

Genesis

Moses

Discussion II

Genesis Chapter 30- Laban Tricked

Genesis Chapter 31- Jacob's Flees

Genesis Chapter 32- Jacob Wrestles

Name: “Genesis” is a Greek word meaning “beginning.” The book tells of the beginning of everything except God who is without beginning or end.

Author: Moses

Date: 1500 BC Moses lived about as far on the other side of Christ as Columbus, who discovered America, lived on this side of Christ.

Outline:

- A. History of the human race (Gen. 1-11)
 - a. Creation
 - b. Fall
 - c. Flood
 - d. Tower of Babel (Nations)
- B. History of the chosen race, the Jews (Gen. 12-50)
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Isaac
 - c. Jacob
 - d. Joseph

	Human Race	Abraham to the Chosen Race
Genesis	Chapter 1 to Chapter 11 (2000 years?)	315 years

HISTORY OF THE CHOSEN RACE—GENESIS 12-50

The Plan of Redemption

As the events of the Old Testament start to unfold there is the continuous development of God's plan to bring into the world the Redeemer, through the chosen race, Israel, in the chosen land, Palestine. Notice how the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all connected with this plan of redemption.

The Purpose of Having One Chosen Race was:

- To keep alive the worship of the one true God.
- to illustrate to other nations, the blessedness of serving the true God.
- To receive and preserve God’s Word, the Bible.
- To give Birth to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

The Father of the Chosen Race—Abraham

Date: Abraham lived about 2000 B.C.

Adam	Abraham	Christ	Today
4000 B.C.	2000 B.C.		2000 A.D.

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and Your never-failing promises both to Israel and the Church. Thank You for this peep into Jacob's dream in which he saw a stairway to heaven and for the blessed promise You gave him that all peoples of the earth would be blessed by his descendants and that You would not leave him or forsake him. May I be faithful in my service to You, my wonderful faithful God and Father, knowing that You will never leave me or forsake me. In Jesus' name I pray, AMEN.

“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.”
(Genesis 28:15)

Discussion Question:

13. How did Jacob leave? (31) _____ Jacob left by sending his people out in groups in order from least amount of loss to those who were the most important to him. Because he was going to meet his brother who he thought was still out to get him. _____

Why? ___ Because God told him to return. _____

14. how long had Jacob been in Haran working? (31:38-41) ___ He had been working there for 20 years. _____

15. Why was Jacob afraid to meet Esau? (32:1-11) _____ Because he wanted to kill him for taking the blessing and the birthright. Which is quite the opposite reason that he was looking for him! _____

16. What various things did Jacob do when he heard that Esau was coming? _____ He prepared an offering, then grouped his people to be sent out from least loss of value to most important. _____

17. At Peniel that night, that turning point in Jacob's life took place. He received from God the blessing he had earlier sought to obtain in evil ways. God was wrestling with Jacob to get what quality out of him? _____ To give because he wanted to give him a blessing. Which would change his name! _____

Jacob now is a new man with a new name, _____ Israel _____, which means "a prince of God."

18. Can anyone have the power with God until he has surrendered to Him?

Closing Prayer:

We pray for- Danny Hoff and family,

We pray for those who are suffering from addiction, alcoholism, drug abuse, mental illness, physical illness, sorrow, trouble, and any other ailment. Those who are imprisoned, persecuted for any reason that is unjust or unright.

We pray for the leaders of all countries and nations, that they may lead, have guidance, and be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

We pray for those who have lost family members in accidents, war, or other natural or unnatural causes.

We pray for your guidance and love as we move into Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter.

Heavenly Father, thank You for the Scriptures, both Old and New, which are profitable for our learning - for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and for our spiritual growth and maturity. Thank You for instructing us in our spiritual walk of faith through the lives of those that have gone before, like Jacob, whose pride, resourcefulness, and ingenuity had to be broken before You could use Him to forward Your plans and purposes. Search me, O God, and know my heart, I pray. Try me, and see if there is any wicked way that needs to be refined, honed, corrected, or established. May I live from this day forward for Your eternal praise and glory. This I ask in Jesus' name, AMEN.

