

וַיֵּצֵא

VAYETZE/AND HE WENT OUT Bereshith/Genesis 28:10-32:2

Last week, we were introduced to **Jacob** as a “**plain man, dwelling in tents**” (Bereshith 25:27). This **secure, home-loving man** will now find himself in **exile**, completely **alone** and with a **long journey** ahead of him. The **lessons** that he learned from the **study of Torah** will now become an **exercise in reality**. **Studying** is quite **different** from **establishing a large family, working, and coping with a life** that rubs up against **ungodliness**.

Jacob has been sent off to find a **spouse**. **Without** the **appropriate spouse**, **Jacob** will **not be able** to **fulfill his role** as the **chosen son**. On account of the **fury of his brother** over the **stolen blessing**, he was **forced to flee without possessions**. He **leaves** only with his **blessing** and his **birthright**, but with **nothing tangible** to show for them. Imagine how you would feel. You are the **chosen son, blessed** with the **promise of the land of Canaan**, yet it is your **rival brother** who **remains in the land!** Furthermore, when **Ishmael** was **REJECTED** from the **birthright process**, he was **sent away to the east**. Now **Jacob** is being **sent away to the east**. **Jacob** had to be very **confused** and in **need of reassurance**.

Bereshith 25:6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

Bereshith 29:1 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East.

The **comfort** that **Jacob** needs will come the **first night**. יהוה's (Yahweh) **reassurances** will come in the form of a **dream**:

*Bereshith 28:10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.¹¹ So he came to a certain place (maqom - מקום) and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the **stones** of that place (maqom - מקום) and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place (maqom - מקום) to sleep.¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the **angels of Elohim** were ascending and descending on it.¹³ And behold, יהוה stood above it and said: "I am יהוה Elohim of Abraham your father and the Elohim of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants."¹⁴ "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."¹⁵ "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 spoken to you."¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely יהוה is in this place, and I did not know it."*

In the dream, יהוה Elohim speaks to **Jacob** in the **familiar covenantal language of the firstborn blessing** and **assures** him that he is the **next link** in the **chain of the chosen**. He also **provides Jacob** with something that he desperately needed at this point...a **personal guarantee of protection**.

Three times in **28:11**, the **location** is referred to as the “**place**” (maqom - מקום). Why the **emphasis** on this **special location**? **Rick Spurlock** in his **commentary on Vayetze** provides this **insight** (emphasis mine):

“The road that Jacob took from Beersheva, was not the easy way to Haran. The easy way was the King’s Highway that follows the Jordan River Valley. Instead, **Jacob took the ridge road** that follows the ridge of hills that make up the center of the Land of Israel. In the **center of that ridge was the town of Shalem, or Jebu (Jerusalem)**, and very close to that was the town that is identified as Bet El (Bethel). The **ancient sages identify Bet El** not with the later Bethel in the time of the Judges and the Kings, but **with Araunah the Jebusite’s threshing floor**, which Jacob’s descendant, **King David purchased** for the purpose of building a **Temple to HaShem**. If this is true, **Jacob’s first encounter with the G-d of Abraham and Isaac** was on the **site of Abraham and Isaac’s greatest test: the offering of Isaac on the mountains of Moriyah**, and the **place of our Master’s suffering and resurrection.**”

Therefore, assuming this is the **same location**, the **stone that Jacob used as a pillow** may have been from the **very altar on which Isaac was nearly offered up on!** **Jacob is walking in the footsteps of his father Isaac** and his **grandfather Abraham** as he **establishes his own identity**. His **walk begins** at the place of **sacrifice**. Not only that, but the **root word of “place”** (maqom - מָקוֹם) is **qum** (קוּם) and it means **“to rise up”**, foreshadowing the **resurrection!**

Now in **gematria**, we also see a **connection between Mt. Sinai** and the **ladder**:

Ladder - סִלָּם: 60 (ס) + 30 (ל) + 40 (ם) = **130**

Sinai - סִינַי: 60 (ס) + 10 (י) + 50 (נ) + 10 (י) = **130**

Another word with the value of **130** is the Hebrew for **“appointed times”** (moed - מוֹעֵד):

Appointed times - מוֹעֵד: 40 (ד) + 6 (ו) + 80 (ע) + 4 (ד) = **130**

Three times a year, the **Israelites** were **commanded** to come to **“this place”** to **meet with יהוה** to **celebrate His “appointed times”**.

