

## Genesis 30b-33

### INTRODUCTION

We left the story of Jacob last week with the birth of his 11th son, Joseph.

We pick it up tonight after Jacob has worked for his uncle Laban for 14 years.

The first 7 years were the time he spent paying the Bridal price for his first wife, Leah.

The second 7 years were the bridal price for Leah's younger sister, Rachel, who Jacob thought he had worked the first 7 years for, but had been swindled out of by his conniving trickster of an uncle.

Those 14 years are now finished, and Jacob has quite a household – 11 sons and a daughter, all from 2 wives, and 2 concubines.

### Outline of Genesis

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### CHAPTER 30

<b>F. Vs. 30:25-43 – God Blesses Jacob</b>
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**25**And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. **26**Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." **27**And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake." **28**Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."

Jacob wanted to return home to Canaan now with his family. He'd worked for 14 years for Laban but all his work had gone to profit his uncle.

He had nothing to show for himself except 2 wives, 2 concubines and 12 little kids.

But Laban was loath to let him go because he'd grown fat off Jacob's labor.

It's obvious to Laban that Jacob is a golden child – that the Lord is with him.

So he makes Jacob an offer – stay and build up his own wealth and holdings before he makes the return trip. That way he won't go home empty handed.

In the rest of the chapter, Jacob works out a deal with Laban to keep watching his flocks.

The deal is this: Jacob will separate out all of the sheep and goats that are not uniform in color.

If they have spots or streaks they will be cut out and made into their own flock which Laban's sons will take a 3 days journey way so there will be no mixing of the flocks.

From that point on, only spotted sheep and goats born to Laban's solid colored flock will become Jacob's.

This was agreeable to Laban since he knows solid colored flocks will produce solid colored offspring. But such was not to be the case.

Jacob had learned some tricks in his 14 years of animal husbandry and he tried them with Laban's flock.

He put some specially prepared tree branches in the watering troughs that seemed to increase the pregnancy rate of the flocks.

He also practice selective breeding – and sure enough they produced an inordinate amount of spotted and streaked which Jacob then cut out and made into his own flock watched by his sons.

**43**Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

The Hebrew of verse 43 literally says, "The man burst out exceedingly exceedingly."

Was Jacob blessed because of his cleverness with the flocks of Laban.

No! – Jacob was blessed because God blessed him, and God blessed him because He had chosen to bless him.

The blessing was a matter of grace, not clever manipulation on Jacob's part.

Nothing Jacob did or didn't do would alter the Lord's blessing.

All he could do was chose to enjoy it, or not.

Actually, Jacob's clever conniving and attempts to finagle himself into a place of blessing nearly resulted in him being in a place where he couldn't enjoy the Lord's blessing because of all the animosity it worked in those around him.

Where ever you are right now, whatever foolish choices may have marked your past – it's never too late to turn to the Lord in surrender and enjoy His blessing.

God loves you and wants to bless you. In fact, He already has in a multitude of ways.

Don't envy others, as Jacob's wives Leah and Rachel did – enjoy what the Lord has given you.

And don't calculate how you can maneuver yourself into God's blessing as Jacob did.

Stop giving God reasons to love and bless you – just open up to the blessings He's already given.

### CHAPTER 31

#### G. 31:1-21 – Jacob Departs From Padan Aram

**1**Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." **2**And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before.

As Jacob's holdings grew, those of his uncle Laban diminished.

Laban's sons, Jacob's cousins, who stood to inherit their father's estate, saw their inheritance dwindling and grew envious & angry.

Laban, who was quite happy with the arrangement when Jacob's work was profiting him, also grew upset and when Jacob realized the hostility had reached the breaking point, he decided it was time to move.

**3**Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

This was the icing on the cake and sealed Jacob's decision.

**4**So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, **5**and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. **6**And you know that with all my might I have served your father. **7**Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. **8**If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. **9**So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.

Though Jacob has made the decision to pack up and return to Canaan, he doesn't know how his wives are going to take it – after all, this is their home and Laban is their father.

So Jacob rehearses for them what gone on between he and Laban for the last 6 years.

At first, Jacob's wages were speckled sheep and goats. When all the flocks produced speckled, Laban changed it to streaked coats.

But then the flocks produced streaked.

No matter what condition Laban put on Jacob's wages, the flocks produced that in abundance.

