

The First Family

Date: 5.24.2026 | Jacob Flees Laban
Scripture: Genesis 30:25-43; 31

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God cares for His people and helps them.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God helped Jacob and took care of him, even when others were unfair to him.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

God blessed Jacob and protected him from Laban, showing that He is always with His people and keeps His promises.

STUDENTS:

God provided for Jacob and protected him despite Laban's deception, leading him back to the promised land and showing His faithfulness to His covenant promises.

ADULTS:

God demonstrates His covenant faithfulness by providing, protecting, and directing Jacob according to His promises. Despite human deceit and conflict, God sovereignly ensures the fulfillment of His purposes, calling His people to trust His provision and follow His leading.

MEMORY VERSE

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.
Galatians 3:9



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

“Household gods” - Probably of Hittite or Mesopotamian origin. These idols were used to practice divination. There is no archeological evidence that these would be in the form of a full-grown man or deity. They were usually in the form of a head, bust, or cultic mask. - Theological Wordbook of the OT #2545

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

As we continue in **Genesis 30:25–31:55**, we see the next phase of Jacob’s life as God continues to keep His promises, even amid conflict, injustice, and human sin. While Jacob has been in Paddan-aram with Laban’s family, he has served Laban for 14 years as the bride price for Leah and Rachel. During that time, Laban has greatly benefited from Jacob’s work, gaining unexpected wealth and success (**Gen. 12:3**). Now that Jacob has fulfilled his obligation, he desires to provide for his own household and return to his home in Canaan (**Genesis 30:25–26**).



Laban, however, is reluctant to lose Jacob because he recognizes that his own prosperity has come through Jacob’s presence (**Genesis 30:27–28**). This is a reflection of God’s grace and the unconditional nature of His covenant, as God continues to bring blessing even through imperfect people within the covenant family. Hoping to keep Jacob, Laban asks him to name his wages. Jacob proposes a plan: he will take as payment the speckled and spotted goats, along with the black lambs—animals that were less common and likely viewed as less desirable (**Genesis 30:31–33**). Because of their distinct markings, these animals would be easy to identify as Jacob’s.

Although Laban agrees, he immediately acts deceitfully once again. He secretly removes all the animals that should have belonged to Jacob and gives them to his sons instead (**Genesis 30:35–36**). In response, Jacob attempts to recover what was lost by influencing the breeding of the flocks. He places peeled branches in the watering troughs and carefully separates the stronger animals, resulting in flocks that are striped, speckled, and spotted (**Genesis 30:37–43**). While Jacob appears to use strategy and effort, it is ultimately God who is at work behind the scenes. Jacob later acknowledges that it was God who caused the flocks to multiply and prosper under his care (**Genesis 31:9**).

God granted prosperity to Jacob, even as He did for Abraham **(12:16)** and Isaac **(26:12-14)**. This passage demonstrates God's faithfulness to His promises despite Laban's scheming and opposition. This account also foreshadows Israel's experience in Egypt.

When Jacob first arrived in Paddan-aram, he had nothing but his staff. Now, after years of labor, he has become very wealthy, and this causes tension within Laban's household. Laban's sons accuse Jacob of stealing their father's wealth, but Jacob gives credit to God for both his own success and Laban's losses **(Genesis 31:1, 9; 12:3)**. After 20 years of service, the Lord speaks to Jacob and instructs him to return to the land of his fathers, promising once again, "I will be with you" **(Genesis 31:3)**.

Jacob gathers Rachel and Leah and explains his decision. He recounts how Laban has repeatedly changed his wages in an attempt to harm him, yet God has not allowed Laban to succeed **(Genesis 31:6-7)**. Jacob recognizes that "the God of my father has been with me" **(Genesis 31:5)**, pointing back to God's promise at Bethel **(Genesis 28:15)**. Jacob's eyes are slowly being opened to the true character and covenant love of the Lord. Rachel and Leah agree with Jacob, acknowledging that their father has treated them unfairly and that God has provided for them **(Genesis 31:14-16)**. Together, they choose to follow God's leading.

Fearing that Laban might stop him from leaving, Jacob secretly departs while Laban is away shearing sheep **(Genesis 31:17-21)**. When Laban discovers Jacob's departure, he pursues him for seven days and catches up with him in Gilead **(Genesis 31:22-23)**. However, God intervenes and warns Laban in a dream not to harm Jacob **(Genesis 31:24)**, showing again that God is protecting and keeping His promise.

Laban confronts Jacob with accusations, claiming that Jacob has stolen from him and left without permission **(Genesis 31:26-30)**. He even falsely accuses Jacob of forcing his daughters to leave, though they had gone willingly. Jacob responds firmly, recounting his faithful service over 20 years—how he cared for Laban's flocks with integrity and never took advantage of him, even when Laban mistreated him **(Genesis 31:38-42)**. Despite Jacob's defense, Laban continues to claim ownership over everything.

In the end, the conflict is resolved through a treaty. Jacob and Laban set up a boundary marker as a witness between them, agreeing not

to harm one another (*Genesis 31:44–52*). The next morning, Laban says goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren, blesses them, and returns home (*Genesis 31:55*).

Throughout this entire account, we see a clear contrast between human deceit and God’s faithfulness. Laban repeatedly tries to take advantage of Jacob, and even Jacob continues to rely at times on his own strategies. Yet God consistently works against Laban’s schemes and provides for Jacob. From Bethel to this moment, God has kept His promise: He has been with Jacob, protected him, and caused him to prosper.