The **ladder** itself is described in almost **human terms**. It **begins** on the **ground**, but its **head** (rosh - ראש) reaches to the **heavens**. **Yeshua** links **Himself** with this **ladder** in His conversation with **Nathaniel**:

John 1:47 Yeshua saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Yeshua answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of Elohim! You are the King of Israel!"⁵⁰ Yeshua answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."⁵¹ And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of Yah ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

The **dream of the ladder** with angels ascending and descending is a **picture of יהוה** **establishing a line of communication between heaven and earth**. In the **Garden of Eden**, **Adam and Eve** were able to **come directly to their Creator**. But **sin broke that connection**, and the **Father removed Himself back up to heaven**. His **ministering angels** still **continued** on with His work for those who **believed**. The **wilderness Tabernacle** established a **similar connection** between the **earthly** and the **heavenly**. **All of these pictures pointed to the Messiah**. Because of **Yeshua**, we can now have **access to the Most**

High in the **heavenlies**. How do we do this? **Prayer** is one way, and the **keeping of the commandments** is another **earthly way** of making a **spiritual connection**.

Bereshith 28:14 speaks of **Jacob's descendents** being **spread** "to the **west** and to the **east**, to the **north** and to the **south**". His **descendents** will be **spread throughout the earth** during **times of exile**. יהוה follows up in **verse 15**, however, with a **promise to bring his descendents back to the land**. We see this **prophetically** throughout **Scripture**:

Isaiah 11:12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 43:5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west;⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth

Yeshua sent His **disciples** out "to the **ends of the earth**" in order to **prepare** for this **restoration back to the land**:

Acts 1:6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Adonai, will You at this time **restore the kingdom to Israel?**"⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.⁸ "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in **Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**"

Jacob awakens from his **dream** and makes an **interesting comment**:

Bereshith 28:17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! **This is none other than the house of Elohim, and this is the gate of heaven!**"

We can understand, with the **appearance of angels ascending and descending**, why he thinks of this place as being the "gate of heaven", but "the house of Elohim" appears to be **prophetic** since there is **obviously no house** there. What **Jacob** does next is very **fitting**:

Bereshith 28:18 Then **Jacob** rose early in the morning, and **took the stone** (even - אֶבֶן) that he had put at his head, **set it up as a pillar** (matzeyva - מַצֵּיבָה), and **poured oil on top of it**.¹⁹ And he called the name of that place **Bethel**; but the name of that city had been **Luz** previously.

Jacob **arises** in the morning, takes the **stone** that he'd been laying on, sets it up as a **pillar** (matzeyva - מַצֵּיבָה), **pours oil** on it, and names it **Bethel** (House of El). Let's compare this with how **Isaac** and **Jacob** reacted when **Elohim** spoke to them. **Abraham** built an **altar** (mizbeach - מִזְבֵּחַ):

Bereshith 12:7 Then יהוה appeared to **Abram** and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an **altar** (mizbeach - מִזְבֵּחַ) to יהוה, who had appeared to him.

Isaac also built an **altar**:

Bereshith 26:24 And יהוה appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the Elohim of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants

for My servant Abraham's sake."²⁵ So he built an altar (mizbeach - מִזְבֵּחַ) there and called on the name of יהוה

Thus we read that **both Abraham and Isaac built altars (mizbeach - מִזְבֵּחַ)**, whereas **Jacob set up a pillar (matzeyva - מַצֵּיבָה)**. And why does **Jacob take the stone he rested his head on**, set it up as a **pillar, pour oil on it**, and call the site **House of El**? The **Hebrew word for stone (even - אֶבֶן)** is a **contraction of father (אָב)** and **son (בֶּן)**, obviously pointing to the **authority of Yeshua and His Father**. This **stone is set up as a pillar and becomes the cornerstone of the “House of El”**. These concepts of a **cornerstone and a house** are made so clear to us by **Paul**:

Ephesians 2:19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of Yah,²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Yeshua the Messiah Himself being the chief cornerstone,**²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in Adonai,

Jacob ends up making what appears to be a **conditional vow**:

Bereshith 28:20 Then **Jacob made a vow**, saying, "**If (אִם) Elohim will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on,**²¹ "so that I come back to my father's house in peace, **then יהוה shall be my Elohim.**"²² "And this **stone (even - אֶבֶן)** which I have set as a **pillar (matzeyva - מַצֵּיבָה)** shall be **Elohim's house**, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

It appears that **Jacob is questioning the promises יהוה has already given him**. With everything he'd seen and heard, how could he **doubt the Almighty**? I believe the **answer hinges** on the word translated as **“if” - אִם**. This **little word has a variety of meanings** and is occasionally translated as **“when”**. If we **exchange the “if” for a “when” in verse 20**, we understand that **Jacob is simply stating that “WHEN” the Almighty fulfills His promises, “then” he will be in a position to build this “House of El”**. He understands the **importance of waiting for יהוה's promises**.

