**SDG #18**

**Genesis – Chapter 31-32**

**Chapter 31**

1. How did Laban’s sons view Jacob? Why? What was the result?

Laban’s sons saw Jacob as a thief. They saw all of Jacob’s wealth as gain from their birthright. They were jealous and greedy and coveted Jacob’s wealth. As a result, Laban began to look at Jacob in a similar manner.

2. As soon as Jacob had finished his 14 years of service he had planned to go back to Canaan. However, Laban didn’t want to lose him and they worked out a payment/wage plan to keep Jacob tending Laban’s flocks and herds. What led Jacob to want to go back to Canaan this time? (vs. 3)

The LORD told him to go back.

3. How long had Jacob been serving Laban? (vs. 41)

Jacob served Laban for 20 years. 14 years for Rachel and Leah. 6 years for his wealth.

4. How did Jacob break the news to his wives that he wanted to return to his homeland? Why did he do this?

He called Rachel and Leah out into the field. This prevented anyone from overhearing him and his plans. Jacob was being secretive.

5. What do we learn about Jacob’s work ethic? (vs. 6)

Jacob served with all his strength.

6. What do we learn about Laban? (vs. 7)

Laban cheated at every opportunity he had. He changed his wages ten times. This may be literal or figurative.

7. What do we learn about God? (vss. 7b – 9)

God took up the cause of Jacob and blessed him by making Laban’s flocks produce blemished offspring. Every time Laban changed the deal God changed the offspring to match it.

8. Who or what is “the angel of God?” (vss. 11-13)

The angel of God can also be translated as the Angel of Genuine Deity. Angel means messenger. This is God coming with a message.

9. How did Jacob respond to the calling of the Angel of God?

Jacob responded, “Here I am!”

10. Challenge Question: Who else responded to God’s call in a similar way by saying, “Here am I, Send me!”?

In Isaiah 6:8, the prophet responds in this way to God’s call of, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

11. Why does God reveal Himself as the God of Bethel?

God is reminding Jacob of his promise, covenant and worship at Bethel. God had certainly fulfilled his part of the covenant. “If God will be with me…”

12. How did Rachel and Leah respond to Jacob’s plan? Why?

Both Rachel and Leah told Jacob to go ahead with his plan. They saw and acknowledged that their father had cheated Jacob and yet God had blessed Jacob with great wealth while their father did not prosper as well.

13. What did Jacob take with him on his journey back to Canaan?

Jacob took his family, all his livestock and all his property. By using the pronoun his and the verbs gained and acquired the author emphasizes that Jacob only took what belonged to him.

14. What did Jacob take with him that he didn’t realize he was taking?

Rachel stole her father’s household gods. What is meant by this we do not know. They were probably small figurines made with a precious metal. She may have taken them for their monetary value, to spite her father, to keep her father from using them to curse Jacob or to worship them.

15. How had Jacob tricked Laban? (vs. 20)

Jacob didn’t say he was leaving. He just started driving the herds. It would have appeared that he was moving to new pasture.

16. What is the significance of Jacob crossing the Euphrates and setting his face toward the hill country of Gilead?

The normal route would have followed the Euphrates to the northwest and then followed the rivers down to the Sea of Galilee. Jacob’s route was direct, shorter, but posed challenges of water and safety because it wasn’t the standard road. The normal route was about 550 miles. Laban began to go after Jacob after 3 days and caught him after 7. He then closely followed Jacob into the hill country of Gilead. Jacob and his family had averaged at least 30 miles a day, which was very fast and indicates how significant Jacob’s haste was.

17. When did Laban realize Jacob had left? How long did it take to catch up to Jacob? What does this tell us?

See previous answer. It is amazing how far Jacob had gotten.

18. Why did God come to Laban in a dream?

Obviously, Laban meant to harm Jacob. God warned Laban not to.

19. What did Laban accuse Jacob of? (vs. 26)

He accused Jacob of kidnapping his daughters; “like captives of the sword.”

