protection (Kalisch, Murphy) or consultation (Wordsworth) on her journey."

offered by carious commentators. For those who may be interested, they are provided on the bottom of page 15.

From what is written later, it appears obvious that Rachel did not have any advantage of her father in interest, nor was she attempting to rescue him from idolatry. After God had directed Jacob to go to Bethel, and he had arrived there, he *“said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem”* (Gen 35:2-4).

Whatever we may think of Rachel’s action, it must be remembered that spiritual ignorance moves a person to do unreasonable things. We ought not to expect Rachel to conduct herself as though she was walking in the blazing light of *“the day of salvation.”* Of course, this was a time when God was winking at ignorance, allowing men to walk in their own ways (Acts 17:30). Now, however, it is an altogether different circumstance. **Now all men everywhere are commanded to repent in anticipation of the day of judgment** (Acts 17:30-31).

JACOB HAD LEFT UNAWARES

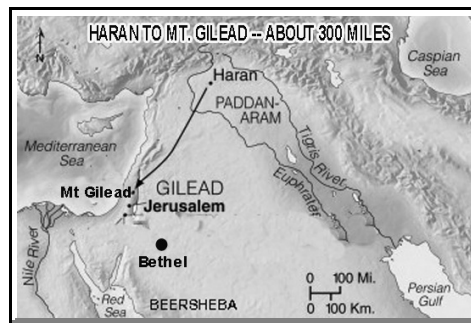
“ . . . And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled . . .” Other versions read, *“And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean, by not telling him that he was fleeing,”* ^{NASB} *“And Jacob outwitted Laban the Aramean,”* ^{RSV} *“went away secretly, without giving news of his flight to Laban the Aramaean,”* ^{BBE} *“would not confess to his father in law that he was flying away,”* ^{DRA} *“tricked Laban the Aramean,”* ^{ESV} *“hid the matter from Laban the Syrian,”* ^{LXE} *“hoodwinked Laban the Aramean by not telling him*

that he was going to flee,” ^{NAB} *“kept Laban the Aramean in the dark,”* ^{TNK} *“deceiveth the heart of Laban the Aramaean,”* ^{YLT} and *“concealed his plans so well that Laban the Aramean had no idea what was going on.”* ^{MESSAGE}

In my judgment, the use of the words *“deceived,” “tricked,”* and *“hoodwinked,”* are not proper. The text goes on to say what is intended by the word *“stole away unawares”*—i.e. *“in that he told him not that he fled.”* Not informing is certainly not to be equated with deception.

Jacob certainly knew what would have happened if he had told Laban he was leaving. Laban would have made a valiant effort to detain him, as he did when he first asked Laban to sent him away (Gen 30:25).

JACOB SET HIS FACE TOWARD MOUNT GILEAD



“ . . . 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.” Other versions read, *“headed for the hill country of Gilead,”* ^{NIV} The Amplified Bible adds *“and crossed the river [Euphrates],”* because it flowed between Haran and where Jacob was going. I am unable to document the width of this river near Haran. Historically its largest width is about four hundred yards. Its greatest depth is said to be about thirty-three feet. At any rate, it must have required some wisdom and commitment to have moved all of his flocks over that river.

Movement Still Requires Wisdom

The saints are on a pilgrimage to

glory. They are leaving one place, in favor of arriving at another. As with Jacob, there are hindrances and challenges along the way – rivers to be crossed and deserts to be traversed. Blessed is that person who is determined enough to get to glory that they successfully pass through these challenges without losing anything critical to their spiritual life.

In order for Jacob to make this trip, the following had to be accomplished.

- Cross the river Euphrates.
- Traverse a desert terrain.
- Move his flocks at a steady pace.
- Keep his wives and eleven children nourished and safe.
- Keep his flocks fed and watered.
- Keep the animals on which they traveled fed and watered.
- Be protected from the perils of robbers.

All of this was accomplished by the Lord of glory, who always protects those He directs and guides.

Jacob Fleed

The word *“fled”* means to leave suddenly and with haste. There is no delay in the word, no lingering, and no hesitation. Whatever was required to leave was done quickly and expeditiously.

Believers Are Also Said to Have Fleed

It is said of those who have come to Christ, *“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us”* (Heb 6:18). That action is also one attended by haste and the absence of hesitation and delay. Being expeditious also enters into the matter, which involves readiness, alertness, promptness, and willingness.

LABAN PURSUES AND OVERTAKES JACOB

"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."

