

stones of the place, He put it under his head, And lay down in that place to sleep.
And he dreamed, And behold, There was a ladder set up on the earth, And the top of it reached to heaven, And behold, The angels of God were ascending and descending on it.
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 you, And to your offspring.
[19 : 44] 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 then 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.

So we'll leave it there, And then we see that Jacob, He goes on from there, He falls in love with a girl called Rachel, He works seven years to try and marry her, And his father-in-law tricks him into marrying, Not Rachel, But his other daughter, Leah, He works another seven years, To get his father-in-law's approval, To marry this girl that he loves, Rachel.

And we'll pick back up, At verse 25, Of chapter 30. So Jacob, He's now, He's done seven years, For Leah, Seven years for Rachel, That's 14 years, He's worked six years, For his father-in-law on top of that, He's been 20 years, Under the rule, Of this, Sneaky, Cruel, Father-in-law, And we're coming to a conclusion, In terms of his time, With his father-in-law on Haran, But we see, Even in the midst of difficulty, Jacob prospers.

So, Verse 25, As soon as Rachel, Had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, That I may go to my own, Home and country, Give me my wives, And my children, For whom I have served you, That I may go, For you know the service, That I have given you.

[21 : 39] But Laban said to him, If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination, Or by experience, As the AV puts it, That the Lord has blessed me, Because of you. Name your wages, And I will give it.

Jacob said to him, You yourself know, How I have served you, And how your livestock has fared, With me. For you had little before I came, And it has increased abundantly, And the Lord has blessed you, Wherever I turned.

But now, When shall I provide for my own household also? He said, What shall I give you? Jacob said, You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pass your flock and keep it.

Let me pass through all your flock today, Removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep, And every black lamb, And the spotted and speckled among the goats, And they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, When you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, And black among the lambs, If found with me, Shall be counted stolen.

[22 : 44] Laban said, Good, Let it be as you have said. But that day Laban removed the male goats, That were striped and spotted, And all the female goats, That were speckled and spotted, Every one that had white on it, And every lamb that was black, And put them in the charge of his sons.

And he set the distance of three days' journey Between himself and Jacob, And Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock. Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plain trees, And peeled white streaks in them, Exposing the white of the sticks.

He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, That is the watering places, Where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred, When they came to drink, The flocks bred in front of the sticks.

And so the flocks brought forth striped, Speckled and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, And set the faces of the flocks toward the striped, And all the black in the flock of Laban.

He put his own droves apart, And did not put them with Laban's flock. Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs Before the eyes of the flock, That they might breed among the sticks.

[23 : 56] But for the feebler of the flock, He would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's, And the stronger Jacob's. Thus the man increased greatly, And had large flocks, Female servants, And male servants, And camels, And donkeys.

Amen. And may God help us to understand this passage As we come back to it in a moment. We're going to sing again to God's praise, And we'll sing again from Psalm 84, From verse 3 to verse 12. It's a fair few verses, But I'm assuming we're going to be singing The double tune That takes us through it really briskly. Psalm 84, verses 3 to 12, Behold the sparrow findeth out, And house wherein to rest, The swallow also for herself Hath purchased a nest, Even thine on altars, Where is she safe?

A young ones forth may bring, O thou almighty Lord of hosts, Who art my God and King. Down to the end of the psalm, We'll stand to sing to God's praise. The harvest, The harvest, The harvest, The harvest, The harvest, And house wherein to rest, The swallow also for herself Hath purchased head and head.

In thine on altars, Where she say, Her young ones forth may bring, O thou almighty Lord of hosts, Who art my God and King.

[25 : 59] Blessed are they in thy house that dwell, They ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man who spent the war, In whose heart my age, Who past in third of Jacob's care, Their aim to take a quest.

On shore the rain that falleth down, The boots with water filled, Still paid from strength, The miracle, Still poured unto strength, Until its high on day appear, Before the heart of man.

Lord God of hosts, My prayer I hear, O Jacob's God I'm clear.

She brought a shield, She brought a shield on the face, Of thine anointed dear.

[27 : 50] For in thy force one day excels, A thousand brother in.

My God's house will I keep adore, And dwell in tents of sin.

For God the Lord's Son and shield, He'll grace and glory give, And will withhold no good from them, That I find thee to them.

O thou that art the Lord of hosts, That might is truly best, Who by assured confidence, On thee alone the rest, O thou that art the Lord of hosts, That might is truly best, Who by assured confidence, On thee alone the rest.

