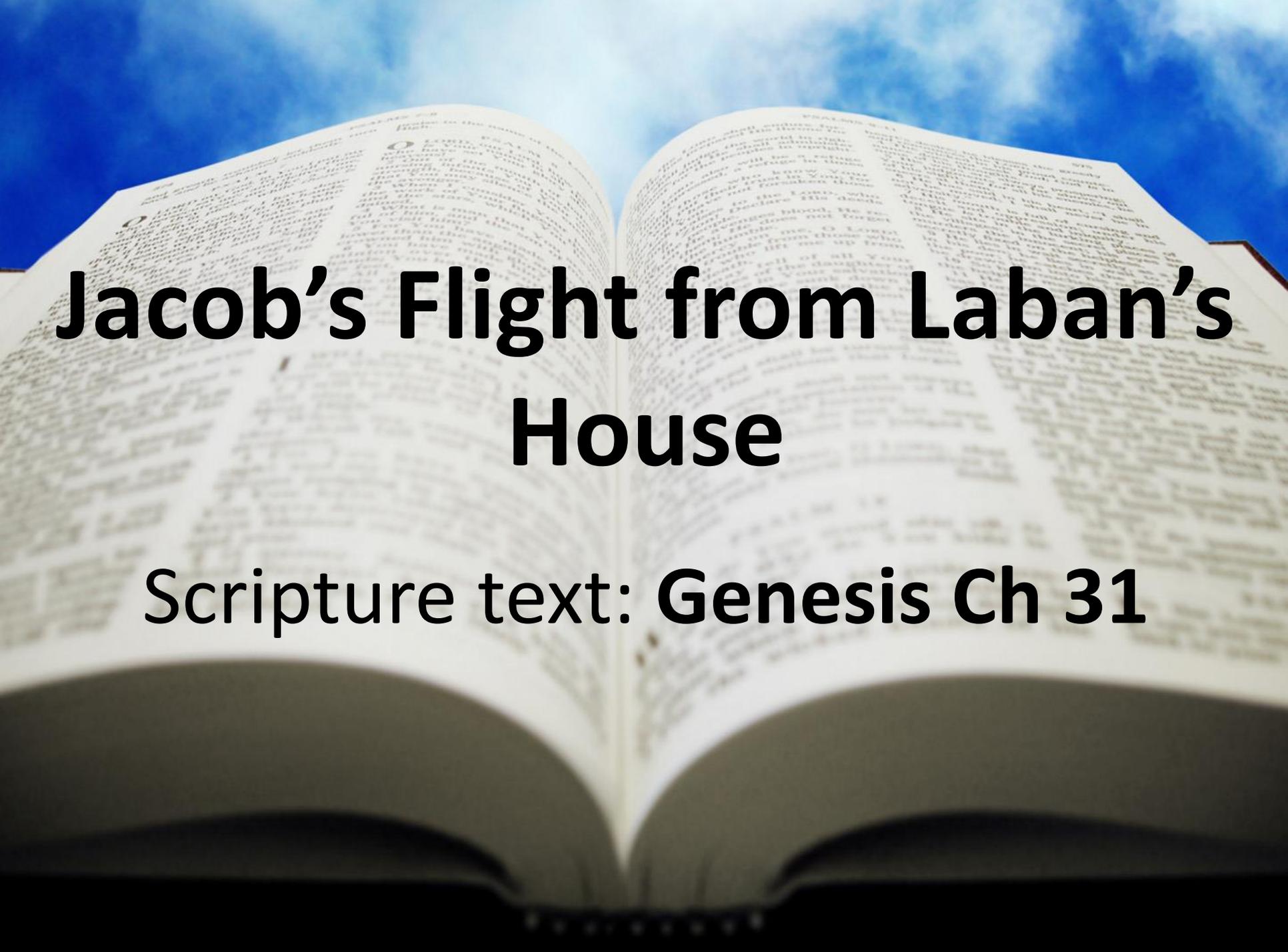


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The Bible is open to a page that appears to be Genesis 31, based on the text overlay.

Jacob's Flight from Laban's House

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 31**

It is a testimony to the blessing of God that Jacob prospered with Laban and that Jacob returned unharmed to his homeland. **This proof of divine protection and prosperity should help lead God's people to live by faith.**

Genesis 31:1-3 Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has gained all this wealth." And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favor as before. Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."

The conference (vv. 1–16).

