

While praying:

*Those who live outside of God's ways are purposely doing things their own way.

*People are living in a made-up world; they think their version of the world is all there is. They think that their ideas about how things work is absolute.

*The framework of the world is but a construct of man; it denies the true hope of mankind.

At the beginning of Ya'akov's travels (Jacob), he has a vision where God promises to be with him and bless him. Ya'akov (Jacob) tells God if He will do this, God will be his God. When he gets to the land of his ancestors, he just so happens to come upon Rachel at a well. He tells the father of Rachel, Laban, that he will work for the hand of Rachel for 7 years. Laban tricks him and he ends up married to Leah. He works another 7 years for Leah. We find out that Laban dealt deceitfully with Ya'akov over and over, but God favored Ya'akov. God tells Ya'akov to return home and he leaves without telling Laban. And, even though Laban catches up with him, Ya'akov works out a peace agreement with Laban and Laban allows Ya'akov to proceed.

At first, we think that Laban is a good guy because the family greets Ya'akov in the name of the true God. Later we find out that he practiced a mixed religion that included idols. We find out that Laban made up his own way about how to live and how to treat others instead of being fair.

Those who live outside of God's ways are purposely doing things their own way. Like Laban they must think they have great ideas. They have no respect for what is truly right. They value their plans and think they have the right to do whatever they want. We see the pain afflicted on Ya'akov by this shrewd and shellfish person, Laban. What I find interesting is that if Laban had decided to do what is right, he could have prospered from God's favor on Ya'akov.

People today are living in a made-up world; they think their version of the world is all there is. They think that their ideas about how things work is absolute. Anyone can make up their own version of truth. Absolute truth though comes from the God who created the heavens and the earth. God has no reason to deceive us. He knows what's best for us and God's version of reality is the real truth.

The framework of the world has become the construct of man; it denies the true hope of mankind. Many think that this world is all there is and have made up their own view of reality. Are there really countless views of reality or is there one reality? Making up your own reality leads you into false realities that are worthless in the end.

Jeremiah said, "For my people have committed two evils: they have abandoned me, the fountain of living water, and dug themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water!" Jeremiah 2:13 CJB. They have abandoned the creator of the universe who knows what is best and can do anything – God is an endless supply of water, like a fountain. Man has made their own concepts to suit themselves – their beliefs are like a cistern that can only hold only a limited supply of water; they are fallible ideas. The Bible compares them to broken cisterns; in other words, they are broken concepts that instead bring trouble and even disaster in time of need.

What would a society look like that did things God's way? People wouldn't deceive others like Laban did and they would give others wages commensurate with their labors. Employees would work hard and deserve the wages they were getting. God would prosper our efforts. The poor would be adequately cared for and those that could work wouldn't just live off of others. Families would be intact, raise their children

with love and respect, and there would be a loving caring and respectful environment both for the family and for society in general. What a wonderful world this could be.

Years ago, one of my cousins accepted Yeshua and he used to pray before going to work on the computer equipment he serviced. This one company was having trouble with their computer system and two guys worked on their system for 24 hours straight. They then called in my cousin; he prayed and the system was fixed in 10 minutes; this really happened! Just think how much better a world we would have if we had more believers in the true God.

In fact, someday those that love God will be able to do things God's way in the new and future kingdom of God. This is what it is like to live under God. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will no longer be any death; and there will no longer be any mourning, crying or pain; because the old order has passed away;" Revelation 21:4 CJB. God can do that because He is God. Those that love Him can be part of an amazing and wonderful future kingdom. Until then, we will have people like Laban who see the world as a world they define for their own benefit.

What could we learn from this portion of the Torah?

- * We need to watch out for those who define their own morality.
- * We need to take charge of our lives and implement the goodness and caring that comes from knowing God and the true way to live.
- * We need to understand that following God's ways brings blessings. In fact God says, "Look, I have taught you laws and rulings, just as ADONAI my God ordered me, so that you can behave accordingly in the land where you are going in order to take possession of it. Therefore, observe them; and follow them; for then all peoples will see you as having wisdom and understanding. When they hear of all these laws, they will say, 'This great nation is surely a wise and understanding people;'" Deuteronomy 4:5-6 CJB.
- * We want God's way and not just any old made up way to live.
- * Do we value the believers in our lives or do we treat them as second rate? Believers are the people that we should be able to count on. "Let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10 NKJV. The word household means relatives. Jews considered themselves relatives. When a person became a Jew, they were adopted into the Jewish family. Since Shaul (Paul) was Jewish, he had a Jewish way of thinking. Gentile theology often makes up mistaken doctrines by taking the Bible out of its cultural Jewish biblical context. Gentiles were joining the Jewish community in Shaul's time.
- * How are we making up our own version of reality? (this is something to think about)
- * God promised Ya'akov blessings and God promises us blessings.

This section of scripture fits well with this Torah portion. Shaul (Paul) talks about those who desire to do what is right and those who do things their own way. Laban was a person who did things his own way and defined his own values. Shaul says the people who do things their own way suppress the blessings that come through a life of following the true God and doing what is right. Their false system of values keeps people from knowing the goodness of God. Ya'akov surely didn't experience the true goodness of God through Laban's conniving.

Shaul (Paul) said in Romans 1:16-18 NKJV,

"16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.' 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"

Here is the basic meaning from a Jewish Hebraic biblical perspective. I've included comments about Laban:

Verse 16

Shaul (Paul) says in verse 16 that he is not ashamed of the messianic message of the Messiah (the word gospel is used in messianic scriptures in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion); also, Christ means anointed in the Greek and refers to the Messiah). Through this messianic message, God can work powerfully toward¹ our rescue (saved here is the Greek word for rescue²) for those who trust in God (and not in their own belief system like Laban did). It is a message especially for the Jews (because they want to do what is right), but also for the Gentiles (for those Gentiles who want to do what is right).

Shaul uses the word Jew which comes from the Hebrew word Yehudah which means praise. The mere mention of the word Jew has in its underlying meaning that they are a people who are to the praise of God and they do what is right.

Verse 17

The messianic message has revealed the good righteous deeds of God so that from the faith we had, we can now have faith in the messianic message (from verse 16 → and in the power of God so that we can endeavor to live right (righteousness). The just (are those who live justly) will live from faith (the Greek word "ek" means from³).

Verse 18

It is evident that God's anger is revealed in those who don't follow God's commandments (ungodliness) and those who don't live right (unrighteousness). They suppress (the true goodness of God, verse 17) and then what people see is a false system of unrighteous (not living right). That is the false system of broken concepts that Ya'akov experienced with Laban and what we experience in this fallen world.

Why do we need a Jewish biblical perspective?

The Bible was written by Jews and was written for a Jewish culture. Yeshua (Jesus) was Jewish and so were all the people that originally believed in Him. Reading it without a correct understanding will simply produce fiction. If we want to understand the Bible correctly, we need to understand its Jewish biblical context.

¹ The Greek word translated "to" in the verse means toward. - "εις, a preposition governing the accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: into, to, toward, for, among." Thayer's Greek Lexicon - <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G1519&t=KJV>

² Also, in the Old Testament portion, saved is the Hebrew word to be rescued, (H4422 malat, NKJV with Strong's Bible). Joel 3:5 (2:32 in NKJV) "At that time, whoever calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved." The word saved is the Hebrew word rescued (H4422).

³ g1537. ἐκ ek; or ἐξ ex; a primary preposition denoting origin (the point whence action or motion proceeds), from. - Enhanced Strong's Dictionary.