

Explore the Bible: April 7

Blessed • Genesis 30:25-34, 41-43

By Laura Lee Leathers



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Thomas Obadiah Chisholm (1866-1960), a poet and hymn writer from Franklin, Kentucky, liked those verses also. He was known as a man who “focused on the new blessings he received from the Lord each morning, which is why he based the words of his timeless hymn “‘Great is Thy Faithfulness’” (Lifeway).

Throughout Jacob’s life, dealing with a series of ups and downs, he saw God’s faithfulness. Our lesson opens today after Jacob has served Laban for fourteen years for his wives. God had kept His promise to protect and provide for Jacob. The

Lord had blessed him tremendously.

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Past (Gen. 30:25-30, CSB) – Jacob arrived at the well, met and fell in love with Rachel, and committed to work for her father, Laban, for seven years. On the night of their marriage, Laban deceived Jacob by switching Leah, his oldest daughter, for Rachel.

The move may have been culturally correct but not morally right. Laban consents to give Rachel to Jacob at the end of the week if he agrees to work for another seven years. He does.

Children were born to Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and a daughter named Dinah. Her handmaid, Zilpah, bore Gad and Asher. Bilhah, Rachel's servant, was given to Jacob because she was barren. She bore, Dan and Naphtali (29:31-30:24; 35:16-18).

After many years, Rachel becomes pregnant and gives birth to Joseph (v. 25). It's now time for Jacob and his family to return to his homeland – the land of Canaan – to claim his

inheritance.

In the conversation Jacob has with Laban, he reminds him of his work for his wives and his children and how hard he has worked. He had met his obligation to pay his debt. The phrases "Send me and Give me" are imperative statements.

Notice Laban's reply, "If I have found favor with you, stay. I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you." Maybe Jacob caught Laban off guard with the news he was ready to return home. Laban replies with caution and friendliness.

Laban sought advice through divination. It means seeking information by some mystical means (see Ezek. 21:21; Gen. 44:5). The practice of divination was forbidden (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10).

Laban realized that only Jacob's God was able to bless. He was blessed because of Jacob's relationship with God and the promise given originally to Abraham, passed down through Isaac to Jacob and then to Joseph.

What could Laban do to make Jacob stay? His solution was to offer Jacob whatever wages Jacob wanted. Laban knew he had been blessed; his financial holdings grew, and he wanted to continue accumulating wealth.

Jacob's response, "I have served you . . . your wealth has increased . . . the Lord has blessed you because of me." It was time for him to do something for his own family.

Present (Gen. 30:31-34) – Laban comes to Jacob a third time with an offer. Jacob responds, "You don't need to give me anything." God had taken care of Jacob. However, as a skilled negotiator and having grown in wisdom, Jacob asks Laban to do "one thing."

Jacob made a proposal. He would go through the sheep and

remove the ones that were speckled or spotted and every dark-colored animal. The female goats spotted and speckled would also be in his flock—his wages.

Laban thought he had gotten the better end of the deal because if those animals were eliminated, they would be the minority; no more would be born. Animals, mainly sheep, were an indicator of wealth (see Job 1:3).

When Laban comes to check, Jacob's honesty will be evident. Laban agrees to the terms. Laban had white sheep and dark goats. Jacob had the multicolored sheep and goats. Both men thought they had won.

Future (Gen. 30:41-43) – Jacob may have followed a folk custom regarding placing the branches in the troughs in that region. But there is also genetics, Jacob's decades of experience as a shepherd, and God's Sovereignty.

“God had gone above and beyond what Jacob had asked or thought. He ended up with two wives, thirteen children, servants, flocks, and livestock. He was a man truly blessed” (Lifeway). Do you see God's faithfulness in blessing you?

Leathers is a member of First Church, Lexington.