

Genesis 30:25 - 31:55 Jacob Prospers and Prepares to Return Home

As the previous account of the building of Jacob's family, this account describes the building of his material wealth.

Genesis 30:25-34 – the agreement

Jacob had served 14 years, yet had nothing of his own. Laban had kept all the wealth Jacob created. What do we know about Laban from his statement that through divination that he came to the conclusion that he became wealthy through the Lord's blessing of Jacob's work?

Genesis 30:35-43 – the outcome

Laban obtained Jacob's continued service, then acted with great speed to cheat Jacob and to go back on his word. As Christians we should never give our word or make a pledge without first counting the cost. Are you known as a person of your word? Read Matthew 5:37

Why does Jacob give the flock a view of stripes and spots? There was a common belief that a vivid sight during conception or during gestation would leave an impression on the embryo. That, obviously, was not the reason for Jacob's success. Jacob also used selective breeding, but it would have been too slow to yield much results. Why do you think the sheep grew to have stripes and spots?

Jacob's behavior is an example of what not to do. We must not fight fire with fire, but must acknowledge that God is the true source of our success. Our blessings are from the Lord, not our own abilities.

Genesis 31:1-16 Jacob's wives agree to flee

Jacob describes for his wives the previous years. Here Jacob shows that he gave God the credit and the glory for prospering him. God's power is not limited by lack of fair play. He has the ability to meet our needs and make us thrive even when others mistreat us. To respond unfairly is to be no different than our persecutors. Read Matthew 5:43-48, Psalm 37:1,8

Genesis 31:17-21 Jacob flees

The household gods (called teraphim) were thought to protect the home and offer advice in times of need. Rachel probably stole them because they comforted her as she left her home. She had previously shown a lack of relationship to the Lord, and a tendency toward superstition (for example, the mandrakes). By taking the idols she showed she had not abandoned those views.

Genesis 31:22-42 - Laban pursues and they each make their case

Jacob was so sure that no one had stolen the idols that he vowed the offender would die. Although Laban did not find the idols, his vow would be fulfilled by Rachel's early death. Have you ever felt absolutely confident about something, and proclaimed it without having all the facts?

Jacob confidently defends himself. He had done more than was expected of him. He had taken the losses from attacked and stolen livestock. His hard work paid off and his flocks multiplied. We should be prepared to make such a defense of our conduct. Doing more than is expected of you pleases God, enhances your reputation, and develops maturity. Look up Proverbs 22:1; Colossians 3:23-24

Genesis 31:43-55 - The Covenant at Mizpah

Mizpah means watchtower. To be binding, an agreement had to be witnessed by a third party. God was their witness. The "witness heap" was given an Aramaic name by Laban the Aramean (Syria), and a Hebrew name by Jacob. It was a resolution to their conflict in that they agreed to stay on their own side of that boundary.

Jacob had left Canaan 20 years before, alone and empty handed. Now he was returning with his family, rich in flocks and servants. God had kept the promise He made in Genesis 28:15 to watch over Jacob. Read John 16:33