

Genesis

Chapter 31:43-32:32

Last week we read of how Jacob tried to leave without Laban knowing it and got caught by Laban. At the end of the study we read of Jacob finally speaking up to Laban and the way he had treated him.

This week we will start off with Laban's response to Jacob, then we will read of the meeting of Jacob and Esau, Jacob's twin brother.

✧ **Gen 31:43-50** ⁴³ *And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?"* ⁴⁴ *"Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me."* ⁴⁵ *So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.* ⁴⁶ *Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap.* ⁴⁷ *Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.* ⁴⁸ *And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed,* ⁴⁹ *also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another."* ⁵⁰ *"If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us--see, God is witness between you and me!"*

Even though Jacob had worked 20 years for his two wives, his children and his flock, Laban still says that they are his. But I think Laban remembered his dream, so he decides to make a covenant with Jacob.

So why were they setting up a pillar of stones?

It would be like a monument or a reminder every time they came to this place of the vow that was made. But it was not only a reminder to Jacob and Laban, but to their children and their children's children and so on. Both Jacob and Laban would tell their children of the covenant of peace made between them, and tell of the pillar of stones that represents this covenant.

We have the same thing today. God made a promise at the beginning of time that a Savior would come and die for us so that we could be in heaven with the Lord forever. Our reminder is the cross that Jesus died on for our sins, and another reminder is the empty tomb proving that Jesus was God come in the flesh and rose from the dead.

Another pillar we have today from God is, the promise to never flood the earth with water again, and we are reminded of this every time we see a rainbow.

But even though God has given us these reminders, the world has perverted them.

The rainbow is now the symbol taken on by the homosexuals.

I also saw a commercial some time back of a company selling their candy with the rainbow, but in the mist of this rainbow were demons portrayed as gargoyles statues

coming to life. What does that have to do with selling candy to kids? But then what does God's promise of not flooding the earth again have to do with homosexuals? These are just ways of Satan perverting God's promises to us.

Another is with the cross. We as Christians wear crosses because it's a reminder that Jesus died for us. But the world has taken this and perverted it also. You see rock and pop stars wearing crosses in their ears, around their neck, pierced on body parts and even tattooed in unspeakable places on their body. They usually do this because of their religious upbringing. They never had a relationship with Jesus and continually use His name in vain and as a curse word. But they have no idea what the cross represents. They just know they were taught to wear a cross because it's a good thing to do, and it shows that you are a religious person. The only problem with religion is that it's man made and not of God.

- † **Matt 15:7-9** *"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "*
- † **Matt 23:27-28 (NLT)** *How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs--beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. You try to look like upright people outwardly, but inside your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.*
- † **James 1:27** *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

But then some of these people choose to pervert the cross and make fun of Christians. That's why they wear the cross the way they do. And anyone who wears a cross upside down is very likely a Satanist because this is Satan's sign.

Both Laban and Jacob had a name for this place. Laban called it **Jegar Sahadutha**, but Jacob called it **Galeed**. The interesting thing is they both mean the same thing, which is: "witness heap". But Laban's name for the place is Aramaic, whereas Jacob's is Hebrew. Even though Jacob had been gone from his home for over 20 years, he still spoke the language of his father, and still served the God of his father Isaac.

Just because we work at jobs of the world and the world is all around us, in the stores, on TV, in magazines, even on the labels of some of the products we buy. You can't get away from the world, but that doesn't mean you should take on the form or appearance of the world to fit in. No, we are to be separated from the things of the world, which means we are not to allow these things to influence us or control us.

Jacob was around greedy Laban and his sons for 20 years, but he didn't allow Laban's lifestyle interfere with his relationship with God or the things his father taught him.

✧ *And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another."*

Have you ever heard of the Mizpah, you can buy them almost anywhere in the form of a necklace, key chain, I bet they even have T-shirts with them. What it is, is a round coin that is broken in two. Written on this coin are Laban's words from verse 49 *"May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another."* What you do with them is give one to a loved one and the other you keep as a reminder of each other and of God's protection for one another when you are apart.

It's a nice thought, but that's not what it represents, at least not in this case. (No you don't have to throw them away if you have one.) But you have to remember why this was done. If you think about it, Laban didn't really trust Jacob. After all, Jacob was sneaking away from Laban because he didn't trust him either.

Another thing they don't put on these coins is verse 50 which is really the entire saying of Laban (verses 49-50). Here it is from the NLT.