This proves it wasn't Jacob's clever tricks with tree branches or selective breeding that resulted in his prosperity – it was God's blessing.

All Jacob's special arrangements did was give his cousins a convenient explanation for why the flocks were producing as they were producing – which fueled their anger and heightened the tension.

If Jacob had simply trusted in the Lord and ceased his conniving efforts with the flocks of Laban, then the testimony to all would have been God's wonderful blessing.

But his little tricks gave his cousins and Laban a way to attribute the blessing to trickery.

When God blesses, it's all too easy for us to attribute it to something we've done.

God will bless a person's life in some way, and they stand out as a wonderful testimony to God's faithfulness.

Someone will say, "You know, you ought to write a book and tell your story."

And so they sit down and as they write, all too often, they concoct some explanation for why and how God's blessed them.

They turn it into a formula, package it, sell it and it becomes a best-seller.

Our testimony ought to be – when asked how or why God blessed – to simply shrug our shoulders and say – God is good! God is faithful! Other than that, I have no idea!

If you can explain the blessing, then it probably isn't God.

There was no way to explain why Jacob prospered other than God blessed him.

Laban changed the terms of their agreement again and again, and no matter what he changed it to, the blessing kept coming.

Jacob eventually realized that what he was doing had nothing to do with the results. →

**10**"And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. **11**Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' **12**And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. **13**I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.'"

God made it clear to Jacob that his prosperity wasn't the fruit of his own efforts but simply God's grace.

He then reminded Jacob of the vow he'd made at Bethel when he first left home back in Canaan.

In that vow, Jacob had said if God would bless him, then he would honor and serve God.

God is calling in that promise now – it's time to go home.

**14**Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? **15**Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. **16**For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

It was expected that the father would take a portion of the bridal price paid for his daughters and set it aside in case anything happened to their husbands.

The daughter would then return to live with their father who would use that portion of the bridal price to support them.

Laban had squandered the wealth gained from Jacob's 14 years of service and Leah and Rachel could see they had become alienated from their father and brothers.

There was simply no longer any place in their father's home for them.

They deeply resented the way they had been treated by Laban, even as far back as when he bargained them away as wages, 14 years before.

**17**Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. **18**And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

Jacob's household had become a sizeable community in the 20 years he'd spent in Padan Aram.

14 years he served Laban for his wives, then 6 years gathering his own holdings.

He'd traded some of the sheep & goats gained from his wages with Laban for other livestock and camels and had a good-size estate now.

The mention of camels here is interesting because it's a mark of Jacob's wealth.

You see, in the world of the Middle Eastern Bedouin, of which Jacob would have been considered a part, camels are the primary mark & measure of wealth. They were the ancient Hummer.

The Bedouin's wealth is measured in the number of camels he owns.

A bit later we'll read that Jacob gave just a portion of his flocks & livestock to his brother Esau as a gift and part of the gift was some 30 camels plus their colts!

If that was just a portion of his total camel inventory – Jacob was one wealthy man!

**19**Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. **20**And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. **21**So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

Question: Did Jacob NEED to flee in this manner?

No! He did it because he feared Laban and his cousins.

His conniving and their envy combined to create in Jacob the fear that they wouldn't let him go.

But God had promised to protect him!

Jacob could have, and probably should have told Laban he was leaving, and then left with confidence.

Instead, he ends up sneaking away, looking more and more like the dirty sneaky thief his name means.

Jacob waited until Laban and his sons were off at a distance shearing their sheep; a task that would keep them occupied for several

days.

Unbeknownst to Jacob, Rachel snagged her father's household idols.

Now – Why? Why would Rachel take them? The text doesn't explain so we can only venture a guess.

The word for household idols is "teraphim" and refers to little statues about 6 to 9 inches tall.

It could be that Laban used these little idols as a means of divination.

In 30:27 Laban said that he had come to know Yahweh was with Jacob by means of divination.

In that case, Rachel took them so that her father would have a harder time tracking them down as they made good their escape.

Many ancient cultures also believed that gods were territorial, that their influence extended only over a certain area.

Teraphim were deities that were attached to a particular field or plot of land.

So Laban's teraphim, or household gods were kind of like title deeds to his estate – truly, "household" gods.

Since Leah & Rachel felt cheated by their father, this may have been Rachel's way of claiming what she felt rightly belonged to her.