Jacob reaches his destination and arrives at the same well where his mother, Rebekah had watered the camels of Eleazar:

Bereshith 29:1 So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East.² And he looked, and saw a **well** (ba'er - בְּאֵר) in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that **well** they watered the flocks. A large **stone (even - אֶבֶן)** was on the **well's** mouth.³ Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the **stone** from the **well's** mouth, water the sheep, and put the **stone** back in its place on the **well's** mouth.

The **well (ba'er - בְּאֵר)** served **different purposes** throughout the day for **different groups of people**. **Jacob arrived around noon (29:7) when shepherds would come to the well to water their flocks**. **Towards evening, when the shepherds would be returning with their flocks to their homes, the women of the city would arrive at the well to draw water for household use**. It was **not common for a girl to be a shepherdess**. **Finding Rachel at the well would have been completely unexpected at this time of day**. Let's continue with the parasha:

Bereshith 29:4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran."⁵ Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him."⁶ So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."⁷ Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them."⁸ But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the **stone** from the **well's** mouth; then we water the sheep."⁹ Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.¹⁰ And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the **stone** from the **well's** mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept.¹² And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

The word "well" (ba'er - בְּאֵר) appears **seven times** in the **first 12 verses** of **chapter 29**. It is a **key word**, but it also should be noted that **beginning with the 3rd appearance of the word "well" and continuing through the 7th**, "well" (ba'er - בְּאֵר) is **mentioned together** with the "stone" (even - אֶבֶן) that lies upon its mouth. Our **drama** revolves around **rolling the "stone" off of the mouth** of the well.

What is the purpose of such a **heavy "stone"** over the **mouth of the well**? In areas where **water is hard to come by**, **fresh water** represents a **precious resource** belonging to the **inhabitants of the community**. The **residents** make sure that the **water is fairly distributed** by **ensuring** that it is **only when all the shepherds of the city are gathered together** that they will be **able to water their flocks**. Hmm...I can see a **picture** here. We have already seen that **Messiah is our "stone"**. He is also the **"living waters"** or the **Torah**, which is **flowing in the well**. The **heavy stone** serves as sort of a **"lock"** for the well, **preventing unauthorized and uncontrolled use of its water**. **Yeshua** came to **unlock the Torah** by **properly interpreting it**:

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (properly interpret).

The **weight** of the **stone ensured** that it was **only when all the shepherds of the city are gathered together (i.e. all tribes restored)** that they would be able to **water their flocks**. Thus we see **Jacob (Israel)**, is like a **key** who is **able to singlehandedly unlock** the **secret of the well (stone is Messiah)** and make **available the "living water" for the bride**. It is through **Jacob** that **Yeshua the Messiah would come**. The **"stone"** can also be a **reference to the large "stone"** that was **placed over the mouth of Yeshua's tomb**. We know that the **"stone"** was **rolled away** so the **good news could pour forth like "living water"**:

John 4:13 Yeshua answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,¹⁴ "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

A "well" is also a **metaphor** for a **wife** in both **Proverbs** and **Song of Solomon**:

Proverbs 5:15 Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well (ba'er - בְּאֵר)...¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth.

Song of Solomon 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, A spring shut up, A fountain sealed....¹⁵ A fountain of gardens, A well (ba'er - באַר) of living waters...

In sort of a **reverse picture**, the “well” becomes the **bride**, the one with whom the **bridegroom** is **intimate with**. The **pleasure derived from drinking the cool water of one’s well** is an image of the **love of a man for the wife who is his, alone**. It is also interesting that the word “Torah” (תּוֹרָה) is a **feminine word**, so we can make the **connection of drinking from the living waters of the Torah, the Living Word**.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Yah, and the Word was Yah.

Now I’d like to point out a couple of **differences** between **Eleazar making the selection of a wife for Isaac** and **Jacob choosing Rachel**. We remember that **Eleazar’s method** was to **pray and ask יהוה** to **direct him in finding a wife of suitable character for Isaac**. He **takes his time** as he **watches Rebekah water the camels** and is **confident** of her being the **answer to his prayer**. In our current reading, we **do not see anywhere** that **Jacob prays for guidance in his selection of a wife**. Instead, **Jacob appears to react to Rachel’s beauty** and even **kisses her**.