✧ **Gen 31:50 (NLT)** *I won't know about it if you are harsh to my daughters or if you take other wives, but God will see it.*

How would you like your friend or even spouse to give you a necklace that said that? It is obvious that Laban didn't trust Jacob, even though he really had no reason not to trust him. For 20 years Jacob served Laban and never stolen anything from him, even though Jacob was cheated time and again by Laban, Jacob was still an honest man. And the reason Jacob was sneaking away was because of the way Laban had treated him.

But when you are greedy and a swindler, you don't trust anyone, no matter how honest they are, because you think everyone is out to get you, even though the truth is you are out to get everyone else.

✧ **Gen 31:51-55** ⁵¹ *Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. ⁵² "This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. ⁵³ "The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴ Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. ⁵⁵ And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.*

Finally Jacob and Laban have parted on good terms. They were examples of what Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

† **Eph 4:25-27** *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.*

People will get angry at one another, but notice that the healing didn't really take place between Jacob and Laban until Jacob spoke out the truth.

For 20 years Jacob was holding in his anger towards Laban. Finally he couldn't take it anymore, as we read last week, and Jacob spilled his guts to Laban. Only then could a real healing take place.

Maybe you are not angry with a person but you are angry with God. It may seem He has let you down or that you don't feel like you can trust Him anymore. One piece of advice I give to you today; Tell God that you are angry with Him and tell Him why. He won't destroy you with a bolt of lightning. God knows already that you are angry with Him and why. Only then can a real healing between you and God occur when you do! It doesn't mean that God will change or bend to your will, it means that God will open your eyes to the truth that you have been blinded to all this time. Then you will return to Him with a repentant heart.

That may not be what you want to hear because you feel that you are right and that God is wrong. I bet you never really thought about it that way before, have you?

Because when you are feeling like you are right and God is wrong, you are making yourself out to be better and more righteous than God. (Everybody say, "ouch" and realize this is true.) I guarantee you that when you do truly return to the Lord with a repentant heart, you will be healed spiritually. This I know personally by experience!

So Jacob goes on his way. Let's read on in chapter 32.

✧ **Gen 32:1-2** ¹ *So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ² When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

Jacob was now returning home to Canaan and was met by the angels of God. This may have been in celebration of Jacob's return home, but also for comfort and protection as Jacob will now be confronting his brother Esau.

We see this in one of the King David's Psalms.

† **Psalms 34:6-8** *This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*

Jacob was clearly a living example of this Psalm. Jacob cried out to the Lord and God's angels ministered to him and encamped around Jacob and his family. We know this because the word Mahanaim means: "two camps". There was Jacob's camp, and there

was God's camp of angels. It's possible that the angels instructed Jacob on what to do next in regards to his brother Esau. Let's read on and find out what that was.

✧ **Gen 32:3-5** ³ *Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴ And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. ⁵ "I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." ' ' "*

I believe the angels instructed Jacob to send these messengers to Esau. Jacob was not boasting in what he was telling Esau, but rather he was seeking Esau's permission to return home. It would be like saying, "Esau, I ran away from you because I cheated you. I have been gone for these 20 years now and God has prospered me. But it means nothing unless I have your forgiveness and I can return home in peace".

Let's see the response.

✧ **Gen 32:6-8** ⁶ *Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." ⁷ So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. ⁸ And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."*

The messengers never made it to Esau at this time. They came running back telling Jacob that Esau was coming with 400 men. At this point Jacob was afraid and in this fear he makes a plan to divide his family into two groups. Just incase Esau attacked one half, then the other would possibly escape and live. This is God taking control of the situation to show Jacob that He's in charge, not Jacob.

After Jacob makes his plans, he finally does the right thing; he seeks God.

✧ **Gen 32:9-12** ⁹ *Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': ¹⁰ "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. ¹¹ "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. ¹² "For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "*

God this was your idea. You said you would be with my family and me. I need Your protection and guidance. Please deliver me from my brother who sought to kill me 20 years ago. You promised to make my descendants as the sand of the sea. Jacob knew that the only way he could make it through all of this was by the mighty hand of God.

We often get into situations where there is nowhere to turn but to God. We know that there is no way out except for God's hand to be upon the situation. God does deliver His children in His way. It may not always seem like the right way, but God knows what He's doing!

✧ **Gen 32:13-21** ¹³ *So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: ¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵ thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. ¹⁶ Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." ¹⁷ And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?' ¹⁸ "then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.' " ¹⁹ So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; ²⁰ "and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." ²¹ So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.*

Was Jacob trying to buy Esau's forgiveness? I don't think so. Jacob was humbling himself before Esau by calling him lord and Jacob referred to himself as Esau's servant. After 20 years of separation between the twin brothers, this was a good will offering to Esau. This was an offering to reconcile himself with his brother Esau. Jacob was hoping that Esau would forgive him and accept him into the family again and as his brother.

