

פרשת ויצא / Parashat Vayetzei

Shabbat Kislev 11, 5770, November 28, 2009
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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5

Thanks be to G-d for His Transforming Power

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 28:10-32:3
הפטרה: Hosea 12:13-14:10
הברית: John 1:19-51
החדשה

10 The struggle with Esau was not the end of Yaakov's troubles when he had
left the land of Canaan fleeing to Haran. It wasn't long before Laban and Yaakov
began deceiving each other too. Yaakov wanted Rachel for a wife and Laban
asked that he work for 7 years. In return for those 7 years, on the honeymoon
15 night, Laban switched Leah for Rachel (*Bereshit / Genesis 29:16-30*). When
Yaakov complained, Laban offered Rachel for another 7 years of service. After
these 14 years, Yaakov wanted to return home however Laban convinced him to
remain for 6 more years to tend his flocks. It was during this time that Yaakov
becomes very wealthy, in fact, more wealthy than Laban. It was also at this point
20 when Laban's sons started to say "Yaakov has taken all that was our fathers, and
from what was our father's he has gained all this wealth (*Bereshit / Genesis 31:1*)
This appears to be the motivating factor for Yaakov choosing to leave secretly at
night in *Bereshit / Genesis 31:17-21*.

It is interesting to note that when Yaakov had arrived at Paddan-aram he
was penniless *32:10* and now has become very wealthy. Also, it was not
25 mentioned that Laban had any sons when Yaakov had arrived but now Laban
does have sons. In ancient times, when a man did not have sons he could adopt a
near relative who would then become his son. This son may be given a daughter
in marriage by his new father. If the father later had sons of his own, the
inheritance would need to be divided among these heirs in some fashion. This
30 son (in our case Yaakov) had the rights of the firstborn and therefore headship
over the family. The head of a family would also be given the household gods
which would be symbolic of his headship and leadership. Do you think this might
have been a motivating factor behind Rachel's actions for taking the household
gods? Rachel took them in secret because she knew Laban did not have a pure
35 heart towards Yaakov as he once did. She also may have felt that Yaakov earned
the birthright for such a thing. The scriptures are not too clear on this but it is an
interesting thought, because I am certain Yaakov would have told his wives and
children about the G-d of Yitzchak and Avraham.

The text for this week, *Bereshit / Genesis 31:17-32*, the order of the verses
40 *31:17* says that Yaakov arose and put his wives and children on camels. Then
31:18 says that he drove all his livestock and all his property away. After we are
told this, *31:19* describes how Rachel stole Laban's idols after he had gone to
shear his flock. This is obviously premeditated theft, but do these events appear

to be out of order? Rachel stealing the idols and Yaakov fleeing from Laban, it seems that Laban didn't notice the idols were missing until after he had heard Yaakov left in secret. I doubt all of these events could have happened on the same day.