We also notice something else in the **order of their developing relationships**. **Isaac marries Rebekah, then he loves her**. **Jacob loves Rachel** apparently **from the moment he lays eyes on her**. **Then he marries her**. **Isaac’s order of marriage, then love**, is probably not the advice you will give your son or daughter, but it does speak of the **commitment to a spouse chosen** by the **Almighty** verses a **spouse chosen by attraction**.

Bereshith 24:67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her...

Bereshith 29:18 Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

One thing I’d like to know is **how much information** did **Jacob share with Laban**?

Bereshith 29:13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things.

I’m sure **Laban was disappointed** when he **saw only Jacob – no camels**, and **NO gifts** for the **family**. **Did Jacob share** with Laban **WHY** he had been **exiled from his home**? Did he give the **details** of the **deceptive plot** that **he and his mother planned** against **his father and brother**? In **telling Laban too much**, did he **set himself up** to be **deceived by his uncle**? Well, this is highly likely since **Laban took every opportunity** to **take advantage of his nephew** through **deceit**.

Jacob’s life had **revolved around the study of Torah**, now he was about to be **immersed into real-life experiences**. Still he has **no problem serving** for his **beloved Rachel** because of his **love** for her:

Bereshith 29:20 So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

We are **familiar** with the **story**. We know that **Jacob was deceived by his uncle** into **marrying Leah**. **Jacob’s deception** was **revisiting** him for “**as we measure, it will be measured to us**”:

Mark 4:24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. **With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.**

Eleven of the 12 sons of Jacob will be born in his exile. The birth of his sons is important information, yet in the midst of the account, we find a perplexing story about mandrakes. Why would the Torah spend time with what appears to be superstition? First...what are mandrakes?

Mandrakes grow wild in fields. Its small, yellow, tomato-like fruit ripens in late spring. Chemical analysis shows it to contain narcotic substances, which explain its widespread medicinal use in ancient times. Because the fruit exudes a distinctive and heady fragrance, folklore associates it with aphrodisiac powers. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty, and sex, was given the name "Lady of the Mandrake." The root of mandrakes (duda'im - דּוּדָאִים) is dode (דּוֹדֵי) which means "love" or "beloved". Both words are found in a verse in Song of Solomon:

Song of Solomon 7:13 The mandrakes (duda'im - דּוּדָאִים) give off a fragrance, And at our gates are pleasant fruits, All manner, new and old, Which I have laid up for you, my beloved (dodai - דּוֹדָי).

Now let's take a look at the mandrake story in our parasha:

Bereshith 30:14 Now **Reuben** went in the days of wheat harvest and found **mandrakes** in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your **son's mandrakes**." ¹⁵ But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my **son's mandrakes** also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your **son's mandrakes**." ¹⁶ When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my **son's mandrakes**." And he lay with her that night. ¹⁷ And Elohim listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Leah said, "Elohim has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.

What a confusing story! In our analysis, let's start with the **premise** which **Yeshua** gave us...the **Scriptures testify about Him**. Now, let's see if we can **find Him** in the story! It is noteworthy that it is **Leah's son, Reuben**, who brings her the mandrakes. **Reuben's name** means "see, a son" (רְאוּבֵן). That might be a **clue**. Now **five times** in our story **Reuben** is associated with the mandrakes...that's the **number associated with grace**, and also **five** is the number of **books** in the **Torah**.

Rachel is asking for the "mandrakes" (דּוּדָאִים - love), but it is quite **obvious** that what she really wants is a "son" (רְאוּבֵן). She is in fact **desperate** for a "son" whom she **associates with "love"**. **Rachel** ends up with the **mandrakes (love)**, but the **beloved son** she so desired will **not come from her womb**. **Prophetically, Reuben (see a son) points to that Son**. In fact, it will be **through Leah's son Judah** that **Yeshua the Messiah** will be born.

Some time later, **Elohim** remembers **Rachel** and she bears a son:

Bereshith 30:22 Then **Elohim** remembered **Rachel**, and **Elohim** listened to her and **opened her womb**. ²³ And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "Elohim has taken away my reproach." ²⁴ So she called his name **Joseph**, and said, "יִסְרָאֵל shall add to me another son."

Joseph will be the **son** who becomes a **shadow picture of the Messiah** for most of the **rest of Bereshith**. A descendent of **Leah's son, Judah**, will **birth the Messiah**....He will be the **head**. But the **Messiah** also has a **“body”**, and that **“body”** will be pictured through **Rachel's son, Joseph**:

*1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the **body** of Messiah, and members individually.*

I know it's **confusing**, but somehow יהוה has been able to give us a **picture of His beloved Son through both Leah and Rachel's children**. **Leah has preeminence**, but **Rachel is not forgotten**.