IT WAS TOLD LABAN

"And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. . ." Other versions read, *"On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled,"* ^{NIV} *"Three days later, Laban found out that Jacob had gone"* ^{CEB} *"Not until the third day was Laban told that Ya'akov had fled"* ^{CJB} *"On the third day,"* ^{NIB} *"Laban didn't learn of their flight for three days,"* ^{LIVING} *"it was announced to Laban he Syrian on the third day that Jacob ran away,"* ^{ABP} *"Two days later,"* ^{GW} and *"Three days later, Laban got the news: "Jacob's run off."* ^{MESSAGE}

The three days reflects the distance between where Jacob's flocks were being kept by Jacob, and where Laban's sons had been keeping Jacob's flocks. I assume that journey was made in order to examine Jacob's flocks to see if there were any solid-colored animals in his flocks.

However, there is yet a better way to view this three-day delay. God was providing Jacob time to get across the Euphrates river and make it to the borders of the promised land.

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Euphrates river and make it to the borders of the promised land.

LABAN PURSUED AND OVERTOOK JACOB

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

It took Laban seven days to catch up with Jacob and his household. If the three hundred mile distance between Haran and Mount Gilead is reasonable, then Laban traveled at about forty-three miles a day. Jacob would have made the same journey in about ten days. The difference was that Jacob was moving his herds, and Laban was not. Carrying a load, camels can travel at least thirty miles a day. With Laban traveling light, and in a hurry, he could have negotiated the distance in seven days, as the Scripture states.

GOD CAME TO LABAN

" . . . 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 . . ." Other versions read, *"Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad,"* ^{NIV} *"Be careful and don't say anything hastily to Jacob one way or the other"* ^{CEB} *"Take heed thou speak not any thing harshly against Jacob"* ^{DOUAY} *"Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob ought save good."* ^{GNV} *"Take heed to thyself that thou speak not at*

any time to Jacob evil things" ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"Take care not to say anything to Jacob,"* ^{NAB} *"Be careful that you neither*

bless nor curse Jacob" ^{NET} *"On no account say anything whatever to Jacob"* ^{NJB} *"I'm warning you-- leave Jacob alone!"* ^{NLT} *"Beware of attempting anything with Jacob, good or bad"* ^{TNK} *"Take heed to thyself lest thou speak with Jacob from good unto evil,"* ^{YLT} *"Don't give him your blessing and don't curse him,"* ^{LIVING} *"Take heed to thyself that thou speak not at any time to Jacob evil things,"* ^{BRENTON} *"Don't say a word to Jacob. Don't make a threat or a promise,"* ^{CEV} *"Be careful of every word you say to Jacob,"* ^{ERV} *"Be careful not to threaten Jacob in any way,"* ^{GNB} *"Be careful what you say to Jacob, whether it's one word good or bad,"* ^{ISV} *"Be careful what you do to Jacob, whether good or bad,"* ^{MESSAGE} and *"Be careful that you do not speak from good to bad to Jacob [peaceably, then violently]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Keeping in mind that this is a text having to do with something God Almighty said, we have the following representations in the various versions.

- ➔ Not saying anything, good or bad. ^{KJV}
- ➔ Not to speak hastily, either for good or bad. ^{CEB}
- ➔ Not to say anything harshly against Jacob. ^{DOUAY}
- ➔ Only say what is good. ^{GNV}
- ➔ Not to speak evil things. ^{SEPTUAGINT}
- ➔ Do not say anything to Jacob. ^{NAB/NJB}
- ➔ Leave Jacob alone. ^{NLT}
- ➔ Do not attempt anything, good or bad. ^{TNK}
- ➔ Take heed not to speak from good unto evil. ^{YLT}
- ➔ Do not give Jacob your blessing or curse him. ^{LIVING}
- ➔ Do not speak evil things at any time. ^{BRENTON}
- ➔ Do not say a word. Do not make a threat or a promise. ^{CEV}
- ➔ Be careful of every word you say to Jacob. ^{ISV}
- ➔ Be careful what you do to Jacob, whether good or bad. ^{MESSAGE}
- ➔ do not speak from good to bad to Jacob [peaceably, then violently]."^{AMPLIFIED}

There are fifteen different representations of the text – all from declared Bibles.

The word delivered is obviously important, for Laban is solemnly told to “*Take heed,*” or see to it that this prohibition is honored.

Lexically, the word “*either*” means “FROM GOOD TO BAD,” ^{STRONG'S} **The idea here is that Laban should not come with gracious introductory words, then proceed to harsh and threatening ones.**



If the intention is not to get to the point where evil words were spoken, it ought to be apparent that evil words were not to be spoken at all by Laban

to Jacob, or under any circumstances. This certainly reveals the care that the Lord has for His children.

There are several instances where God communicated with wicked and uncovenanted people, such as Laban.

