

## EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

### Message #69

### Genesis 31:1-16

Laban was a cheapskate of an employer. He provided Jacob with a place to live and food to eat, but Jacob could not ever get ahead working for this guy. For twenty years he had faithfully and diligently worked for Laban, and Laban kept profiting year after year. Finally Jacob got fed up and decided it was time to leave. Laban realized that to lose Jacob would mean he would lose the blessing of God (30:27), so he told Jacob to name his price. Jacob responded by saying he would take all of the spotted and marked cattle that were born into Laban's herds and God remarkably increased him. Tucked away behind the scenes of all of this was the sovereign plan of God. God wanted Jacob back in the promised land and he would use this employment mess to get him there.

**WHEN A GREEDY EMPLOYER DOES NOT ADEQUATELY CARE FOR ONE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, GOD WILL REMOVE HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT AND HIS BLESSINGS.**

God was about to take Jacob away from Laban and Jacob would prosper. But Laban would struggle for the rest of his life. How would Jacob know it was time to move, time to go? There are three humbling circumstances that helped Jacob determine this:

**CIRCUMSTANCE #1** - Jacob saw the reaction against him. 31:1-2

**Way #1** - He faced verbal hostility. 31:1

**Way #2** - He faced attitude hostility. 31:2

**(Observation #1)** - When it was time for Jacob to leave, things were positive, not negative.

**(Observation #2)** - When it was time for Jacob to leave, those who should have appreciated him turned against him.

**(Observation #3)** - When it was time for Jacob to leave, God was moving and directing him.

**CIRCUMSTANCE #2** - Jacob knew the revelation of God. 31:3, 11-13

One of the things this employment mess did was draw Jacob close to God and His word. Ever since God put His complete revelation into writing, there is no further need for direct revelation. But we may conclude that when it is time for a person to move from one spot to another, there will be nothing contrary to the revelation of God. In other words, God's leading will never violate God's revelation.

**CIRCUMSTANCE #3** - Jacob saw the response of family. 31:4-16

These girls knew their dad was a cheapskate and this was one time leaving family was the best thing to do. Under Mesopotamian law, you could not take wives out of the country without their consent or else it would be kidnapping (R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis*; p.390). In these verses, we may observe that the noun “God” (Elohim) is used seven times (31:5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16, 16). This move was literally all God’s will, Jacob is really getting back on track spiritually. He is in touch with God’s word and God’s will.

**Step #1** - Jacob got his wives alone. 31:4

He needed a quiet place where he would not be heard, but could present his case to his wives.

**Step #2** - Jacob informed his wives of what he saw. 31:5a

**Step #3** - Jacob informed his wives of God’s presence. 31:5b

**Step #4** - Jacob reminded his wives of his faithful service. 31:6

**Step #5** - Jacob reminded his wives of their father’s treatment. 31:7

**Step #6** - Jacob reminds his wives of God’s blessings. 31:8-9

**Step #7** - Jacob reminds his wives of God’s leading. 31:10-13

The response of Rachel and Leah (verses 14-16) clearly affirm the power of God. This is the first time that Rachel and Leah agreed on anything and the agreement was - let’s go, let’s do God’s will. Their father had sold these girls to Jacob and he had entirely used up their inheritance on himself. Laban was a pathetic father who never once demonstrated any godliness, so his daughters said, “Jacob, we are with you, go and do God’s will.”

**Lessons:**

- 1. God is sovereignly working out His plan behind the scenes of even the most difficult of employment situations.**
- 2. God will eventually remove a faithful servant from an employer who does not adequately care for him.**
- 3. God’s faithful servant will always prosper in whatever he does.**
- 4. God will eventually reward the faithful servant with great prosperity and the unfaithful employer with great poverty.**
- 5. When it is time to leave, the faithful servant will know it and no one will be able to stop it.**