✧ **Gen 32:22-32** ²² *And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. ²³ He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. ²⁴ Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. ²⁵ Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. ²⁶ And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" ²⁷ So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." ²⁸ And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." ²⁹ Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. ³⁰ And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." ³¹ Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. ³² Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.*

Who was this man that Jacob was wrestling with? After all, Jacob had sent everyone away as he sought the Lord more in private. The answer is in verse 28 ***for you have struggled with God and with men.*** So does this mean it was just a man? No the struggling with man was Jacob's struggle with his brother Esau and with Laban his father in law. I believe that the man Jacob was struggling with was Jesus. That was the only way man could see God's face and live. If this were an ordinary man then Jacob would not have sought a blessing from Him.

"But if this was God how come He didn't know Jacob's name?"

Oh, He did know Jacob's name, remember Jacob's name meant: *"heel holder"* or *"supplanter"* which means to attack at someone's heels or to hold someone back. But God had now changed his name to Israel, which means: *"God prevails"* or *"who prevails with God"*

Jacob from the time of his birth until now had tried to prevail on his own. We see this when he was born and during his birth he tried to hold back Esau.

† **Gen 25:26** *Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.*

We also see this when Jacob took Esau's birthright with a bowl of soup, once again holding back Esau from what was rightfully his.

† **Gen 25:33-34** *Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

Then Jacob stole Esau blessing.

† **Gen 27:19 & 35-26** ¹⁹ *Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."*

³⁵ *But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." ³⁶ And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"*

Who have you done wrong in the past? Have you ever sought their forgiveness? Maybe today the Lord is speaking to your heart and has put someone in mind that you need to make things right with. Should you send them a present first like Jacob did? Maybe yes,

maybe no. Ask the Lord how He wants you to confront this person. And ask the Lord for strength and His forgiving heart towards this person and for this person to also have a forgiving heart towards you as well.

Jacob was named for holding others back, or grabbing on to what belonged to someone else and wanting to make it his own. But the truth was that Jacob was the one being held back by God. Sure he has 11 sons, and a large flock and would, in today's terms, considered to be very well off financially. But having the things of this world does not make you a success, at least until God puts His hand upon it and uses it for His glory.

Jacob had 11 sons (and will have a 12th as we will see) but these 12 sons were nothing more than just sons. But when God put his hand upon Jacob and all that he had, only then could it be something of use. These 12 sons of Jacob will be known as the 12 tribes of Israel. And they are mentioned throughout the bible from Genesis to Revelations. Jacob was no longer just a rich shepherd, but was now a nation, all of this because God's hand was upon it all.

You may feel like you don't have much to offer the Lord, but He asks for all that you have no matter how little or great that is. But all that you have means nothing unless He has your heart as a believer in His Son Jesus Christ.

Maybe this week you are reading this and you have been at the end of your rope, or things just seem too impossible. Do you feel like a Jacob ready to meet his brother who was ready to kill him 20 years ago? Are you afraid wondering if there really is a God, and if there is, can He fix what you are going through? I'm here to tell you that there is a God and He loves you. He has proven this by sending His Son Jesus to die for you on the cross. Jesus has paid the price for ALL of your sins. All you need to do is ask for His forgiveness and believe in Him. This is all done with a simple pray like this:

*Jesus, I admit I am a sinner and I ask you to please forgive me for all my sins. I believe that you died on the cross for my sins and rose again the third day just as you said you would. Please be my Lord and Savior and change me into what you want me to be. Fill me now with Your Holy Spirit and give me the ability to share what you did for me with others. Thank You Jesus, I pray this in Your name.
Amen!*

Isn't that just too cool? If you prayed that prayer from your heart you are now a Christian, welcome to the family of God.

So, will all of your problems go away right away? Maybe yes, but then maybe no. I know it's not what you may want to hear, but rest assured, as a Christian you will have a peace knowing that God is in control of your life now. God will always be with you no matter what. Don't allow your circumstance make you think that He's not. God always knows what He's doing, and it always works out better His way than if you did it your way.

Maybe you are a believer but it seems you have so little, or you have much and it doesn't seem to be used for God's glory. You gave your life to Jesus, but have you given Him your possessions? This week I would encourage you to give everything to God. Allow Him to use them in anyway He sees fit. Remember, He took a man and made him into a nation. He can take you and do wonderful things to, just trust in Him and not your own abilities. After all, it's God doing the work through you. Not you doing the work with God's help!

Next week we will read of Jacob and Esau coming face to face. Will Esau accept Jacob's gifts and forgiveness, or will he destroy him and his family. If you can't wait to find out, then read ahead in chapter 33.

May God richly bless you in His love grace and mercy!