Let's pray as we come back to this passage. Our Heavenly Father, We thank you for your word, We thank you that you are the Lord God of hosts, And we thank you that just as the psalmist was able to say, O Jacob's God, We thank you that we can take that psalm, We thank you that you are Jacob's God, And that you are our God, And we thank you that we can trust you.

[30 : 15] So open our hearts to your word, We pray, Help us in preaching and listening and responding, To be led by your spirit, And to be blessed, As we come under the authority of your word, We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Boys and girls, Have you ever made a promise?

I think we've all made promises, But only the boys and girls will answer me. Have you ever made a promise? Yeah? We might make a promise and say, Well, you know, I'll tidy my room, And I'll do it just later on tonight.

I promise I will. Or you might say, If you let me stay up tonight, I promise I'll go to bed early tomorrow. And you might say, I'll definitely eat my vegetables tomorrow night, If you just give me double pudding tonight.

So, We all make promises, But do we always keep our promises? Not always, do we? We often break our promises.

[31 : 38] And we don't have to look far, In any part of this world, To see broken promises. The world of politics is full of people, Who make promises, And manifestos, And very quickly break them.

The world of commerce is full of products, That we were promised, We'd do this, that, and the next thing. And after we've purchased them, We realize they don't do the half, Of what it was promised they would do.

And in our own relationships, In our own lives, We're just conscious, Whether we are young, Or whether we're older, We know that we often break our promises.

That's us. But that's not our God. And that's one of the things that we see really clearly, In the passage that we're looking at tonight.

Our God is a promise-making, And he is a promise-keeping God. And we see that in Jacob's life. We read from Genesis chapter 28.

[32 : 44] And at Genesis 28, We see Jacob, Who is, you could see, At rock bottom. He's sleeping out rough. He has no one.

He has nowhere to go. And yet God comes to him, And promises, That he will bless him. That he will give him a family. That he will give him possessions.

That he will give him a home. That he will know blessing, And that he will be a blessing. We hear that promise in Genesis 28. And as we go from there, Into Genesis 30, And then, If we glance forward into 31, We see that the God who makes these promises, Keeps these promises.

They come true. So we'll look at the promises of God tonight, In Jacob's life. Under four headings, God promises him family. He promises him a blessing.

He promises him possessions. And he promises him land, Or a home. And we see that God is as good as his word.

[33 : 51] So let's just step through the text In Genesis chapter 30. So starting at verse 25 Of Genesis 30. It says there, As soon as Rachel, That's Jacob's wife, The one that he loved.

As soon as Rachel had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, That I may go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children, For whom I have served you, That I may go.

For you know the service that I have given you. So the text begins, The story begins, As we pick it back up, With a birth announcement. And it's the birth of Joseph.

It's an unexpected birth, Because Rachel was believed to be barren. That's Genesis 29 verse 31. That's what everybody understood.

She wasn't able to have children. So when she becomes pregnant, And gives birth to Joseph, There's great joy, In the family.

[34 : 58] But there's also joy at the birth of Joseph, Because Jacob sensed, Jacob seemed to sense, That there was something special, About this child Joseph.

And we know, The story of Genesis. We can read on, Into Genesis, And we can see, That this child Joseph, He proved to be special, In lots of ways.

His life would not be easy. There would be family feuds, More family feuds. There would be, The trauma of being sold, Into slavery by his own brothers.

He would be accused, And convicted, Of crimes that he did not do. He would serve time, And be forgotten, Languishing, In a prison cell.

And yet, Through all of that, God would be with them, And God would use Joseph, In an amazing way. So we have here, The announcement of a birth, The news of an expanding family, In the arrival of Joseph.

[36 : 05] And yet, Jacob's family wasn't limited to Joseph, He actually had, He had 11 sons, At this point, And one daughter. So we see that this is an expanding family, And that expansion, Is seen, It's underlined, With the birth of Joseph.

And when we think about this, All this, Testifies, To the faithfulness of God. Because, If you keep a finger, In Genesis 28, And if we rewind to Genesis 28, And verse 14, We can see, That God made a promise, And God's promise to Jacob, Was that his descendants, Would be as, Numerous as the dust of the earth.

At the time that Jacob, Received that promise, He had no wife, And he had no family. And now we see, Just a little down the road, That Jacob had fathered, 11 sons, And one daughter, And God's promise, Was coming true.

God's faithfulness, Was seen, In the life, And the growing family, Of Jacob. So that's the first, Evidence we have, Of the fact, That God, Makes, And he keeps his promises.

He promised, Jacob, A family. And we see here, This expanding family. We might ask the question, Well, How is this relevant to us, In terms of application?