“And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”
(Genesis 32:26)

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Discussion Notes:

CHAPTER 30 LABAN TRICKED

³⁰ *The little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I have been. But now, when may I do something for my own household?”*
(Genesis 30:30)

EVENTS:

1. *Bilhah gives birth to two sons of Jacob.*
2. *Zilpah gives birth to two sons of Jacob.*
3. *Leah gives birth to two more sons of Jacob.*
4. *Rachel gives birth to Joseph.*
5. *Jacob finds a way to obtain Laban's sheep, goats, and cattle.*

THE CONTEXT—WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US?

Verses 1-25. Despite the polygamy and dissension in Jacob's household, God blessed the man by given him eleven sons in six years! These were prolific years for Jacob indeed! Both Rachel and Leah pressed Jacob towards more polygamy, offering their maidservants to him as additional wives. Competing interests and competing moral values present themselves in this chapter. The two sisters were unaware of the humiliation and dishonor to which they were subjecting themselves through this polygamy. When a man marries multiple women, he must divide his time, attention, and love amongst his wives. But these women were less concerned about their husband's time and affection than they were about getting the best of each other. This is the corrosive sin of envy. At the same time that they rejected God's intentions concerning marriage, the sisters also ignored His sovereign control over the womb. They came to rely entirely on their own ability to manipulate causes in order to bring about the blessing of children. Granted, there are things that we can do to enhance the possibility of pregnancy. But men and women will often forget about trusting God as they enthusiastically pursue pseudoscientific methods to get what they want. The women in this story were desperate to get their hands on mandrakes, a walnut-sized fruit thought to improve fertility. Here, Moses under the inspiration of the Spirit, attests that the opening of Rachel's womb had far more to do with the hand of God than it did with the mandrakes. Rachel eventually attributed the blessing into God's hand.

Verse 26-43. Meanwhile, Jacob was busy working to produce blessing himself out in the field with Laban's flocks and herds. While his wives were seeking to enhance their fertility by polygamy and mandrakes, Jacob was working to advance the family's wealth by another pseudo-scientific means. He peeled the branches of poplar and hazel trees and placed them in the water where the herds drank. As the theory went, if the sheep looked upon the stripes prior to conceiving their young, this would permanently affect the genetic code such that the lambs would come out striped.

Verse 30 elucidates the basic problem with Jacob's family at this time. Jacob told Laban, "God has blessed you since my coming: and not when shall I provide for my own house?" This is the same issue that Abraham struggled with when he took matters into his own hands and conceived a child with Hagar. Upon multiple occasions, Abraham and Isaac tried to deceive the pagan kings using their own ill-conceived means. Also, Rebekah arranged an

extravagant deception in order to secure the blessing for Jacob. When push comes to shove, this family has a hard time trusting in the power of God and trusting that he would work things out for their sake. On the one hand, Jacob here acknowledged God's provision for Laban's family by way of his own hard work. But then he turned his eyes away from God, when it came to his own family, focusing instead upon his own responsibility to provide. Could the same God who blessed Laban because of Jacob's presence also bless Jacob with the or better provisions? It was at this point that Jacob's faith in God wavered.

The truly astonishing element of this story is found in God's gracious condescension towards this unworthy clan. Although we know that striped sticks do not produce striped lambs and mandrakes likely do little to improve the fertility of a woman. God patiently "played along" with the silly antics of His people in this story. He provided them with children and Jacob fully intended to bring about—the disenfranchisement of Laban. God's judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out! In mercy, He did not give them their just desserts. At the same time, there would be consequences for polygamy and enviousness in the household in the lives of Jacob's sons.