Jewish tradition attaches a much more righteous motive to Rachel's theft of the teraphim.

It says she took them to keep her father from idolatry.

But why didn't she just destroy them if that was her purpose?

#### **H. 31:22-55 – Laban Overtakes Jacob**

**22**And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. **23**Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. **24**But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."

Jacob got a 3 day jump on Laban, but when Laban was told Jacob had split, he gathered his relatives and went in pursuit.

A week later they caught up with Jacob who's managed to make it some 300 miles on the road back to Canaan. [Map]

That's 300 miles in 10 days with this caravan-household; that's good time!

Jacob has been urging them on at a fast pace to put as much distance as possible between he and Laban.

But Laban was not to be deterred and managed to catch up.

This return trip had to be torture for Jacob.

He had an angry uncle behind him who Jacob knows thinks he'd been cheated, and in front of him is a brother he hasn't seen for 20 years who was speaking murderous designs on him because he cheated him.

Jacob is running from the results of his conniving into the results of his deceit.

Surely a day of reckoning and breaking is coming.

But that was true for his uncle Laban as well.

God appeared to him in a dream and warned him that the wicked plans he intended to unleash on Jacob would not be tolerated.

**25**So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. **26**And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? **27**Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? **28**And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. **29**It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' **30**And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"

When God told Laban to speak to Jacob neither good nor bad, He meant not to judge Jacob as condemned nor to sweet-talk him into returning to Padan Aram.

God was letting Laban know that ultimately, He was in control and Jacob's fate was in His hand, not Laban's.

When they meet, Laban just can't restrain himself from pouring on the guilt.

Why – Jacob ought to have announced his departure so they could throw a bon-voyage party and send him forth as a victorious ruler.

Then, Laban does what all bullies do – he mentioned that if he wanted to, he could easily set on Jacob and wipe him out – and he would, but for God's intervention.

Then he raises the one thing that he could lay with sincerity at Jacob's feet – the theft of the teraphim.

That last phrase of v. 30 is hilarious when you think about it – "Why did you steal my gods?"

How powerful can they be if they can be stolen? A god that cannot look out for itself isn't much of a god.

Of course, Jacob has no idea what Laban is talking about because Rachel snatched the teraphim without his knowing it.

**31**Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.'

This answers Laban's question on why he snuck away instead of announcing his departure. But in regard to the teraphim . . .

**32**With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

**33**And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. **34**Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them. **35**And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.

Rachel was reclining on the saddle which had been taken off the camel and placed in her tent.

She'd stashed the teraphim under the saddle and when Laban came in to search, she claimed to be having her monthly period.

In the Bedouin culture, when a woman is going through this time, she stays in her tent in isolation from men.

It was taboo for Laban to be in there at all, but he certainly would not go near anything she was sitting on.

The only reason he stayed to search the tent was because he was convinced someone in Jacob's household had stolen his little gods. He was desperate.

**36**Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? **37**Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both!

Of course, Laban had found not a single thing that belonged to him because nothing had been taken, except the teraphim.

**38**These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock.

Which actually, was a right for the shepherd who tended the flock to partake of.

**39**That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. **40**There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. **41**Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.

Jacob had gone far and above the normal arrangements for what a shepherd was responsible for in the years he tended to Laban's flocks.

**42**Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

It's becoming clearer and clearer to Jacob that his life is totally in God's hand.

But he still has a long way to go in his relationship with this God.

Note how he refers to Him – He is "the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac."

No where does Jacob call Him, "My God."

**43**And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? **44**Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me."

Laban just won't let go! He's a greedy and envious conniver who has come to realize there is no way he can win this contest.

For 20 years he's managed to keep Jacob down and manipulate things to his advantage.

Why even for the last 6 years when Jacob was growing his own estate, Laban saw it as really just a part of his own.

Even here, 300 miles from home, he still sees it as rightfully his.

But he knows he can't take it back because God has warned him.

So he suggested that Jacob and he make a covenant – they would formalize a new arrangement that would define their relationship from henceforth.

**45**So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. **46**Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. **47**Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, [Aramaic for Heap of Witness] but Jacob called it Galeed [Hebrew for the same thing]. **48**And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, **49**also Mizpah [Watch], because he said, "May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. **50**If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us—see, God is witness between you and me!"