בְּרֵאשִׁית 31:17-32

17 אָמַר אֱלֹהִים אֵלָיו עֲשֵׂה: וַיִּקַּם יַעֲקֹב וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת־בְּנָיו °
 18 וְאֶת־נָשָׁיו עַל־הַנְּמָלִים: וַיִּנְהַג אֶת־כָּל־מִקְנֵהוּ וְאֶת־
 כָּל־רֶכְשׁוֹ אֲשֶׁר רָכַשׁ מִקְנֵה קִנְיָנוֹ אֲשֶׁר רָכַשׁ בְּפָדָן
 אֲרָם לָבוֹא אֶל־יַצְחָק אָבִיו אֶרֶצָה כְּנָעַן: וְלָבָן הֵלֵךְ
 19 לָגֹז אֶת־צֹאֲנוֹ וַתִּנְגַב רָחֵל אֶת־הַתְּרָפִים אֲשֶׁר לְאִבֶּיהָ:
 20 וַיִּנְגַב יַעֲקֹב אֶת־לֵב לָבָן הָאֲרָמִי עַל־בְּלֵי הַגִּיד לֹא כִי
 21 בָרַח הוּא: וַיְבָרַח הוּא וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וַיִּקַּם וַיַּעֲבֹר
 22 אֶת־הַנָּהָר וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־פָּנָיו הַר הַגְּלָעָד: וַיִּגַּד לְלָבָן בַּיּוֹם
 23 הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי בָרַח יַעֲקֹב: וַיִּבַּח אֶת־אָחִיו עִמּוֹ וַיַּרְדֵּף
 24 אַחֲרָיו הַרְדָּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וַיִּדְבֹּק אֹתוֹ בְּהַר הַגְּלָעָד:
 25 וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־לָבָן הָאֲרָמִי בַחֲלֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
 הַשְּׁמַר לְךָ פֶּן־תִּדְבַר עִם־יַעֲקֹב מִטּוֹב עַד־רָע: וַיִּשְׁגַּ
 26 לָבָן אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹב תָּקַע אֶת־אֹהֳלוֹ בַחֹר וּלָבָן תָּקַע
 אֶת־אָחִיו בְּהַר הַגְּלָעָד: וַיֹּאמֶר לָבָן לַיַּעֲקֹב מַה עָשִׂיתָ
 27 וַתִּנְגַב אֶת־לִבְכִי וַתִּנְהַג אֶת־בָּנֹתַי בַּשְּׁבִיּוֹת הָרָב:
 לְמַה נִּחַבְתָּ לְבָרַח וַתִּנְגַב אֹתִי וְלֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי וְאַשְׁלַחְךָ
 28 בַשְּׂמֵחָה וּבַשְּׂרִים בְּתָף וּבְכִנּוֹר: וְלֹא נִמְשַׁתְּנִי לְנִשְׁק
 29 לְבָנִי וּלְבָנֹתַי עִתָּהּ הַסְּכַלְתָּ עִשּׂוֹ: יִשְׁלַאֲל יָדַי לַעֲשׂוֹת
 עִמָּכֶם רָע וְאֵלֹהֵי אֲבֹיכֶם אֲמַשׁ | אָמַר אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר
 30 הַשְּׁמַר לְךָ מִדְּבַר עִם־יַעֲקֹב מִטּוֹב עַד־רָע: וְעִתָּהּ
 הֵלֵךְ הִלַכְתָּ כִּי־נִכְסְךָ נִכְסַפְתָּה לְבֵית אָבִיךָ לְמַה נִּנְבַּתָּ
 31 אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי: וַיַּעַן יַעֲקֹב וַיֹּאמֶר לְלָבָן כִּי יִרְאַתִּי כִּי אָמַרְתִּי
 32 פֶּן־תִּגְזַל אֶת־בְּנוֹתֶיךָ מֵעַמִּי: עִם אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶת־
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא יִחְיֶה נֶגְדָּ אֲחִינוּ הַכֹּרֵ לְךָ מַה עָמְדִי וְקִחְדֵלְךָ
 33 וְלֹא־יָדַע יַעֲקֹב כִּי רָחֵל נִנְבְּתָם: וַיָּבֹא לָבָן בְּאֹהֶל

Bereshit / Genesis 31:17-32
 31:17 Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; 31:18 and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. 31:19 When Laban had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's. 31:20 And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing. 31:21 So he fled with all that he had; and he arose and crossed the Euphrates River, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead. 31:22 When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, 31:23 then he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him a distance of seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. 31:24 God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, 'Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad.' 31:25 Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead. 31:26 Then Laban said to Jacob, 'What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? 31:27 'Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre; 31:28 and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. 31:29 'It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.' 31:30 'Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?' 31:31 Then Jacob replied to Laban, 'Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. 31:32 'The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself.' For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. (NASB)

When Laban catches up with Yaakov he accuses him of stealing the idols. Yaakov burst out at Laban after being accused of stealing his idols. To be best of

55 my recollection, Yaakov has never spoken in this manner before. Also, in *31:43-44*, Laban does not appear to be impressed by Yaakov's harsh words. Yaakov come out from the land of Canaan with nothing and is now returning very wealthy. Laban appears to attribute all of Yaakov's wealth to himself.