[37 : 48] And the application, Is very straightforward, And it goes like this, God was faithful, And God still is faithful, Because he doesn't change. And yes, We see that, In Jacob's life, And yes, We see that, In the birth of Joseph, But we see that, Even more clearly, If we fast forward, Down the line, Of Jacob, And keep on going, Through the different generations, Till we get, From the birth of Joseph, Right through, To the birth, Of Jesus.

Because from Jacob's line, We have the announcement, Of the birth, Of Jesus, The promised Messiah, Who came into this world, To be our saviour, So that we can know, The blessing, Of being part, Of the family, Of God.

So the first thing, We see here, In terms of promise, Made and promise kept, Is the promise of family. The second thing, We see here, Is the promise, Of blessing.

So Jacob, He now has 11 sons, And one daughter, And understandably, After having worked, For his father-in-law, Laban, For 20 years, He wants to go, He wants to go home.

Laban, on the other hand, Is not so keen, For Jacob, And his daughters, To leave the family home. And we might say, Well, You know, That's understandable.

[39 : 28] In the same way that, You know, We may have family, On the other side of the minch, Who are not happy about the minch, In the distance. Jacob, Surely, Is not going to be happy, About the fact, That there's a distance, Between him and his daughters.

But that's not, What was motivating, Laban. Laban. The reason, That Laban, Wasn't happy, Was, Because he recognized, That he had benefited, Materially, Because Jacob, Was with him.

And he was now fearful, That that material benefit, That blessing, Would dry up. So, Laban, Verse 27, Says to Jacob, If I have found, Favor, In your sight, I have learned, By divination, By experience, That the Lord, Has blessed me, Because of you.

And Jacob, Is anxious, That these blessings, Don't stop. He doesn't want, The blessings, That are associated, With Jacob, Being in his land, And his place, To run out.

So, He says to Jacob, Let's do a deal. Are you not happy, About your pay? I can work out, A pay rise for you. How can I adjust, Your terms and conditions, To persuade you, To stay?

[40 : 49] Verse 28, Name your wages, And I will give it. And yet, Even in this apparent, Generosity, Laban is only thinking, About himself.

He's motivated, By money. And yet, He is discerning, Because what he said, About Jacob was true. Jacob, Did bring blessing, Into Laban's house.

And again, If we, Hit pause, At this point, And we think about, The reality of that, And then we go back, To Genesis, Chapter 28, We can again, Draw a line, And see, That, All this blessing, That Jacob brought, Into Laban's, House and experience, Is aligned, With the promise, Of God to Jacob. God's promise, To Jacob, In Genesis 28, And verse 14, Was that, In you, And in your seed, All families of the earth, Will be blessed.

This is the beginning, Of that blessing. God has kept, His promise, To bless Jacob, And to bless, Those who are, Around Jacob. And so we see again, God is a, A God who makes, And who keeps his promises.

[42 : 16] He promised family, He brought family, He promised blessing, He brought blessing, To Laban, In Haran, And yet again, This applies, Beyond them, And this applies, To us still, This evening.

This applies, As far as Haras, Because, Through the family, Of Jacob, Eventually, As we've said, Jesus would come, Into the world.

And why did Jesus come? Well, He came to, Take the curse, Of our sin, Away from us.

Jesus breaks, The curse, Of our sin, At the cross. And if we believe in Him, We have the promise, That we are blessed.

We go from cursed, Under sin, To blessed, Forgiven our sin. We go from lost, To saved, We go from dead, To eternally alive, If we believe, In Jesus.

[43 : 39] So that blessing, That promise of blessing, It comes to Jacob, But it goes, Through Jacob, Beyond Jacob, All the way through to us.

God is a God, Who makes, And who keeps, His promises. The third, Place that we see, The promises of God, Made, And then kept, Is in terms of, The possessions.

And verse 29, We can pick up, Again, The conversation, Or the negotiation, Between Laban, And Jacob. So verse 29, Jacob said to Laban, You yourself know, How I have served you, And how your livestock, Has fared with me.

For you, Had little before I came, And it has increased abundantly. And the Lord has blessed you, Wherever I turned. But now, When shall I provide, For my own household also?

And it was, Absolutely undeniable, It was crystal clear, To Jacob, And to Laban, And to anyone who looked in, That Laban had been blessed, With much more, In the way of material possessions, And financial wealth, Since Jacob came.

[44 : 59] He had little before, But he has a lot now. And that's why, Laban is so keen, To keep Jacob, On staff. And Laban, Because he thinks, All the time in terms of money.

Laban assumes, Everyone has a price. And so he tries to negotiate, And doesn't get very far. And now he tries, In verse 31, A second time, To negotiate, With Jacob.