**51**Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. **52**This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. **53**The God of Abraham, [Jacob's Grandfather] the God of Nahor [Laban's grandfather; Abraham and Nahor were brothers, sons of Terah], and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. **54**Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. **55**And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

Laban had come with evil intent when he pursued Jacob.

He was only restrained from following through on his plans by the intervention of God.

Jacob had NEVER shown any kind of such violent hostility toward Laban, and yet Laban here says the heap of stones they've piled up is to be a line of demarcation that restricts their movement.

Laban won't pass it going south and Jacob won't pass it going north.

Because Laban meant harm to Jacob, he automatically concluded Jacob had the same designs on him and this is his way to protect himself.

This is the last we see of Laban. He returned to Padan Aram and passes from the story.

Twice in this Chapter, Jacob refers to God by the name – "the Fear of Isaac."

Both times, Jacob uses it in speaking to Laban when he caught up with him and accused him of stealing his idols.

Jacob is contrasting his God with Laban's deities. Whereas they can't even take care of themselves, the God of Abraham's family takes care of them!

He is a God who is so powerful, it's good and right to hold Him in the deepest kind of awe and reverence that borders on outright fear.

## CHAPTER 32

### H. 32:1-32 – Jacob Prepares To Meet Esau

#### 1. Vs. 1-5 – Jacob Sends Messengers to Esau

**1**So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. **2**When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim. [Double Camp]

Now that Jacob is finally free of Laban, who represents the world, and is moving with purpose back toward the place of promise, God opens his eyes to the reality and presence of the spiritual realm.

He sees angels, like the ones he'd seen at Bethel in his dream of the ladder 20 years before when he was leaving Canaan.

He calls the place of the vision Double Camp because he realizes the spiritual lives right alongside the natural.

**3**Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. **4**And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. **5**I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'"

Jacob sent messengers to Esau, probably to try to gauge the reception he would receive.

After 2 decades would his brother still be fuming or had he cooled?

Also, Laban had rebuked Jacob for sneaking off. Maybe Jacob doesn't want to be accused of trying to slink back, so he announces his arrival by sending these messengers.

He wanted to make sure Esau didn't think his brother was returning with schemes about wanting to take any of the wealth Esau had managed to accumulate.

He'd done quite well on his own in Padan Aram.

In ch. 25, we read that Esau was given the nickname Red, Edom, when he sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of red stew.

The region he ended up settling in was named after this nickname.

It's located in present day Jordan, and is indeed covered with reddish rock.

## 2. Vs. 6-8 – Esau Is Coming!

**6**Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.” **7**So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. **8**And he said, “If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape.”

The messengers had not been able to tell if Esau’s response was happy or hostile.

All they could say was they had delivered the message and then seen Esau gather a virtual army of men!

This troubled Jacob greatly – he could conclude only one thing – Esau was coming to attack him.

Now, Jacob has no army to defend him. All he has is a few household servants and a bunch of little kids.

So he divides the house into two groups and sets a distance between them. If one is attacked, then the other can see it and hopefully make good an escape.

## 3. Vs. 9-12 – Jacob Prays

**9**Then Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’: **10**I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. **11**Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. **12**For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”

In this phase of Jacob’s life, what we see is a guy who can’t decide who he is and where he ought to take his stand.

This prayer is filled with some marvelous truths!

- 1) I’m here because you told me to go.
- 2) I am not worthy of Your blessing.
- 3) You have blessed me beyond measure.
- 4) I confess my fear to you.
- 5) You are my protection.

But what had Jacob done just before praying this prayer? He made two camps out of his household! That was just one more scheme of the flesh.

After making his own plans, he realized that might not be enough, but he didn’t know what else to do.

Jacob was coming to a place where he was simply in over his head – there was no place left to look, but to God – and so he prayed this prayer.

How many people follow Jacob’s route – they do everything they can to make life work on their own; they strive, connive, finagle, & manipulate.

As long as there is SOMETHING they can do, they will do it before looking to God.

They won’t look to God until they’re in a situation where there’s no place else to look.

Because looking to the Lord is the very thing they need to do, God will allow them to strive, connive, finagle, & manipulate themselves right into a corner.

He’ll let their foolish, self-sufficiency play out till they have no where else to look but to Him.

How much better to realize right from the start that apart from God we can do nothing but mess things up?

