

Lesson 21 Genesis 31, 32 & 33

Jacob Flees

Chapter 31

1. Deception seems to have run in this family. Do you think certain sinful or positive habits tend to run in families? Give evidence to support your view.
2. Jacob is treated unfairly by Laban in chapter 31. Can you find some verses in Gen.31 where God blessed Jacob for not being bitter?
3. If you have any personal bitterness over a past or present injustice, what verse in Gen.31 would give you comfort?

Chapter 32

4. Write some facts about angels beside each of these passages.
 - A. Genesis 32:1-2
 - 1 **Early the next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he set out on his journey back home.**
 - 2 **Meanwhile Jacob continued on his own way, and God's angels encountered him.**
 - B. Psalm 34:7&8
 - 7 **This poor one cried out and the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him.**
 - 8 **The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he saves them.**
 - C. Daniel 6:22
 - 23 **My God sent his angel and closed the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me. For I have been found innocent before him; neither have I done you any harm, O king!"**
 - D. 1 Corinthians 6:2&3
 - 2 **Do you not know that the holy ones will judge the world? If the world is to be judged by you, are you unqualified for the lowest law courts?**
 - 3 **Do you not know that we will judge angels? Then why not everyday matters?**
 - E. Hebrews 1:14
 - 14 **Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?**

5. Which phrases in Gen.32:3-8 show Jacob's panic and great fear of Esau?

3 When Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's encampment." So he named that place Mahanaim.*

4 Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom,a

5 ordering them: "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob: I have been residing with Laban and have been delayed until now.

6 I own oxen, donkeys and sheep, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my lord this message in the hope of gaining your favor.'"

7 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We found your brother Esau. He is now coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."

8 Jacob was very much frightened. In his anxiety, he divided the people who were with him, as well as his flocks, herds and camels, into two camps.

6. Do you think this fear may have been connected with his guilt? Why or why not?

7. A. In Gen.32:13-21, what changes do we find in Jacob's attitude and preparation to meet Esau after Jacob prayed?

13 You yourself said, 'I will be very good to you, and I will make your descendants like the sands of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'"

14 After passing the night there, Jacob selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau:

15 two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams;

16 thirty female camels and their young; forty cows and ten bulls; twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

17 He put these animals in the care of his servants, in separate herds, and he told the servants, "Go on ahead of me, but keep some space between the herds."

18 He ordered the servant in the lead, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? To whom do these animals ahead of you belong?'

19 tell him, 'To your servant Jacob, but they have been sent as a gift to my lord Esau. Jacob himself is right behind us.'"

20 He also ordered the second servant and the third and all the others who followed behind the herds: "Thus and so you shall say to Esau, when you reach him;

21 and also tell him, 'Your servant Jacob is right behind us.'" For Jacob reasoned, "If I first appease him with a gift that precedes me, then later, when I face him, perhaps he will forgive me."

B. Give some points in Jacob's prayer that should be present in our prayers. (Seven possible)

8. What do you think was the main thing wrong with Jacob in God's sight throughout all his life which needed to be changed before Jacob could take his promised inheritance? (CCC2573)

CCC2573 God renews his promise to Jacob, the ancestor of the twelve tribes of Israel. Before confronting his elder brother Esau, Jacob wrestles all night with a mysterious figure who refuses to reveal his name, but he blesses him before leaving him at dawn. From this account, the spiritual tradition of the Church has retained the symbol of prayer as a battle of faith and as the triumph of perseverance.

9. *Challenge Question:* Who do you think was represented by "the man" of Gen.32:24? Also see Hosea12:2-5 for more details.

Gen.32:24

25 Jacob was left there alone. Then a man* wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

Hosea 12:2-5

2 Ephraim shepherds the wind, and pursues the east wind all day long. He multiplies lies and violence: They make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt.

3 The LORD has a dispute with Judah, and will punish Jacob* for his conduct, and repay him for his deeds.

4 In the womb he supplanted his brother, and in his vigor he contended with a divine being;

5 He contended with an angel and prevailed, he wept and entreated him. At Bethel he met with him, and there he spoke with him.

10. Give all the verses in this chapter (Gen.33) which show:

A. Jacob's humility

B. Jacob's love toward Esau after his encounter at Peniel