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CHAPTER 31
JACOB FLEES

Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. (Genesis 31:20)

EVENTS:

1. *God tells Jacob to return to Canaan.*
2. *Jacob leaves Haran with his family without telling Laban.*
3. *Laban pursues and overtakes him seven days later.*
4. *God warns Laban in a dream not to harm Jacob.*
5. *After making a covenant between the families, the two parties part ways.*

THE CONTEXT—WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US?

Verse 1-16. After 21 years of disingenuous dealing and deception between Laban and Jacob, the relationship had almost completely disintegrated. But through it all, God was true to His promise. He did not forsake the Jacob, the man He had called Bethel. Despite Jacob's imperfections, God was still directing his life. In a dream, He told the man to leave Haran and return to the land of Canaan.

Laban exhibited a great deal of self-centeredness in his business dealings with Jacob. What a sad commentary on this man's lack of love for his own flesh and blood! One would think that he would have been happy to pass his assets on to his daughters and to the son of the covenant. But the man was controlled by his flesh. In spite of Laban's double-dealing and short-changing, God circumvented his foul purposes and blessed His man Jacob anyway.

The sojourn in Haran seems to have been a growing experience for Jacob. In verse 9, he finally acknowledged God's sovereign control over every aspect of his work and compensation (v. 9). At first, he might have relied a little too much on the peeled-stick-in-the-drinking-water technique to yield him striped herds, but now he was convinced of God's presence and blessing. In a dream, God confirmed that He was looking out for Jacob's interests. Surely, it was the revelation that solidified the man's confidence in God's promises and provisions. Can you see the great blessing that come from being in a covenant relationship with the God of heaven? He really does look out for the interests of His own.

Jacob is also to be commended for his diligent labor and productivity. While it is true that Laban did benefit from this massive agricultural enterprise, Laban was also blessed by Jacob's prodigious work. Comparing the character of the two men, we have to conclude that Laban was far more dishonorable and self-centered. He broke contracts, refused his own daughters any inheritance, cheated his own son-in-law on his wage's multiple times, and even dealt underhandedly in the marriage of his daughters. The word "scoundrel" comes to mind.

Verses 17-21. Is it any surprise that Rachel would also join the deception game that bath her husband and her father were playing? Before leaving Haran, Rachel snatched her father's Teraphim (or idols). Most likely, these golden idols represented a sizeable portion of the family's wealth. Verses 14 and 15 indicate that Rachel was motivated by financial gain. She was especially

distressed that her father would not provide her with any inheritance. This was one miserable family indeed! This is what happens when people live for themselves. Relationships suffer when sin, selfishness, and dishonesty dominate the home. Regrettably, this selfishness is the story of the average family in our world. It is only by the grace of God and the indwelling of the Spirit of God that we are able to transcend the selfishness, covetousness, envy, and treachery that ruin so many family relationships.

Verses 22-42. Laban pursued Jacob for one full week. Imagine the kind of irritation, animosity, and vengeful thoughts that must have simmered in this man's heart as he bore down on Jacob and the family. At this juncture there was real potential for violence. Thankfully, God intervened in the situation. By direct revelation in a dream, he warned Laban not to speak good or evil of His man Jacob. In other words, Laban was not to make any judgement concerning Jacob. Effectively, what God told him was, "Let it go." Just drop the issue and walk away.

Laban is a complex character in the biblical record. Clearly, it was the fear of the living God that restrained him from taking action against Jacob. He agreed to take a vow in the name of the God of Abraham. Yet at the same time, he was steeped in idolatry, contract-breaking, and materialism. How much different is this man from us?

Back at Bethel, God had promised that He would not allow anyone to harm Jacob. All the way to this point, God help true to His promise. Laban did complain about the teraphim, and proceeded to search the tents for the idols, to no avail. In a sad addendum to the story, Jacob unknowingly cursed his favorite wife. He may not have expected Rachel to have stolen the idols from her father, but when Jacob placed a curse on the person that lifted the teraphim, God took his words at face value. It wasn't long after this Rachel died, which very well could have been a consequence of her theft and her husband's curse. Let this be a lesson for all of us! Even if men do not take their words seriously, God is listening and He will hold use to the words we speak.

