

God's Parity

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Genesis 31:1-9

Our text finds Jacob in servitude to his father-in-law, Laban. Some background information that we did not read reveals that Jacob was tricked by Laban into consummating a marriage to Laban's older daughter, Leah, when Jacob had asked for the hand of his younger, and had been promised that. Then Jacob served 7 additional years for the hand of Rachel the younger, and kept Laban's flocks as part of the servitude. And, according to our text, Jacob tells his wives that Laban changed his wages 10 times. Now, this was evidently not like giving him a raise, nor even like negotiating with him and asking him to take a cut in pay; it was more like Laban just reducing Jacob's wages without any consultation at all.

Further down in this chapter, we learn from Jacob's statements to his wives, that God revealed a plan to him by which he would come to possess a multitude of livestock through a genetically planned breeding program. At the point of our text, Jacob has succeeded and Laban's boys are mad, and Laban himself is unhappy and apparently unfriendly toward Jacob. Sometimes family members don't like for you to look like you are wealthier than them. Sometimes they get the idea that you have gotten well off at their expense. Laban is apparently sitting in his tent thinking that somehow Jacob has duped him and plundered his livestock herds. It's obvious that Laban's boys think so...Jacob has heard them talking. When God intervenes in his people's lives with blessings, and at the same time deals with the disobedience of others around them (in what could be called a negative way), too often those who feel the heavy hand of God are quick to look around for somebody to blame. That somebody will almost always be a child of God, if there is one around. In a world where people have the idea that it is right and proper to take your wealth and re-distribute it to others who have not worked for it, there will always be certain people who will feel cheated if you do well as the Lord blesses you. This concept of the redistribution of wealth is not new, and we can see that Laban's boys were moving in this direction in our text. This kind of attitude is especially true if people, in their lack of industry, or wastefulness, find themselves standing still or actually losing ground concerning material things. This is apparently where we find Laban's household.

While the family in-fighting of this situation is somewhat interesting because it smacks of things we sometimes see in lots of families around us, what we really want to notice is the statement that Jacob made to Laban's two daughters, his wives, in verse 9, about this whole fiasco. This is a profound statement, and should draw our attention, because it is a declaration about a principle of God that I trust the Holy Spirit will help us understand today. The principle has to do with the parity of God. Parity is defined as "Equality, as in amount, status, or value." What we see in our reading is that God leveled the playing field between Jacob and Laban. He did this by rewarding Laban for his deceit and wage manipulation toward Jacob. In this account we should be able to see some facts that help us understand God's supreme reign of creation, and how He goes about ensuring parity on the earth. When we talk about this parity of God, we are talking about how

God rewards humans according to their own deeds. In other words, He renders punishment equal to the severity of the offense.

As we think on Jacob and Laban, we want to notice 3 things:

1. God notices (the doings of men)
2. “You reap what you sow” will always hold true
3. How to understand something about the actions of God in all world events, small and great, and be able to realize that not everything we see God bring on people has to do with punishment.

I. God notices

Psalms 11:4 The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD's throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

- This notice is far more than a casual observing of the business and behavior of people
- God is not a spy satellite that observes the activities of humans in a detached way and simply records the events in His memory; He is watchful, regarding the activities of His creatures. You can depend on it that He who marks the fall of a sparrow certainly knows all about the doings of His higher creatures, and has feelings about these things.
 - > Gen 6:5 And **GOD saw** that the **wickedness** of man *was* **great** in the earth, and *that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart* *was* only evil continually.
 - > Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and **it grieved him at his heart.**
 - > Isa 65:19 “...I will **rejoice in Jerusalem**, and **joy in my people**,....”
 - > Proverbs 5:21 For the **ways of man** *are* **before the eyes of the LORD**, and he **pondereth all his goings.**

II. The principle we state as “you reap what you sow” will always hold true

- God is a God of parity
- To be fair and true to His own principles, He must reward according to works
 - > See His statement of this principle in Hos 8:7: “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind...”
 - > The apostle Paul stated it like this, when he spoke of how God does business: (Rom 2:6) “(God) Who will render to every man according to his deeds....”
- Some imagine that all disobedient humans reap this after death, but the whole bible speaks differently; it is full of instances that contradict this idea. I see in the bible, Adam sweating and slaving over hard-to-manage farm fields; I see Eve suffering labor pains in child delivery; I see Pharaoh and all his constituents experiencing plagues, and bloody water, and first born dying...there are a multitude of examples like these.
- What happened with Laban was about the parity of God being meted out through providential intervention of the Lord
- The parity of God assures that human behavior will receive an equivalent payback

III. Understanding the parity of God in the light of all world events

- Not every negative thing that happens to people relates to them reaping what they have supposedly sown
 - > John 9:1-3 And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but **that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**

- What are called negative things which happen to children of God may have to do with the parity of God, or they may not.
- Examples where we can see the connection between deeds and God's parity in dealing out punishment:
 - > We see a direct connection between David taking Uriah's wife and putting Uriah in a position of jeopardy on the battlefield and the death of his and Bathsheba's son several years later, then his own grown son, Absalom, defiling his concubines when he seized the throne of Judah and Israel (2 Samuel:11 and 12).
 - > We see a direct connection between Moses striking the rock at Meribah in Kadesh and his not being allowed to go into the promised land (Numbers 20: 8-12)
 - > We see the parity of God in the life of Samson after he has rejected the counsel of God and his parents about whom he should marry, and the sad state of his life a few years later when he is imprisoned by the Philistines and blinded (Judges 14-16)

- Examples where there is no direct connection with punishment:
 - > But what about the abuse heaped on Joseph by his brothers, his being sold into slavery, being transported to Egypt; being imprisoned as a result of a lying woman? (Genesis 39)
 - > What about the years of imprisonment suffered by Jeremiah for prophesying the truth to the Jews? (Jeremiah 33:1)
 - > What about John the Baptist being beheaded as a frivolous act of Herod over a good dance? (Matthew 14)
 - > Or what about Stephen tried and stoned to death by a malignant mob? (Acts 7)
 - > Or what about Paul's being stoned at Lystra, his extended imprisonment, his shipwreck on a primitive island, etc.? (Acts 14: 10; Acts 24; Acts 28)
 - > Or what about John the Apostle being exiled to the Isle of Patmos? (Revelation 1)
- What are these things?
- When we can answer that, we have an anchor for proper perspective and for dealing with disturbances in our lives. We have the insight we need to properly glorify God.
 - > The answer lies in this statement from the Lord: Psalms 11:5 "The LORD trieth (Heb. Tests; especially metal; investigates and proves) the righteous..."
 - > Psalms 66:10-12 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. 11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. 12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*.
 - > Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.