Three factors entered into Jacob's decision to leave: **the changed attitude of Laban**; the need for establishing his own home; and, most of all, the **direct leading of the Lord. God had reminded Jacob of his Bethel vow.** The backslider now had to return and fulfill his promises to the Lord who had blessed him. **Rachel and Leah agreed to go, but their decision was based on material considerations, not the will of the Lord.** We wonder if the wives knew anything about Jacob's Bethel experience until now.

Genesis 28:13-16 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "**I am the LORD**, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all **the families of the earth be blessed**. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and **will bring you back to this land**. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "**Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.**"

Genesis 28:17-21 And he was afraid and said, "**How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.**" So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. **He called the name of that place Bethel**, but the name of the city was Luz at the first. Then **Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God,**

Genesis 31:4-7 So Jacob sent and **called Rachel and Leah into the field** where his flock was and said to them, "**I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before.** But the God of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father **with all my strength**, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But **God did not permit him to harm me.**

Psalm 37:28 For the LORD loves justice; **he will not forsake his saints.** They are preserved forever, but the children of the wicked shall be cut off.

Isaiah 54:16-17 Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; **no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed,** and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. **This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD."**

Genesis 31:11-13 Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. **I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.**'"

Genesis 31:14-16 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "**Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money.** All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, **whatever God has said to you, do.**"

The chase (vv. 17–35).

Instead of trusting God to protect him, Jacob steals away in haste while Laban was away shearing sheep. **What a poor testimony when believers choose to act in secrecy.** Laban was already three days' journey from Jacob (30:36), so he did not catch up with him for a week. God warned Laban before he even faced Jacob, so there was no reason for Jacob's fear (v. 31; see also Prov. 16:7).

Genesis 31:31 Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.

Proverb 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Proverb 29:25 The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.

Laban “put on a front” and made it look as though he was offended, **when he was probably glad to be rid of the man who was outsmarting him and getting richer.** His real concern comes out in v. 30—**someone had stolen his idols!**

Hidden sin led to more sin as Rachel, **the thief, lied to her father and her husband,** while angry Laban examined everything in the caravan.

The conflict (vv. 36–42).

Twenty years' pent-up anger now revealed itself, and Jacob "**laid it on the line**" to his father-in-law. Laban was an idolater, and Jacob a backslider—how could there be any agreement between them? The only redeeming thing in Jacob's angry speech **is that he gave God the glory for his success** (v. 42).

Genesis 31:42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. **God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night."**

Genesis 31:43 Then **Laban answered** and said to Jacob, "The daughters are **my** daughters, the children are **my** children, the flocks are **my** flocks, **and all that you see is mine**. But what can I do this day for these my daughters or for their children whom they have borne?"

Who was Laban glorifying?

If Almighty God had not warned him, do you think he might have tried something with Jacob, (based on 1st half of verse 43)?

The covenant (vv. 43–55).

The so-called “Mizpah Blessing” found in many hymnals is not at all scriptural. **These two men did not trust each other**, so they set up a pillar to remind both of them **that God was watching**. Instead of witnessing to their friendship (as the “Mizpah Blessing” states), **these stones witnessed to their mutual distrust of one another**. Note that in v. 47, the two men did not even speak the same language! (Both names mean “**heap of witness**” or “**heap of testimony.**”) **It is truly sad when family members cannot trust each other.**

How much better it would have been had they forgiven each other and turned the whole thing over to God.

Verse 52 indicates that the pillar Laban erected was also a boundary marker beyond which Jacob dare not go.

Jacob's twenty years of servitude were over, but he needed still to go back to Bethel and make things right with God.

Genesis 31:48-52 Laban said, "**This heap is a witness between you and me today.**" Therefore he named it Galeed, and Mizpah, for he said, "The LORD watch between you and me, when we are out of one another's sight. If you oppress my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one is with us, see, **God is witness between you and me.**" Then Laban said to Jacob, "See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. **This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, to do harm.**

Matthew 10:34-37 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.** For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. **And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.** Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Luke 12:51-53 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, **I tell you, but rather division.** For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. **They will be divided,** father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

This division will be between those who serve God and those who won't!

2 Timothy 3:1-5 But understand this, that in the last days **there will come times of difficulty.** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.**

Titus 1:11-16 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by **teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach**. One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. **To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled**. They profess to know God, but **they deny him by their works**. They are **detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work**.

Philippians 3:14-19 I press on toward the goal for the prize of **the upward call of God in Christ Jesus**. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. **Only let us hold true to what we have attained**. Brothers, join in imitating me, and **keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us**. For many, of whom I have often told you and **now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ**. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

Philippians 4:4-8 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, **but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, **will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** Finally, brothers, **whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.**