

Genesis 31

Read Genesis 31:1-16: God's preparations to change Jacob into a new man are reaching their completion. The season of transformation is changing to a season of new beginnings. The existing circumstances no longer fit.

Jacob overhears Laban's sons talking about how they feel that Jacob has taken their sheep. This is odd, since Laban kept changing the deal so he could reap on the lambs that God blessed Jacob with. Jacob can also see it in Laban's face. Instead of making Laban rich, everyone can see how Jacob is coming into his own. Some people cannot be happy for others. They feel that somehow, they should be receiving the same benefits. If Laban was willing to go back on his promises, he would probably also be willing to take back Jacob's flock. God gave Jacob a dream confirming all that Laban literally was doing to him. God has seen it all along, and he has blessed the breeding and lambing to Jacob's favor. God tells him it is time to get out of there.

God is compared to a mother eagle; and we are like her eaglets. When it is time to leave the nest, she starts removing the fluffy down padding, exposing the uncomfortable sticks. It becomes more and more obvious when God tells you it's time to move on.

As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, ¹² So the LORD alone led him, (Deuteronomy 32)

But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Rachel and Leah also see how their father is really only thinking of himself. They feel that he just *sold* them to Jacob to build his sheep enterprise. How sad. They are completely behind Jacob taking the herds and leaving for his homeland.

Read Genesis 31:17-42: Jacob packed everything up and moved his family and livestock towards Canaan. Unfortunately, Rachel took her dad's idol too. Rachel must have still been an idolator. Laban was informed that Jacob had taken off.

Laban took his male relatives to chase down Jacob. It took him 7 days to catch up to him. Jacob could travel 5-10 miles per day with a flock and lambs. Jacob's flock was already three days away from Laban's to begin with. Laban could ride his camels 20-25 miles/day to catch up. Laban began with a 60-mile deficit. Laban probably traveled 140 miles to catch Jacob. Laban obviously had very strong feelings about all of this sudden relocating. Laban complained about not being allowed to send off his daughters and grandchildren, but he understood that Jacob was homesick. Laban was upset about losing his idols.

Jacob responds by saying that he feared that Laban would abduct his own family from him. Jacob added that he has no interest in idols. Jacob told Laban to kill whoever had it. He did not know that Rachel hid them.

Now Jacob gets upset in righteous anger. He tells Laban that he was taken advantage of and misled over and over again. Jacob added that he personally covered all of Laban's losses; which is above and beyond the terms of the deal. Laban admitted that God told Laban not to touch Jacob or scold him.

Read Genesis 31:43-55: Laban's comments confirm Jacob's fears. Laban considered everything in Jacob's possession was his own! He's not a good guy at all. He is just an opportunist. Fortunately, God warned Laban to not touch Jacob or even speak too harshly to him. Both men set up a rock pile to act as a boundary marker. It was like a virtual watchman. Both men were supposed to keep to their side. Jacob offered a sacrifice to God; which is a sign that he is coming around to God's ways of thinking.