- ➔ CAIN. Genesis 4:6-15
- ➔ ABIMELECH. Genesis 20:3
- ➔ LABAN. Genesis 31:24
- ➔ PHARAOH. Genesis 41:25,32
- ➔ BALAAM. Numbers 22:9-12; 24:2
- ➔ A MIDIANITE. Judges 7:13
- ➔ NEBUCHADNEZZAR. Daniel 2:28

➔ BELSHAZZAR. Daniel 5:5-28

➔ PILATE'S WIFE. Matthew 27:19

In all of these cases, the communication was initiated because God had the interest of His people at heart. It is the same with this occasion.

THEN LABAN OVERTOOK JACOB

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

The stage now is set for the confrontation of inimical spirits. Being so different in both temperament and calling, it ought to be apparent that such a confrontation would eventually occur. However, the Lord has orchestrated HOW it will take place.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/22/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The fifty-third lesson will cover verses 26 through 55 of chapter thirty-one: “JACOB LEAVES LABAN AND LABAN PURSUES HIM, #2.” Laban finds Jacob and asks why he had left abruptly, charging that he had stolen his gods from him. Jacob challenges him to search and see that this was not true. His search discovers no idols, although Rachel had taken some idols from him. A heated exchange follows, and then Laban returns to his home. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

“Openings and Introductions” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; “Lead Singing” – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; “Calling” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; “Sermon” = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; “Exhortation” = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; “Table Meditation” = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ’s role in salvation; “Lead Scripture shower” = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; “Lead prayer session” = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; “Lead Intercessory Prayer” = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; “Closing Scripture/Benediction” – Closing of the AM Gathering

SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO

DURING JANUARY, 2013

1. *Blakely, Benjamin* (Lead AM Singing).
2. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Sermon).
3. *Blakely, Jonathan* (AM Sermon, PM Table Meditation).
4. *Blakely, June* (Lead PM Prayer Session, Teach AM Class, Lead PM Singing).
5. *Blakely, Michael* (PM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).
6. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano).
7. *Blakely, Paul* (Lead Scripture Shower).
8. *Cobb, Anita* (Closing Scripture/Benediction).
9. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Opening Word, PM Sermon, PM Introduction).
10. *Cobb, Nicole* (Leading AM Singing).
11. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Calling, AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class).
12. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (AM Exhortation, AM Calling, AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Exhortation).
13. *Hutchcraft, Adah* (PM Introduction)
14. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (Lead AM Singing, Lead PM Singing, Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction).
15. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Lead PM Intercessory Prayer, Teach AM Class, AM Calling, AM Exhortation).
16. *Hutchcraft, Jason* (AM Table Meditation, AM Opening Word, PM Introduction)
17. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Play Piano Solos, Lead Scripture Shower, Introduction to PM Sermon, Read PM Sermon Text).
18. *Hutchcraft, Silas* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Read AM Sermon Text).
19. *Parker, Melissa* (Lead AM Scripture Shower, AM Calling).
20. *Parker, Tony* (PM Table Meditation, PM Table Meditation).
21. *Sims, Annie* (Introduction to AM Sermon, Read PM Sermon Text).
22. *Sims, Baylie* (Read AM Sermon Text).
23. *Sims Girls – Annie, Hannah, Rachel* (Read AM Sermon Text).
24. *Sims, Hannah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction)
25. *Sims, Ricky* (AM Table Meditation, AM Sermon, PM Exhortation).
26. *Sims, Tasha* (Lead PM Singing).
27. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Opening Word, PM Exhortation).
28. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord’s Table Interlude, Read PM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
29. *Williams, Nichole* (Closing Scripture/Benediction).
30. *Preparing Lord’s Supper* (Various sisters).



2013
REFRESHING WATERS
RENEWAL

Location:

Wildwood Baptist Church, Joplin, MO

**THE IDENTITY AND
RELEVANCE OF THE
GOSPEL**

Dates: August 6-8, 2013

Be in prayer for these gatherings, intended to be spiritual epochs, during which expanded perceptions of the Gospel are expected, as well as the power of the Gospel to be made manifest. This year we are meeting at a new location, trusting that it will be conducive to more local interest. This will be the twenty-fourth Renewal, held in various congregation facilities. Traditionally we have never realized any satisfactory degree of interest and participation in the congregation that hosted the gatherings. There have been times when no one from that congregation attended. In the very best cases, only a fraction of the membership has been represented. Notwithstanding, these gatherings have been well attended, with several brethren traveling hundreds of miles to attend them, and some coming from more than a thousand miles away.

Keep in mind that the consistent focus of these gatherings is the nature and content of the Gospel of Christ. We cannot conceive of there being a more relevant, spiritually productive, and God-honoring theme. We are persuaded that this is the only valid thrust for the people of God. It is for this reason that we are asking you to pray for a mighty shaking of this region which lies under a blanket of mediocrity and lukewarmness. We are also asking you to pray for the preachers, that they will deliver their messages with insight and power. It is time for an unquestionable display of the power of the Gospel and the effectiveness of faith.