



JACOB GOES HOME

GENESIS 31, 32 & 33

Jacob had come to the land of his mother. He had met his mother's brother, Laban, and had married his daughters, Leah and Rachel. He had continued to live and work for Laban many years. Laban began to treat Jacob unfairly. God spoke to Jacob and told him to return to the land of his father, Isaac, and grandfather, Abraham. "I will be with you," said God.

Laban was angry with Jacob because Jacob was so successful. If Laban paid Jacob with animals for the work he did for Laban, then Jacob's animals became the healthiest and his flock grew. If Laban decided the flocks of animals between himself and Jacob, Jacob's animals still became the best.

Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel, agreed with him about leaving. "We have no reason to stay here," they said. "Our father won't be giving us any of his wealth anyway. Go ahead and do what God has told you to do."

Jacob put his wives and children on camels. He put all his flocks of animals ahead of them. He packed all of his belongings. They left quickly for the land of Canaan where his father, Isaac, lived.

When he realized they were gone, Laban came after Jacob. "Why have you taken my daughters and my grandchildren away?" he asked Jacob. Jacob said to Laban, "I have worked for you for twenty years. I have worked hard during hot days and cold nights. But still you have been unfair to me. I left quickly because I thought you would take my wives from me by force."

Jacob and Laban made an agreement before God and they all had a feast. They agreed not to harm each other. They agreed that God would be a witness to their actions. Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren and blessed them. Then, Laban returned home.

Jacob continued on his way home. He knew he would be seeing his brother, Esau, on the way. He sent messengers to give gifts to his brother. Jacob remembered how he had cheated Esau many years before in order to receive their father's blessing. He was afraid his brother would still be angry about this.

Jacob saw Esau coming toward him with four hundred soldiers! Jacob was afraid his brother would attack him. He prayed and asked God to rescue him from his brother. When Jacob's brother, Esau, saw him, Jacob bowed down to the ground. Then Esau ran to meet him. Esau hugged him and kissed him. They both wept.

Jacob and Esau each went their own way. Jacob continued to travel to his home. Esau traveled to where he was going.

Jacob had asked God to help him. God had taken care of Jacob, as He had promised. God had also rescued Jacob from his brother. Esau had forgiven Jacob and they loved each other again.

When we ask God to help us, He can answer our prayers in wonderful ways.

JACOB GOES HOME - TEACHER'S GUIDE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1) Jacob had worked for his mother's brother, Laban, for many years. Laban began to treat him unfairly. God spoke to Jacob and told him to go back home to the land of his father. God said, "I will be with you."
- 2) Jacob took his wives and children, his animals, all his possessions and left quickly. When Laban realized they were gone, he followed after them.
- 3) Laban said, "Why did you take my daughters and grandchildren away?" Jacob said, "I have worked hard for you and you treated me unfairly. I was afraid you would take my wives from me by force."
- 4) Laban and Jacob made an agreement before God. They would agree not to harm each other. God would be a witness to their actions. Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren, then blessed them. Afterwards, he returned to his home.
- 5) Jacob knew he would be seeing his brother, Esau, on his way home. He was afraid Esau would still be angry with him for receiving his father's blessing. Jacob asked God to rescue him from Esau. When they saw each other, Jacob bowed down. However, when Esau ran to him, he hugged and kissed Jacob. Esau forgave his brother.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What made Jacob decide to return to his home?
- 2) What did Laban do when he realized Jacob and his family were gone?
- 3) What was the agreement Laban and Jacob made before God?
- 4) Why was Jacob afraid as he continued on his way home?
- 5) What did Esau do when he saw his brother, Jacob?

ANSWERS:

- 1) Jacob decided to return home because Laban had been treating him unfairly.
- 2) Laban followed after them when he realized Jacob and his family were gone.
- 3) Laban and Jacob made an agreement before God that they would not harm each other.
- 4) Jacob was afraid because he knew he would be seeing his brother, Esau.
- 5) When Esau saw his brother, Jacob, he ran to him and hugged and kissed him.

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