

FAITH - FEAR - FAITH? ~ Genesis 31:1-55

→ Scripture Reading Psalm 27:1-4

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 30:43 (NIV) In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.

KEY TIME REFERENCES

- Jacob PAID 14 yrs. for his wives - 30:25
- Jacob STAYED 6 more yrs. - 31:41
- Jacob WORKED for Laban 20 yrs. - 31:41

GOD TELLS JACOB TO GO HOME ~ Genesis 31:1-21

[1] Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father." [2] And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been. [3] Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I WILL BE WITH YOU."

Genesis 28:15 (NIV) I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THIS LAND.

[4] So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were. [5] He said to them, "I see that your father's attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me. [6] You know that I've worked for your father with all my strength, [7] yet your father has CHEATED me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me. [8] If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, 'The streaked ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked young. [9] So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.

[17] Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, [18] and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. [19] When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel STOLE her father's household gods. [20] Moreover, Jacob DECEIVED Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. [21] So he fled with all he had, and crossing the River, he headed for the hill country of Gilead.

Instead of facing Laban honestly and trusting the Lord to keep His promises and work things out, Jacob fled with his family like a criminal escaping justice. **This was an act of FEAR and UNBELIEF, NOT an act of FAITH...** Wiersbe

IN HOT PURSUIT ~ Genesis 31:22-30

[24] Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

STOLEN GODS? ~ Genesis 31:31-42

[31] Jacob answered Laban, "I was AFRAID, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force. [32] But if you find anyone who has your gods, he shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

[42] If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you."

MAKING A PEACE TREATY ~ Genesis 31:43-55

[43] Laban answered Jacob, "The women are MY daughters, the children are MY children, and the flocks are MY flocks. All you see is MINE. Yet what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about the children they have borne?"

TERMS OF THE TREATY...

- Jacob VOWS to treat Laban's daughters WELL
- Both Promise NOT to cross the border to HARM the other

APPLICATION

TIME To GO HOME...

- CIRCUMSTANCES had Changed - vs. 1-2
- God CONFIRMS the TIME is Right - vs. 3
- Rachel and Leah AGREE they should Leave - vs. 16

Psalm 56:1-3 (NIV) Be MERCIFUL to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack. [2] My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride. **[3] When I am afraid, I will trust in you.** [4] In God, whose WORD I praise, **in God I TRUST; I will NOT be afraid.** What can mortal man do to me?

FIRM COMMITMENT

- When I am AFRAID - I will TRUST God
- I will NOT be Afraid - MERE men cannot harm me

APPLICATION

Psalm 27:1-3 (NLT) **The LORD is my LIGHT and my SALVATION** - so **why should I be afraid?** The LORD is my FORTRESS, protecting me from danger, so **why should I tremble?** [2] When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. [3] Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will **NOT be afraid.** Even if I am attacked, **I will remain CONFIDENT.**

Psalm 27:4 (NLT) **The one thing I ask of the LORD** - the thing I seek most - is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, DELIGHTING in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple.

TAKE AWAY ??

Isaiah 43:1-2 (NIV) But now, this is what the LORD says - he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: **Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.** [2] **WHEN** you pass through the **waters**, I will be with you; and **WHEN** you pass through the **rivers**, they will not sweep over you. **WHEN** you walk through the **fire**, you will not be burned; the **flames** will not set you ablaze.

WHEN - NOT IF

Isaiah 43:2-3 (NIV) **WHEN** you pass through the waters, **I WILL BE WITH YOU**; and **WHEN** you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. **WHEN** you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. [3] **For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...**