He said, Verse 31, What shall I give you? Name your price, What ways are you looking for? Tell me how to increase your terms and conditions. What can I do to persuade you to stay?

Jacob, Though at this juncture, He doesn't want to stay, He wants to go. He doesn't want to negotiate, He wants to come out. And so Jacob, He asks, For what seems to be much less, Than he could have asked for.

Basically, Laban says, Name your price. And Jacob says, Well, My price is not much. He asks for much less, Than he could have asked for.

[46 : 11] Which, I don't know, Maybe it was almost like a departing gift to his father-in-law. Maybe it was like a sweetener, That would just try to unlock him, From the grasp of his father-in-law. So Jacob said, This is verse 31, You shall not give me anything.

If you will do this for me, I will again pass your flock and keep it. Let me pass through all your flock today, Removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep, And every black lamb, And the spotted and speckled among the goats, And they shall be my wages.

So my honesty will answer for me later, When you come and look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, And black among the lambs, If found with me, Shall be counted stolen.

So that's all Jacob asks for. Weerspeed, the commentator, Says, All Jacob wanted for his wages, Was the privilege of building his own flock of sheep and goats, From the speckled and spotted animals, In Laban's flocks.

Animals that were considered inferior anyway. These would be separated three days journey, From Laban's flock, So that Laban could investigate at any time, And immediately know, Whether Jacob was robbing him.

[47 : 27] Hale, the commentator says, Jacob was only asking for a small portion, Of Laban's flocks. Laban, thinking it to be a good bargain, He agrees.

And we have that agreement in verse 34, Laban says, Good. He's expecting a big ask, And he's just got a small ask, And so he says, Good. Let it be as you've said.

Deal. Handshake. Sign the papers. Sign the papers. But even at this point, The deceitful, Money-grabbing Laban, He still can't bring himself, Just to simply accept the offer.

He's always up to dirty tricks. So even at this stage, He tries to double-cross Jacob, And actually, He tries to double-cross his own daughters, In the process.

At verse 35, That day, Laban removed the male goats, That were striped and spotted, And all the female goats, That were speckled and spotted. Every one that had white on it, And every lamb that was black, And put them in charge of his sons.

[48 : 44] And he set a distance of three days' journey, Between himself and Jacob, And Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock. Gil Ralph Davis says, Laban is a hustler.

He no sooner shakes hands on the deal, Than he culls these rare specimens from the flock, And puts his sons in charge of them, At three days' journey away. It seems that Laban has just taken away the starter pool, That Jacob could use, For the start of his holding.

And yet, In spite of all that, In spite of the fact, That Jacob asks for so little, And in spite of the fact, That having asked for so little, He's actually given even less than he asked for, In spite of the disadvantage, That Jacob finds himself in, Jacob's flock prospers and grows.

The breeding technique, That Jacob uses, Is detailed in verses 37 to 40, It seems somewhat odd, To a non-crofter, Sheep-goat farmer, Like me, I think it was likely, Somewhat superstitious, I don't think, Alistair, This is a technique, That is down in scripture, That's supposed to be adopted in Harris, It's in the text, Because this is the strange technique, That was used, At this time, In that place.

And it's in there, Just for us to note, This strange, Slightly superstitious breeding technique. Verses 41 to 42, Also show us that, Jacob is still shrewd, There's a, A characteristically, Jacob-like move, Where he engineers, Kind of selective breeding, Which meant that, He ended up, With the stronger flock, And Laban, Ended up with the weaker flock, But, The summary statement, Of all that was going on, In terms of possessions, Flock, Riches, Is found, In verse 43, It says, Thus, The man, This is Jacob, Increased greatly, And had large flocks, Female servants, Male servants, And camels, And donkeys.

[51 : 17] In other words, Against all the odds, In spite of, All the, The dirty tricks of Laban, In spite of the weak position of Jacob, Jacob's flock, And his possessions, Increased greatly.

And we stand back from that, And say, How is that possible? How could that have happened? And the answer, Was because God, Was with him.

Just, As he, Had promised to be. As we think, About this situation, In terms of the, The big picture, Of scripture, We can see, That this is so often, How God works.

Sinclair Ferguson says, What this story, Is really all about, Is how the foolishness, Of what Jacob does, Displays the wisdom, Of God.

And how in Jacob's, Weakness, God, Displays, His power. It's the way God works. And as we ponder, That truth, Where do our minds go?

[52 : 40] I think our minds, Should go, To the cross. Where we see Jesus, God the Son, Hanging, In apparent weakness, In the eyes of the world, He looked foolish, And broken, And defeated.