Okay, let's take a look at the other **odd story** in our parasha. It is **complex**, but perhaps with a few **insights**, we can **begin to grasp** what the **Torah is trying to tell us**. **After the birth of Joseph, Jacob is ready to return to Canaan**. He **approaches Laban**, who works out a deal with him to stay for a few more years. It is **Jacob's idea to work for sheep**:

Bereshith 30:31 So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks:³² "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages.

Over and over the **Scriptures** refer to **shepherds and sheep**. So **who are sheep? We are!** Remember that **Jacob is still in the exile**, and **what would better describe us** (in our exile) than a **bunch of speckled and spotted sheep!** Few of us could **describe ourselves as pure, sheep of Israel**. Most likely, we have a **few spots and specks**. This is the **description of the sheep that Jacob asks to “feed and keep”**.

In another move of **deception**, **Laban removes the spotted, speckled, and striped sheep**, puts them in his own sons' hands, and **separates them by a three day journey from Jacob**. **Jacob is left to care for the “pure” sheep of Laban**, apparently without real hope of **additional spotted and speckled sheep**.

We next see **Jacob doing a very odd thing**:

Bereshith 30:37 Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the hazel and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods.³⁸ And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink.³⁹ So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.

These **words** are very **difficult to translate**, but let's catch the **gist** of what's going on here. **Jacob has positioned these sheep in front of the watering troughs**. **Water** is very symbolic of the **“Word”**. These **sheep** are not only **thirsty**, but they are **eager to proliferate....to be fruitful**. **Jacob takes advantage** of their **eagerness** and their **thirsty condition** by **placing in front of them peeled rods (from green poplar, hazel, and chestnut trees) which exposes white strips**.

As **Jacob peels these rods**, he **removes some of the outer covering to reveal what's inside**. First, what **words** are used to **describe these rods?**

- **Green poplar** (לִבְנֵה לָחֵץ) – perhaps better translated as **“fresh white”**. **White** (לִבְנֵה) is the **feminine form of Laban** (לָבָן). We have seen before that **Laban pictures a false purity**.

- **Hazel** (לִזְ) – also means “to depart” or “to be perverse”
- **Chestnut** (עֵרְמוֹן) – its assumed root (עֵרַם) means “to be subtle”, “to be shrewd”

All of these words seem to point to some form of **deceitfulness**. **Jacob** appears to have **learned his lesson**, and as a **shepherd** he is now **ready to share** what he has **learned** with the **flock**. Did the **sheep** learn? Well, they are **eager to be fruitful** and check out the **result**:

Bereshith 30:39 So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Those **sheep in the exile**, that thought of themselves as **pure and white** have come to an understanding of their **identity**. The fact is, they **never** were **pure and white**. Later, as **Jacob** explains **Laban's continued deceit** to his **wives**, he tells them how the **Almighty** had **revealed** the **true condition** of the **sheep** to **him in a dream**:

Bereshith 31:10 "And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and spotted.

I understand that I only **grazed the surface** of this story, but I believe the **bottom line** is that **Jacob** has **matured during his stay in his exile**, and he is **attempting to bring as many sheep into the fold as he can before he's told to return**. It's a **worthy goal for us, also**.

Jacob is now a **wealthy man**, and **Laban** is very **envious**. For the **first time** since **Jacob left Canaan**, יהוה will **speak directly to him**. A **direct word from יהוה** is **how Jacob knows that his exile has ended**:

Bereshith 31:3 Then יהוה said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."⁴ So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock,

Note that **Jacob speaks to his wives in the field** where his “**flock**” is. And “**flock**” is **not plural**. When the **Father** has **told him to return**, there is only **ONE flock**, and it is **in the field** when the **information to leave** is given. That is something to **ponder**.

Jacob, his wives, his family, and his property depart from **Laban** and head **back to Canaan**. He completely **breaks ties with Laban**. We will **hear from Laban no more**. **Jacob, the deceiver**, came **20 years ago to Haran**. He **met up with a trait of his own character...Laban, a deceitful man** who was **manipulative, possessive, and selfish**. **Jacob's separation from Laban** pictures his **separation from his own character flaw**. This must happen **before Jacob (and us) can return to the Land and leave the exile**. **Paul** warns us of **deception in the camp**:

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Messiah.¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Jacob is still a **work in process** and his **next challenge** will be in **dealing with his brother, Esau**. We'll deal with that next week.

Shabbat Shalom!

Ardelle