This points us to the gospel. Just like Jacob, we often try to control situations or rely on our own efforts, and like Laban, we can act selfishly and unjustly. But God’s plans are not dependent on human behavior. He is faithful even when we are not. Through Jacob’s family, God continued His promise to bring blessing to the world—a promise ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the true and greater fulfillment of God’s promise, the one who brings lasting blessing, forgiveness, and restoration. Just as God was with Jacob in a difficult and uncertain season, He is with His people today. We can trust Him to provide, protect, and guide us, knowing that His promises never fail and His plan of redemption is always moving forward.

TELL THE STORY

Genesis 30:25–31:55

Jacob had been living with his uncle Laban for many years. He worked for Laban for 14 years so he could marry Leah and Rachel. During that time, God blessed Jacob, and Laban became very rich because of Jacob’s hard work. When the time came, Jacob told Laban, “I want to go home and take care of my own family” (*Genesis 30:25–26*).

But Laban did not want Jacob to leave. He knew that God had blessed him because of Jacob. So Laban said, “Tell me what you want to be paid, and I will give it to you” (*Genesis 30:27–28*).

Jacob made a plan. He said he would take only the sheep and goats that had spots or stripes, and the black lambs. These animals were



not very common, so it seemed like an easy deal for Laban (*Genesis 30:31–33*).

Laban agreed—but he was not honest. Right away, he gave those special animals to his sons instead (*Genesis 30:35–36*). Once again, Laban tried to trick Jacob.

Even though Laban was being unfair, God was still taking care of Jacob. Over time, more and more of the animals were born with spots and stripes, and Jacob became very rich. Jacob knew this was not just because of his hard work—he said that God had blessed him (*Genesis 31:9*).

After 20 years, God spoke to Jacob and said, “Go back to your home. I will be with you” (*Genesis 31:3*). Jacob told Rachel and Leah everything that had happened. He explained how Laban had treated him unfairly, but also how God had been with him the whole time (*Genesis 31:5–7*). Rachel and Leah agreed that it was time to go, and they trusted God to take care of them (*Genesis 31:14–16*).

So Jacob and his family quietly left while Laban was away (*Genesis 31:17–21*). When Laban found out, he chased after them for seven days! But before he caught up to Jacob, God spoke to Laban in a dream and warned him not to hurt Jacob (*Genesis 31:24*).

When Laban met Jacob, he was angry and made many accusations against him. But Jacob explained how he had worked hard and been honest for 20 years, even when Laban was not fair to him (*Genesis 31:38–42*). Finally, they agreed to stop fighting. They set up a pile of stones as a sign that they would not harm each other (*Genesis 31:44–52*). Then Laban said goodbye to his family and went home (*Genesis 31:55*).

This story shows us something very important. People in this story made wrong choices. Laban tried to trick Jacob, and Jacob sometimes tried to solve things his own way. But God was always faithful. God kept His promise to be with Jacob, protect him, and take care of him.

This reminds us of the good news of the gospel. Just like Jacob, we don’t always trust God the way we should. But God never stops keeping His promises. Through Jacob’s family, God would one day send Jesus. Jesus came to forgive our sins and bring us back to God.

Because of Jesus, we can trust God no matter what is happening. Even when life feels unfair or hard, God is with us, taking care of us, and working out His good plan.

REBUILD THE STORY



1. Why did Jacob want to leave Laban and return home, and how does this connect to what God told him?
(Genesis 30:25–26; 31:3)
2. Why did Laban want Jacob to stay, and what does that show about how Jacob's work affected him? *(Genesis 30:27–28)*
3. What payment plan did Jacob suggest, and why might it have seemed like a small or unlikely reward at first?
(Genesis 30:31–33)
4. What did Laban do after agreeing to Jacob's plan, and how does this show his character? *(Genesis 30:35–36)*
5. Even though Jacob worked hard and made plans, who was really responsible for his success and growing wealth?
(Genesis 30:43; 31:9)
6. What did God tell Jacob to do after many years, and what promise did He repeat? *(Genesis 31:3)*
7. How did Rachel and Leah respond to Jacob's plan to leave, and what does their response show about their father?
(Genesis 31:14–16)
8. How did God protect Jacob when Laban chased him, and how did the conflict finally end? *(Genesis 31:24; 31:44–52)*
9. Jacob was treated unfairly by Laban. How can this story help you trust God when life feels unfair?

10. When do people try to control situations instead of trusting God, and what can we learn from Jacob's story about that?
11. How do you see God keeping His promises in this story, even when people are making wrong choices?
12. How does this story point us to Jesus and remind us that God's plan is bigger than our mistakes?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

In this passage, we clearly see that God's blessing is not random—it flows through His covenant promises. God chose to work through Jacob, and because of that, those who treated Jacob well were blessed. At the same time, those who tried to harm or take advantage of him, like Laban, ultimately experienced loss (*Genesis 31:9*). Laban's deception, selfishness, and constant attempts to control the situation could not stop God's plan. Instead, God faithfully provided for Jacob, protected him, and ensured that His promises for Jacob and his family would continue. This shows us that God's plans are not dependent on human actions—He is sovereign and always accomplishes His purposes.



This points us to the gospel. Just like Jacob, we are imperfect and often try to control our lives or respond wrongly when things are unfair. But God's faithfulness does not depend on us—He keeps His promises because of who He is. Through Jacob's family, God continued His plan to bring blessing to the world, a promise ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the true source of blessing, the one who brings forgiveness, restoration, and new life. Because of Him, we can trust that no matter what others do or how messy life becomes, God is still working, still providing, and still carrying out His perfect plan to redeem His people.

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use your Attributes of God poster as a guide.

PRAYER PROMPTS

God, thank You for Your hand of protection and blessing in Jacob's life. Even when he was surrounded by deception, trickery, and a father-in-law who wanted to see him fail, You provided and sustained him and his family. Please help us to recognize Your hand in our lives just as Jacob did. Help us to trust You and always do right!



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Genesis 32-35