

## **“Declare God's Faithfulness to all Generations”**

### **Genesis Chapter 31**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

When Jacob fled from his brother's murderous rage he camped in a desolated place but found that by God's providence he was at the very house of God. There, at “Beth-El”, God promised Jacob “... And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest...”(Gen 28:15). Now in Genesis 31 after decades with Laban it is once again time for Jacob to leave. Jacob must step out of God's promise. The history of Jacob is one of a faithful God and a fallible man. We see God deliver Jacob from evil men and we see how God is slowly delivering Jacob from his own sin. Our God is the faithful God of Jacob, the covenant keeping God of “loyal love”.

***Grasp God's faithfulness so that you and your family will grow in faith!***

#### **Gen 31:1-16 – God was faithful to Jacob during his years with Laban**

Vs 1-4 Jacob's fear and his secret plan. The “deceiver” has been deceived 10 times by Laban! But in all of this he knows that “God suffered him not to hurt me.”

Vs 5-9 Jacob gives God glory for being faithful, protecting him, and providing for him. Jacob is growing in grace!

Vs 13-14 Laban's daughters also feel that

Vs 9-16 God is keeping the promise that He made at Beth-el and the family of Jacob are learning to trust him. In this chapter Jacob mentions God 8 times, more times than all the previous chapters combined.

Jacob has suffered at the hands of Laban, and because of his own bad decisions. But God has been with him and used this difficulty to help Jacob grow closer to Him. God has a purpose for every pain and difficulty in our lives. See how adversary has caused Jacob to grow in grace!

*Use adversity as an opportunity to trust God!*

#### **Gen 31:17-24 – God was faithful to protect Jacob when Jacob knew he needed protecting**

Vs 17-22 As usual, Jacob has a plan! It's reasonable plan but Jacob still trusts too much in his own plans. Because God is with Jacob he should not flee like a fugitive.

Vs 23 The “brethren” here would be a large company of relatives including Laban's sons who believe what Jacob has belongs to them. And Laban's daughters say in Vs 15 that they are like strangers to their father. Jacob is apparently in danger!

Vs 24 But God is with Jacob. What he says to Laban is a figure of speech that means something like “watch yourself! Don't try to change his mind.”

God is not only with us in danger we see, he is with us in danger that we do not see. The world is full of uncertainty, but nothing is hid from God

*Focusing on God's faithfulness in the face of the enemy protects you from bitterness and foolish sin!*

#### **Gen 31:17-24 – God was faithful to protect Jacob when Jacob DID NOT know he needed protecting**

The stolen gods (“terrefiem”) were an important part of ancient near eastern paganism. These small clay idols were supposed to bring blessing to those who owned them, like a good luck charm. The father passed the idols down to a chosen son, usually the first born, as a blessing.

Owning these household gods was synonymous with being the head of the family. It's interesting that once again Jacob is accused of “stealing the blessing” and once again he is somewhat innocent but not entirely.

When Jacob swore his oath, he had no idea of the danger that he had put Rachel in! It's hard to imagine that Laban would kill his daughter, but Jacob would be in a bad bargaining position after making this rash vow.

Again, we have shadows of idolatry and deceit upon Jacob's family. Their trust in God is far from perfect, but God is still faithful!

*To better grasp God's faithfulness give thanks for His unseen protection!*

### **Gen 31:36-42 – Grasping God's faithfulness helped Jacob to let go of bitterness**

Vs 36 here Jacob nearly “loses it” he pours out his complaint to Laban!

Vs 37-41 Look at how the “schemer” has grown! He recalls years that he spent doing everything with integrity and insists that his dispute with Laban be settled “above board” in the presence of witnesses. Now would be the perfect time to demand restitution for all the hurt and humiliation that Laban inflicted!

But Jacob let's go. “...God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands...”

Too often when one hurts us, the lasting bitterness does so much more harm than the first injury.

*Grasp God's faithfulness you will be able to commit your cause to Him and avoid the trap of bitterness!*

### **Gen 31:43-55 – Grasping God's faithfulness allows Jacob to move on in God's will for his life**

Vs 43-44 Suddenly, Laban's position is very dangerous. God has told him not to hurt Jacob, Jacob is talking about legal action for his many wrongs, and maybe someday Jacob will come for him ready to fight like he did. Laban very shrewdly decides to offer a settlement.

Vs 45-52 Laban doubles down on threats and bravado, but he knows he better and, so he turns to something the he knows Jacob values... “If thou shalt afflict my daughters...God is witness betwixt me and thee.” Note in verse 51, who set up the monument?

Vs 53 But Laban entirely misses the point! “The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.” Each time “God” is used here it is plural (gods) and the verb is plural as well (may they judge between us). Laban knows that Abraham had a “god” but he knows nothing of the God of Abraham.

Vs 54-55 but Jacob does and swears by the one true God who Isaac taught him to revere.

As these men swear their oaths we see that Laban truly has a darkened consciousness. To follow God's will, Jacob and his family must leave.

*Whether the world is trying to seduce you or scare you, trust God's faithfulness and leave the world behind!*

## CONCLUSION

Here we have seen Laban almost entirely unfaithful, God entirely faithful, and Jacob and kin somewhere in the middle. So much of our practical walk with God depends on our grasp of His faithfulness. By His faithfulness we are protected and provided for whether we know it or not, by His faithfulness we can forgive wrongs and escape bitterness, and by His faithfulness we are free to move forward in His will. Do you really believe his promises? The key to spiritual growth is trusting God's faithfulness and turning that trust into action. We often fall short, but God is always faithful.

***Grasp God's faithfulness so that you and your family will grow in faith!***