

B. Laban's Treaty – A Treaty Between Nations(43-55)

C. This story is about the birth of a nation!

Genesis: Truth for Understanding the World (Part 21)
Blessing in the Face of Poverty, Injustice, and Impossible Odds

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Text: Genesis 30:25–31:55

Introduction – Everybody's Struggle

LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an
aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- What obstacles does Jacob have to overcome in this story? How did Jacob respond? What does God accomplish?
- What does it mean to say that Jacob's struggle is *every believer's struggle*? In what sense is this story about us?
- How does this account of Jacob's struggle with Laban, and Rachel and Leah's struggle for love and children, together create a story about the birth of a nation? What do we learn about God in these accounts?
- What obstacles have you encountered in your struggle against sin or injustices ("*It's not fair!*")? How does the the blessing of Abraham which is yours in Christ strengthen you for your struggles?
- How does the story of Jacob gaining large numbers of spotted, streaked, or dark-colored lambs from white, and spotted and streaked goats from black speak of how God can create something from *nothing*?
- How might that story speak to how God ultimately forms His people, the seed of Abraham? (Consider Galatians 3:29.)
- What spoke most to you from this text? Does it adjust your view of God? ...of the obstacles you face? ...of your place in God's family?
- Why do you think the title for the Lord, *the Fear of Isaac*, is introduced here by Jacob? Does it have particular relevance to the story?

I. Jacob's Struggle with Laban (30:25-43)

A. *Pay Up!*

- i. Jacob's servitude under Laban

- ii. There is a proper distinction that is to be made between God's people and the world.

B. Laban refuses to do what is right, and intends to take advantage of Jacob even more!

- i. Laban cheats on the deal they make.
- ii. Jacob, despite the injustices he has endured, still works hard to prosper in the midst of it.

C. What in the world is Jacob doing?

- i. What you see is not what you get!

- ii. God creates something from nothing!
 - a) Genesis 1 & 2 Creation
 - b) The Flood
 - c) Rachel and Leah's rivalry and relationship

- iii. Out of this bondage God is forming a nation!

II. Plundering Laban (31:1-18)

- A. Jacob *heard* and Jacob *saw*. (1-3)
 - i. *Seeing* and *hearing* are for those perceiving God's direction.

 - ii. This is confirmed then by, "Then the Lord said..."

- B. God with us! (4-9)
 - i. *God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me.*

 - ii. *...for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.*

- C. Rachel and Leah's Perspective (14-16)

D. What were the odds of this?

III. Plundering Laban's god (31:19-35)

- A. *God-napping* (19)
 - i. *"Does Rachel still want to worship the god of Laban, the one who couldn't protect him from being plundered by Jacob's God?"*

Biblical Archaeologist (Summer 1983): "...the family gods were passed down from a father to his heir, normally his eldest son, and they were linked to the immovable property of the family. The [one] who possessed the gods also held the paternal authority of the head of the house..."

- ii. Separation is setting in! God is setting apart His people.

B. Jacob is Heading for the hills... and boy is he. (22-24)

C. Laban's Lips are Moving (26-30)

D. YHWH Above All gods! (31-35)

IV. The Birth of a Nation (31:36-55)

A. Jacob takes Laban to task! (36-42)