20. What was Laban’s purpose in speaking about all the things he could of done? (vss. 27-28)

Laban is trying to make Jacob look very poor or bad.

21. How does Laban betray his true intent? (vs. 29)

Laban speaks of being able to do Jacob harm. He obviously had planned to do exactly that because he told Jacob he wouldn’t because God had warned him not too.

22. What conflict is presented between Laban’s dream and his accusation of verse 30?

Laban said the dream was from, “The God of your father” and he speaks of Jacob stealing his gods. There is a conflict of gods. Obviously, Jacob had his God. Laban is left without his. Obviously, his gods weren’t very powerful.

23. How did Jacob respond to this accusation?

Jacob vehemently contested Laban’s accusation and challenged Laban to find the gods. He also promised to kill anyone who had taken them.

24. Why didn’t Rachel give the gods back to her father? What does this say about her view of her father?

Since Jacob had promised to kill anyone who had taken the gods, Rachel was obviously worried about how her father would react. She feared for her life.

25. Verses 36-42 contains Jacob tirade against Laban. What is Jacob’s ultimate message to Laban?

Jacob claims that if it wasn’t for God he would have been sent away empty handed.

26. Was Jacob correct in his assessment of Laban? How do you know this? (vs. 43)

Jacob was correct. In spite of working for Laban for 20 years, Laban still claimed everything belonged to him.

27. What is the significance of the stone pillar and the stone heap?

There is great symbolism in this action. In essence there are two witnesses which shows the great seriousness of the covenant. At the same time, Jacob’s pillar represents One God and Laban’s heap represent his many gods.

28. What were the agreements of the covenant?

Jacob would take no other wives and neither he nor Laban would cross over or past the stone pillar and stone heap to do harm to the other.

**Chapter 32**

29. What is meant by, “The angels of God met him?”

God allowed Jacob to see the angels that were traveling with him.

30. What was Jacob’s primary concern as he returned home?

Jacob’s greatest fear was that Esau would attack him.

31. How did Jacob try to address this fear? (There are multiple steps or actions that he took)

Step #1 (vs. 5)-He sent messengers to Esau letting him know that he was returning and was wealthy.

Step #2 (vs. 7) -He divided his camp into two groups.

Step #3 (vss. 9-12)-He prayed.

Step #4 (vss. 13-21)-Jacob sent a series of presents/gifts to Esau.

Step #5 (vss. 22-23)-Jacob sent his family across the Jabbock River away from the two camps and away from him.

32. Focus on steps 3 and 5. What do we learn about Jacob in these steps?

Jacob has greatly matured in faith. He humbled himself before the LORD and asked God to fulfill His covenant. Jacob also loved his family and sought to protect them as he faced Esau by himself.

33. What was the purpose of Jacob’s wrestling match?

Jacob’s life was a constant struggle from the time of his birth. This wrestling match seems to be a test of his resolve for his sake. Jacob deceived and worked his way through previous struggles. What would he do now when faced by this aggressor? Would he try to deceive? Would he run? Or, would he stand and face the aggressor? By wrestling all night we see that Jacob would not leave the land God had promised him or the family God had blessed him with.

34. Who was this man that Jacob wrestled with? How do you know?

It was God. We know it is God for three reasons:

1. By a simple touch he dislocated Jacob’s hip.
2. He changed Jacob’s name to Israel, which mean, “Strives or wrestles with God.”
3. Jacob identified Him as God.

35. What did Jacob want from the wrestle?

Jacob wanted a blessing.

36. A verse to contemplate: Genesis 31:53

Consider how Laban identifies God. What can we learn from this identification and how can we apply it to our lives?

Laban identified God as the God of Abraham, Nahor and of their father (Terah). The faith and belief in God was passed down from father to son. It was very clear to Laban. Likewise, there should be no doubt that we believe in Him and have passed this on to our children and grand-children.