Verses 43-55. Finally, Jacob and Laban came to an agreement. They marked the place and promised never to pass over that boundary marker to harm each other. Jacob promised never to marry another woman or to hurt Laban's daughters. Together they sealed the covenant with a meal. This covenant

supper is a common element in godly covenant-making in both the Old and New Testaments.

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CHAPTER 32
JACOB WRESTLES

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. (Genesis 32:24)

EVENTS:

- 1. Jacob meets a host of angels as he continues his journey back to Canaan.*
- 2. Jacob makes preparations to meet his brother Esau.*
- 3. Jacob wrestles with the Lord, seeking to obtain a blessing.*

THE CONTEXT—WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US?

Verses 1-3. The prospects facing Jacob and his family at this stage were not pleasant. Having survived a potentially lethal confrontation with Laban, the party now was heading for an even more unpleasant engagement—a face-to-face meeting with Esau. Life is made up of a plethora of different situations, both pleasant and unpleasant. We should expect to encounter difficulties, conflicts, and vast amounts of loss as we travel through our lives. It is better to accept this, rather than be surprised of hardship when it presents itself. Job knew what he was talking about when he stated that “Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.” (Job 5:7)

This was the same situation that Jacob faced as he was preparing to meet Esau. Twenty years earlier, when he left his family in the land of Canaan, his twin brother was in a vengeful rage. As Jacob now stood at the edge of these dark waters, contemplating the challenge of wading into the trial, surely, he must have felt deep consternation.

But remember that God had promised that He would be with Jacob wherever he went. As Jacob prepared to walk through this difficult trial, God sent a host of angels to meet him on his way. Occasionally, God opened the eyes of His people to see his mighty power. The children of Israel caught a glimpse of this at the Red Sea. Elisha and his servant witnessed the armies of Angels surrounding the city. May God help us to visualize His complete sovereignty

over everything, including the puny problems that are of immediate concern to us! It is this sort of vision that brings things back into perspective. When a man sees tens of thousands of 100-foot-tall angels surrounding the area, he would be hardly concerned about the band of 400 Edomites approaching the scene. Jacob called this place “Two Armies.” By this designation, he testified to God’s superior force over all who would be aggressors against God’s people. For the remainder of human history, God’s armies would always be near and available to the people of God.

Verse 4-23. We may take a number of lessons from this passage relating to the important Christian duty of peacemaking. While God’s armies are always ready to deliver His people, Jacob still understood his duty to address the present conflict. Usually, conflicts between humble believers out to be resolved quickly, according to Jesus’ instructions in Matthew 18. But this was not that kind of conflict. What heightened the complexity of this particular situation was the fundamental disagreement between the two men. The first party was the son of the covenant and a servant of the living God. The second party was a man of the world. They shared different commitments in relation to God and to His covenant.

Long-standing rifts in families are nothing new, especially between Christians and their unsaved parents or siblings. Examples like this can be very instructive for those who find themselves in the midst of family feuds. First, Jacob took the matter to God in prayer. A prayer of faith is one of the first indications what a man is walking in relationship with the living and true God. With all the shortcomings and failings, Jacob was demonstrating himself to be that man of faith. In his prayer, he acknowledged God’s goodness to him and his unworthiness as a recipient of His good gifts. Then, on the basis of the covenant promise, the promise which was made to him under heaven’s ladder some twenty years earlier, he pleaded for God’s protection for his family.

Having trusted everything to the sovereign hand of God in Prayer, Jacob then prepared a substantial gift of 550 animals for Esau. “A gift in secret turns away wrath,” says the book of Proverbs. But what can we say about a gift amounting to upwards of \$100,000 in value? When was the last time you saw brothers exchange gifts of such value? The momentousness of the occasion cannot be underestimated here. Judging from the size of these men’s households and holdings, any kind of animosity could have very well resulted in warfare between two developing nations. That is what happened some four hundred

years later between the Edomites and Israelites. But for now, Jacob wanted to establish a long-standing peace agreement between the two parties. Warfare is expensive and incredibly destructive. Peace is of immeasurable value, worth at least \$100,000 to the families of Esau and Jacob.

