

## Saturday, August 1, 2020 ▫ Read Genesis 31:1–16

*Questions from the Scripture text: What does Jacob hear in v1? What were Laban's sons saying that Jacob had done? What does Jacob see in v2? What was the difference in it now, from before? Who spoke to Jacob in v3? What does He tell Jacob to do? Whom does He say will be with Jacob? For whom does Jacob send in v4? To where? To what? What does he say that he has seen (v5)? How does he now explain his surviving and prospering? What does he say that they know (v6)? What does Jacob say that Laban has done (v7)? What does Jacob say has kept Laban from succeeding in this? How did God stop him (v8)? What does Jacob conclude that God has done (v9)? What had happened to Jacob, when (v10)? Who spoke to him (v11)? What did He say? What did Jacob say? In v12, what explanation does God give for which rams "leap on the flocks" (v12)? How does God identify Himself in v13? What two things does He remind Jacob that Jacob had done at Bethel (v13)? What does God now command Jacob to do? What do Rachel and Leah ask in v14? What do they ask in v15? What do they say that Laban has done? What do they say that God has done (v16)? To whom do they say that the flocks really belong? What do they tell Jacob to do?*

God is actively taking everything from those who have the upper hand and giving it instead to those who are His. That's Jesus's first message of discipleship to the largely sorry-looking and oppressed lot Whom He redeems to follow Him (cf. Mat 5:1–12; Luk 6:20–26; 1Cor 1:26–31).

And in this passage, we have a temporal, earthly example of the same thing. How does Jacob explain his own prosperity? "The God of my father has been with me" (v5). "God did not allow him to hurt me" (v7). "God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me" (v9).

God sees all that is done to His chosen ones (v12), and He comes to us in this passage not only reminding us of His past faithfulness ("I am the God of Bethel," v13a) but also of our former resolves when first we knew Him ("where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to Me," v13b).

Upon the basis of His faithfulness and goodness, and of our belonging to Him and having made commitments to Him, He now gives us good commands by which He intends to continue and complete His blessing of us. "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family and I will be with you" (v3). "Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family" (v13). This was not just "go home," but rather go to that land which was once referred to your grandfather as "the land which I will show you," and which is closely tied to all of My covenant promises.

So also, the Lord has been with us. He hears whatever we hear that worries us (v1), and He sees what whatever we see that worries us (v2, cf. v12b). Indeed, when we stop to consider it, we know that He hears and sees all things. And He gives us good commands to walk in the way of His blessing, based upon the past displays of His faithfulness.

For us, that past display of His faithfulness is especially the finished work of Jesus Christ, which is the central concern of the teaching of the whole Bible. So the Lord calls us to dwell upon all of the glorious Scriptural theology that flows in and out of who Christ is and what Christ has done.

And those commands that are the way of His blessing is especially His instruction about the means by which Christ continues to apply His finished work by the ministry of His Spirit. So the Lord calls us especially to live by all of His good commands and instruction and wisdom as the path of blessing.

Because, surely, what He who has given us Christ is doing—in all of these things that we hear and see—is giving us all things together with Him. Whether Laban's things. Or the Canaanites' things. Or the things of all the nations. Or indeed a New Heavens and New Earth, and ultimately and best of all: Him Himself!

What place does reflecting upon who Jesus is and what Jesus has done have in your thought life? How do you factor in Biblical commands, instruction, and wisdom into all your choices and actions, big or small?

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH433 "Amazing Grace"