60 *Bereshit / Genesis 31:36-37*
31:36 Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob said to Laban, 'What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me? 31:37 'Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two.

70 What lessons can we learn from Yaakov's life, his character, and personality? Yaakov had character flaws just like you and I, and he wanted to get the best of others if he could. Yaakov's life story may be summarized by looking at his character. Yaakov deceived his twin brother (Esau), taking his birthright and Yitzchak's (father's) blessing. In Beersheba he was a deceiver (*28:10*). Yaakov fled to Haran where he lived with Laban (*27:42-43*). During Yaakov's time with Laban, Laban cheated him when he wanted to marry Rachel giving him Leah first (*29:23*). In Haran he was both the deceiver and the one who was deceived (*30:25-43*). In Peniel (*37:1*) Yaakov, after his encounter being face to face with G-d, he became a righteous and godly man. The Torah describes at the end of Yaakov's life, he became a respected man of wisdom in Egypt (*Bereshit / Genesis 45:3-4*)

80 Yaakov did not prosper simply because he was craftier than Laban; Yaakov's success was not the product of his schemes. Yaakov's character was a deceiver, but through all of the sinfulness, deceptions, motives, and methods, G-d still blessed him. Yaakov believed in the value of his birthright which Esau didn't care about and the blessings of G-d. Yaakov's life is a story of G-d's transformation and the breaking of the bondage of evil. G-d transformed Yaakov from a deceiver into a respected man having a special relationship with the Lord at the end of his life. Yaakov's life teaches us many lessons, about reaping and sowing, prosperity, our enemies, and our character/nature. The life of Yaakov shows us that we do reap what we sow; Yaakov deceived others and later was deceived by Laban. His financial prosperity doesn't mean that G-d approves what he was doing by operating in deception, but it provides for us a picture that G-d is working in Yaakov's life and works in our lives too. Can G-d make our enemies be at peace with us? He certainly can but the Lord does not do so by forcing someone outside of their personal autonomy. The Lord warned Laban not to harm Yaakov and Laban made the right choice to do as the Lord commanded him even though Laban was an idol worshiper. Can G-d change our character/nature? I believe G-d is working daily on our character; this is part of the process of truth, freedom, healing, and peace in Him. In the Messiah Yeshua, we are transformed, made free, healed, and become at peace with G-d. For example, the Ephesian ecclesia experienced a similar freedom and transformation in *Acts 19* in the Ketuvei Shelachim. *Acts 19* tells us that the occult practices were common in Ephesus. The scriptures tell us that when the message of the Messiah Yeshua was

brought to Ephesus, there was a conversion of many who had walked in deep darkness. The power of G-d working in the lives of believers, such as Yaakov, in the Ephesians, and you and I, demonstrates that there is no force of evil that cannot be broken. Note also that Rav Shaul (Paul) prayed the believers at Ephesus would continue to be filled with the knowledge and wisdom of G-d and the hope of their calling in Yeshua the Messiah. Yaakov's life brings a sharp contrast on our need for complete dependence upon G-d. If you can see this and feel as I am feeling that there is a strong connection between our recognizing our need for the Lord, praising Him for His work in our lives (transformation), and giving thanks to Him, let us pray together right now.

Heavenly Father,

The verses we have studied today draw a deep contrast between the effects of sin in my life that brings death, and my need for Yeshua, Your gift of life. I recognize and acknowledge my complete dependence upon You Lord. At this moment, I renew my faith in Yeshua the Messiah, I believe His blood was shed for the forgiveness of my sins according to the requirement laid down in your Torah. Please restore to me the joy of Your salvation and create in me a new heart. Transform me anew from this moment forward so that I can be used for your glorious purposes. I thank You for all that You have brought me through, life's troubles and trying circumstances, if it was not for these things I would not be the person I am today. I praise You Lord for the work that you have done in my life, and ask that you would continue doing so. I give you all of the glory, all of the honor, and all of the praise, in Yeshua's name I pray.

Amen.

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever