

Life of Joseph

Lessons in Humility, Leadership and Forgiveness

Adventures of Joseph's Family

- After the birth of Joseph, Jacob asked Laban to let him return home [Gen 30:25-26].
- Laban bargained for Jacob and his family to stay in Paddan-aram [Gen 30:27-28].
- Jacob asked for a portion of Laban's livestock as compensation [Gen 30:29-33].
- Laban agreed, but then made efforts to undermine Jacob's plan [Gen 30:34-36].
- Jacob then pulled a Laban (לָבָן, lābān = white) by exposing the stronger animals to white stripes peeled in various tree branches [Gen 30:37-42].
- Because so many strong striped, speckled and spotted animals were born, Jacob soon became prosperous [Gen 30:43].
- Because of this prosperity, Laban's family turned against Jacob [Gen 31:1-2].
- Jacob learned that his prosperity had come from God and he was instructed to return to the land of his fathers [Gen 31:3-13].
- Jacob's wives were agreeable, angry that Laban had spent their dowry [Gen 31:14-16].
- Jacob loaded up the family and livestock to leave for home [Gen 31:17-18].
- Rachel, being mad at her father, stole the household idols without Jacob's knowledge [Gen 31:19].
- Jacob had betrayed Laban by fleeing without telling him [Gen 31:20-21].
- When Laban heard that Jacob had fled, he took off after him and caught up to him in the hill country of Gilead [Gen 31:22-23, 25].
- Laban's main reason for pursuing them was because of the stolen idols.
 - According to pagan religions, household idols represented the right of inheritance.
 - Laban also believed they gave him protection.
- God warned Laban to not speak either good or bad to Jacob [Gen 31:24].
- Laban played the hurt father card against Jacob [Gen 31:26-28].
- Laban accused Jacob of stealing his idols and told him he would have done him harm were it not for God's warning [Gen 31:29-30].
- Jacob answered Laban's questions and was ready to punish the thief [Gen 31:31-32].
- Laban's search did not turn up the idols because Rachel hid them [Gen 31:33-35].
- Jacob lashed out at Laban, citing all that he had done for Laban and stating how God had shown him favor [Gen 31:36-42].
- Laban suggested a covenant establishing a boundary between them [Gen 31:43-44].
- Jacob setup a pillar as a witness/watchtower of the covenant [Gen 31:45-49].

- The terms of the covenant were that Jacob would not harm Laban's daughters and Jacob would not harm Laban [Gen 31:50-52].
- Both parties agreed to the covenant and went their separate ways [Gen 31:53-55].
- God sent angels to meet Jacob and prepare him to face his brother Esau [Gen 32:1-2].
- Jacob then sent messengers to Esau to attempt to arrange for a favorable meeting with him [Gen 32:3-5].
- Esau agreed to meet Jacob along with 400 men which frightened Jacob [Gen 32:6-8].
- Out of fear, Jacob prayed to God for deliverance from Esau [Gen 32:9-12].
- Jacob fails to trust God and crafts his own solution for deliverance by preparing gifts for Esau to win his favor [Gen 32:13-21].
- Jacob then sent his family across the Jabbok and he was left alone [Gen 32:22-23].
- Jacob then spent the night wrestling with God [Gen 32:24-32].
 - There is a significant wordplay here in the Hebrew as Jacob (יַעֲקֹב, ya'aqōb) could not cross the Jabbok (יַבְבֹּק, yabōq) to the land of blessing until after he had wrestled (יָעַבְדָּ, yē'ābēq) with God.
 - Jacob was living in the darkness of fear and was forced to fight through the darkness.
 - Jacob was defeated by a supernatural blow, but still demanded a blessing.
 - Jacob receives his new name of Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל, yis-rā'el = God contends).
 - This encounter changed Jacob's life as he stopped being a self-willed schemer and began to live his life in the boldness of his faith.
- Jacob did not immediately change his ways as he reacted with fear at the sight of Esau coming [Gen 33:1-2].
- Jacob bowed before Esau, but Esau came running to embrace Jacob [Gen 33:3-4].
- Esau then got to meet Jacob's entire family [Gen 33:5-7].
- Esau did not want to take Jacob's gifts, but Jacob insisted [Gen 33:8-11].
- Jacob continued to be a trickster by leading Esau to believe his children and flocks were frail [Gen 33:12-15].
- Jacob did not follow Esau to Seir, but went his own way [Gen 33:16-20].
- Jacob's daughter Dinah wanted to interact socially with the local Canaanite women [Gen 34:1].
- Shechem, a powerful man in Canaan, slept with Dinah against her will [Gen 34:2].
- In spite of his horrific act, he loved Dinah and wanted to marry her [Gen 34:3-4].
- Jacob kept silent when he found out what had happened, but his sons were livid when they heard [Gen 34:5-7].
- Shechem and his father Hamor tried to negotiate an agreement [Gen 34:8-12].
- Jacob's sons made a proposal they assumed would not be accepted [Gen 34:13-17].
- Shechem and Hamor agree to the proposal – Shechem because he wanted Dinah and Hamor because he intended to seize all of Jacob's property [Gen 34:18-23].
- The men of the city listened to Shechem and Hamor and then agreed to be circumcised [Gen 34:24].

- Simeon and Levi did not honor the agreement and killed all of the men while they were in pain [Gen 34:25-26].
- The sons then looted the city [Gen 34:27-29].
- Jacob was scared of the possible backlash, but his sons stood by their actions, claiming to be defending their sister [Gen 34:30-31].
- God then commanded Jacob to move to Bethel [Gen 35:1].
- Jacob obeyed and demanded his household cleanse itself of idols [Gen 35:2-7].
- God reiterated Jacob's new name of Israel and confirmed the covenant promises to Jacob [Gen 35:9-13].
- Jacob responded by setting up a monument to God [Gen 35:14-15].
- During travel to Ephrath, Rachel died while giving birth to Joseph's younger brother Benjamin [Gen 35:16-20].
- Reuben forfeited his birthright by sleeping with Jacob's concubine Bilhah [Gen 35:22].
- Jacob's sons, by mother [Gen 35:23-27]...
 - Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun
 - Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin
 - Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali
 - Zilpah: Gad and Asher
- Isaac died and was honored by Jacob and Esau in burying him [Gen 35:28-29].

