

THE GREAT SHEEP KEEP

INTRODUCTION

God has one plan for this entire creation: He is called Jesus. When Jesus came He did not seek His own comfort, He sought to save us from ourselves and our sin. Yet in saving us, Jesus doesn't leave us to ourselves, He calls us to become the church; a people who are called out to be His people, His priests, His ambassadors, His blessing.

DISCUSSION (1JOHN4:19)

Have you ever been used by anyone?
How?

How should we as believers be receiving and giving in a way that honors God?

EXPLANATION (1KINGS10:9)

What does it mean to BE a blessing?

APPLICATION

Read Matthew 6:19-24.

Do you seek your own comfort or the call of Christ in your life?
In What Ways do you focus on your stuff (your speckled and spotted sheep) and don't care about anyone else?
Do you have ways of trying to manipulate others (and/or God) with your "branches in the water"?

MISSION

How often do we lose site of the one plan God has for His creation?
What things overwhelm you when you think of God's plan?

HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Genesis 31 and ask the following Questions:

When was the last time you ran from your problems rather than dealing with it?
Has there ever been a time when you couldn't run and had to own your mistake? When?

Family & Group Discussion

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PART 47 THE GREAT SHEEP KEEP GENESIS 30:25-43

Genesis 12:2
1 John 4:19
Genesis 30:25-43
1 Timothy 5:8
1 Kings 10:9
1 Kings 9:15

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Christmas Eve Services

7, 9 & 11pm

*Nursery Care at 7pm only



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THE GREAT SHEEP KEEP

Genesis 12:2 I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

God tells Abraham that he was to be a blessing, and He reiterates it with Jacob. What we are looking at helps us to understand a pattern and where we can connect with God's story and plan for redemptive history; which should lead us to better understand our role.

The point of the narrative today is to show that the blessing Jacob received did not come from Laban; rather, it was a gift from God. As Abraham had rejected the offer of wealth from the king of Sodom (Genesis 14:21), now Jacob refused to take anything from Laban.

What Jacob took instead was the right to stay on and shepherd Laban's flocks and to keep a part of the herd that he raised. After the deal was struck, Jacob was allowed to keep all the speckled or spotted goats and all the black sheep in Laban's herds. From this he would build his own herds.

Jacob's clever use of the peeled poplar branches was not so much intended to demonstrate his resourcefulness as it was to further the theme of God's continued faithfulness to His word. The clue to the meaning of the passage is the last verse of the chapter (v. 43), where a summary of the whole narrative is given *"thus the man increased greatly."*

The summary recalls God's blessing of both Abraham (12:16) and Isaac (26:14) and puts the events of this chapter within the larger context of the themes developed throughout the book, namely, God's promise of blessing and His faithfulness to that promise. Jacob's wise dealings with Laban are an example of the way God caused him to prosper during this time.

Laban is a lover of money; Laban loves money and uses people. The biblical model and concept for money is to love people and use money to bless them, care for them, house them. Laban uses his family for profit to the point of taking food from his grandkids mouths so he can get more. Laban never says "I love my grandkids" because he only cares about "more."



God blesses Jacob and makes him prosperous despite all the opposition. As Christians, the word prosperous has been widely abused. For Jacob "prosperous" means he worked twenty years and got ripped off in the process. God is now intervening and giving Jacob his back wages.

God is bringing about Justice.

Sometimes God blesses people with wealth and sometimes He doesn't, rich and poor have nothing to do with godly verses ungodly. The point is that we, as God's people, should always work hard and be honorable. We should not have Laban's attitude of just wanting money (or Jacob's attitude of deceiving), we must simply trust God.

Throughout the Torah God continues to say that His people must be careful not to forget where they came from. Where ever they were, whatever they did, they were not to forget who God is and what He has done. In the exodus, God says to His people *"I brought you out and rescued you by my grace, have a Passover, a feast, celebration telling the story of your redemption."*

God does this because we tend to make everything run in the opposite direction of God. It seems everything in scripture, because of man, ends up going bad.

- Noah→naked & drunk
- Abraham→Sarah/Hagar
- Isaac/Rebekah→Jacob/Esau
- Jacob/Rachel→Leah
- David→Bathsheba.

This happens because the scriptures are always moving forward, towards→Jesus.

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