And yet, As Jesus, Hands there, He is overcoming sin, And Satan, And death, And hell, And securing for us, Salvation, Eternal victory, If we believe in Him.

Our God is a God, Who is faithful. He makes promises, And He keeps His promises. We see that, In terms of the promise, Of the family, In terms of the promise, Of blessing, In terms of the promise, Of possessions, And finally, Just in a word, To conclude, We see that, In the promise of a home.

So to circle back, To verse 25, We can see, That as Jacob comes, To have this conversation, With Laban, His desire, Is to go home.

He's been there for 20 years, His bank account, The bank account of the family, Has vastly increased, But Jacob's desire, In spite of all the years, That he'd spent there, Was to go home.

[54 : 21] As soon as Rachel, Had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, That I may go, To my own home, And country. He needed his father-in-law's, Permission.

In terms of etiquette, He needed, He needed to get, His permission to go home. And as we continue, Not tonight, Into Genesis 31, We see, That Jacob, He begins that journey home, Which is not going to be, Straightforward.

But that desire, For home, Again, It leads us back, To God's promise.

In Genesis 28, And verse 15, God promised, Land. He promised, A home, For Jacob. Calvin says, Jacob does not use, This language, Concerning Canaan, Only because, He was born there, But because, He knew, That it had been, Divinely, Granted to him.

It was promised to him. It was home. Eveson, The commentator says, Jacob's eye, Was on the land, That God, Had promised.

[55 : 44] So God, Has promised, Home. And Jacob, Is seeing home. And he is moving, In the direction, Of the home, That God, Has assured him, Of.

The question, We finish with, Is where is our home? Our home, Is not the place, That we were born in.

Our home, Our home is not the place, That we are living in. If we are God's people, We have the promise, Of a home, Beyond this world.

We're passing through here. We're thankful, For where we are, Perhaps. This is not home. We're not there yet.

But if we are trusting, In Jesus, We have, The promise, That in his time, He will take us there.

[56 : 53] Jesus said, In John 14, To the disciples, Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, Believe also in me.

In my Father's house, Are many rooms, Many mansions. If it were not so, Would I have told you, That I go, To prepare, A place for you.

And if I go, And prepare a place for you, I will come again, And take you, To myself, That where I am, You may be also.

God's promise, There is a home, That we are headed for, If we are in Christ. So God was faithful, In all of his promises, To Jacob.

And when we think about Jacob, He was a rascal. He was a rogue. He was undeserving of all these, Blessings.

[58 : 13] And yet God promised, And he delivered. Because he's a God of grace. He was, And he is. So tonight, We can, We must, Trust him.

We'll pray. Lord, we thank you for your word, And we thank you for the fact, That you are the God, Who promises, And who always, Delivers on your promises.

We thank you for, The connections that we can draw, Even from the life of Jacob, So many years ago, So far from here, Connections and blessings, Which we feel, Even this evening, As we, Are reminded of the fact, That in Christ, We are blessed.

In Christ, We have a home. In Christ, We have everything, That we need. So help us, We pray, To trust you. Forgive us, When we are slow to trust, Help us, We pray, To regularly, Day by day, Come back, Not only to these stories, In the Old Testament, Of Jacob, But help us, To come back, Day by day, To the cross, Where we see, Jesus, The promised, Lamb of God, Dying for us, And rising from the dead, That we, May, And, Will, Definitely, Have salvation, If we are trusting in him, Help us to be trusting, In you we pray, In Jesus name, Amen.

We're going to sing, To conclude, A paraphrase, Of, John chapter 14, Paraphrase 42, And the words, Are on the screen, Let not your hearts, Let not your hearts, With anxious thoughts, Be troubled, Or dismayed, But trust in providence divine, And trust my gracious aid, I to my Father's house return, Where numerous mansions stand, And glory manifold abounds, Through all the happy land.

[60 : 24] We'll sing this paraphrase, To conclude, To God's praise. Let not your hearts, With anxious thoughts, Be troubled, Lord, Or dismayed, But trust in providence divine, And trust my gracious aid, I to my Father's house return,

Where numerous mansions stand, And glory manifold abounds, Through all the happy land.

I hold your entrance to Savior, And your amorphous bread, Rejoice the Lord, I say to you, When I, your friend, I'm there.

Then shall I come, When ages close, To take you home with me, Let me shall meet, To part no more, And still together be.

I am the way, That's good, the light, No sign of human race, But such as I, On dark and night, Shall see my Father's grace.

[63 : 27] And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, Be with us all now and forevermore.

Amen.