So Jacob did the Jacob thing and divided his camp into two groups. Then he prayed.

What would be his next move? What would he trust in, his devices or the reality of the prayer he’d just prayed?

George Mueller, a great man of faith and prayer, was once asked what was the most important part of prayer. He replied: “The 15 minutes after I have said Amen.”

No matter how great Jacob’s prayer was, what will he do afterwards?[\[1\]](#)

## 4. Vs. 13-23 - Jacob Sends “A Gift” To Esau

**13**So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: **14**two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, **15**thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. **16**Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves.” **17**And he commanded the first one, saying, “When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?’ **18**then you shall say, ‘They are your servant Jacob’s. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.’” **19**So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, “In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; **20**and also say, ‘Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.’” For he said, “I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.” **21**So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

In the original message Jacob sent to Esau, he’d referred to himself as “your servant.”

It was customary in the ancient Middle East that when you appeared before a ruler, you presented a gift.

Some see what Jacob is doing here is following that custom.

But if that’s the case, then why didn’t he take his place at the head of it, instead of way behind it.

No – this “gift” of 550 animals was nothing less than an attempt to soften up Esau.

The proportion of female to male animals follows the specific amount designated for proper balance in the herds.[\[2\]](#)

They would come to Esau and his men in waves:

- 1) 200 female goats w/20 males
- 2) 200 female sheep w/20 rams
- 3) 30 camels
- 4) 40 cows w/10 bulls
- 5) 20 donkeys

Jacob sent them on their way, then settled down for one more night before the meeting with Esau.

**22**And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. **23**He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

Crossing this river was the point of no return – he was fully committed now.

But Jacob knew that once he set foot on the western side of the river, he would need to make good on his vow made at Bethel 20 years before.

So before he takes his position at his family’s side, he knows he needs to count the cost of what he’s committed to.

One more night alone is what he needs to set his heart in the place he knows it needs to be set.

So after ferrying his family and household across the river, he spends one last night on the eastern side alone.

## 5. Vs. 23-32 – Jacob Wrestles To The End of Himself

24Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" 27So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." 28And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

29Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. 30So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." 31Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. 32Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

These verses will be our text on the 13th so I'll leave further comment till then.

## CHAPTER 33

### I. 33:1-17 – The Brothers Reunite

1Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. 2And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

The gift of 550 animals had already been encountered by Esau and his men as they marched toward Jacob's camp.

When Jacob saw Esau approaching, he quickly assembled his family and had them march out in a kind of parade to meet his brother.

Once they were ordered and moving forward, he went himself to meet him, bowing all the way.

4But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. 5And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." 6Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. 7And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down. 8Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?"

The gift of flocks and herds Jacob had sent.

And he said, "These are to find favor in the sight of my lord." 9But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." 10And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me.

Jacob simply means that he couldn't be happier seeing the very face of God Himself than to see Esau's countenance look upon him with this favor and acceptance.

11Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it. 12Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you."

Esau was inviting Jacob to come to Edom and stay with him, or at least as much of road as was common to their path.

13But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. 14Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir." 15And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." 16So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth [booth].

Esau and Jacob are both happy to be reconciled, but after 20 years, their lives are very different and both know it.

Esau is polite and invites Jacob to come stay with him and Jacob hints that he might come, but not to wait for him.

Esau offers some assistance by leaving some men to act as protection, but again Jacob begs off and says he'll be fine.

Esau is more than happy to return home while Jacob, instead of continuing on South toward Edom and Esau's home, moves North west toward Succoth.

This was a region he had passed through on his journey north 20 years earlier and knew it was prime grazing land for his massive flocks.

He stayed there for a time then moved toward the city of Shechem several miles away.

### J. 32:18-20 – Jacob Settles In Shechem

18Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. 19And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. 20Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel [God, the God of Israel].

It's interesting Jacob settled at Shechem.

When the Lord first came to him in Padan Aram and told him to return to the land of promise He reminded him He was the God of Bethel. [31:3, 13]

When Jacob took his vow at Bethel 20 years earlier, he said he would return and make it a place of worship to God. [28:10-22]

But he didn't go to Bethel – he went to Shechem; a city teeming with the influences of a corrupt Canaanite culture.

Jacob is going to find himself running in to all kinds of trouble at Shechem.

[1] Guzik, On Line Commentary

[2] Keil & Delitzsch