After preparing the gift, Jacob sent messengers ahead to signal his interest in reconciliation with his brother Esau. The messages contained conciliatory signals. Most importantly, we should not ignore Jacob's humility. This is a characteristic that is essential in any peacemaking. In his message, Jacob referred to Esau as "my lord," and called himself "your servant."

Verse 24-29. On the evening before the critical meeting, Jacob sent his family ahead in two bands over the Jabbok River. There he wrestled with an angel for the remainder of the evening. Hosea 12:3-4 refers to this highly significant event in the life of Jacob:

3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God. 4 He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there—

From his birth, Jacob had proven himself as a mighty wrestler. First, he grabbed the heel of Esau. He wrestled hard for the birthright and the blessing. Then for 21 years, he contended with his father-in-law for material wealth. Now here he was grappling with an angel for hours and hours on the north side of the river. In this strange interchange, God was testing Jacob's fortitude and commitment to the covenant. It was a test of faith. He had already challenged Jacob to return to the promised land and assume the covenant; but now it seemed as if He was "preventing" him from entering the land.

For hours upon hours, Jacob engaged in a strenuous, hand-to-hand wrestling match. His persistence is remarkable, as witnessed in his final desperate cry, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me!" Having already seen an army of angels surrounding the camp, Jacob probably senses that this was no ordinary man opposing him. He must have realized that his dealing had to do with the living God. What right does a man have to wrestle with God, except on the basis of the covenant that God has already established with him? If God had not already promised the land to Jacob, he would have no right to "sue" Him for the blessing of protection and provision.

As the dawn broke and the wrestling ended, God changed Jacob's name to "Israel." This name is significant in its literal translation: "He will rule with God." Originally, man was created for dominion, to rule as God's vice-regent over His creation. But the fall of man severely crippled man's ability to think, to live, and to rule according to God's design. In this new covenant, man's ability to take dominion and to rule with God was restored. It is restored for us in Christ.

There is no doubt that Jacob was a man of high achievement, clarity of purpose, and relentless persistence. His passion, his energy, and his intense persistence was persuasive with God. But how does a man influence God when God himself is the chief influencer of all things? Surely it is God who influences us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philemon 2:12-13). Yet the fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much (James 5:16). God influences us and we influence Him. He first influences us. We have to believe that fervency still matters. The more fervent and persistent the prayer, the more influence the prayers will bear upon the Almighty. But we do not have an influence apart from the covenant relationship He has already made with us. If we were not His children, we would not have the right to approach Him as our Father. A man cannot approach God apart from faith in the covenant promises that God has already made with him in Christ.

Verses 30-32. What a remarkable account of some of the most memorable events that ever occurred in human history! In the end, Jacob recognized the source of all blessings. He finally understood that he was not wrestling with Esau or Laban. He was in a wrestling match with God. Amazed that he survived a face-to-face confrontation with God Himself, he called the place "Peniel," meaning, "Face of God." Jacob walked away with a perpetual reminder of the wrestling match: a limp he would carry for the rest of his life. It was monument to his weakness and his strength: both a sign of victory and a symbol of his dependence on God.

Closing Prayer:

We pray for- Danny Hoff and his family, Coral, Martha for rest and recuperation, Aunt Anne who is wrestling with the start of dementia, Kelsie, Barb Delzer, Emelia, Rylee, and anyone else who is struggling with any illness, ailment, or medical struggle.

We pray for those who are suffering from addiction, alcoholism, drug abuse, mental illness, physical illness, sorrow, trouble, and any other ailment. Those who are imprisoned, persecuted for any reason that is unjust or unright.

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