

## **GENESIS Lesson 35 – 7/07/19**

### **Jacob leaves**

**31:17: Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;**

**31:18: And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.**

**31:19: And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.**

**31:20: And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.**

**31:21: So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead.**

**31:22: And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.**

**31:23: And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.**

**31:24: And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.**

**31:25: Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.**

**31:26: And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?**

**31:27: Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?**

**31:28: And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.**

**31:29: It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.**

**31:30: And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?**

**31:31: And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.**

**31:32: With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.**

**31:33: And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.**

**31:34: Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not.**

**31:35: And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.**

The family meeting is now over, Jacob makes the executive decision to leave Haran and head back to the Promise Land.

Jacob takes his wives, his children, his cattle and leaves the affliction of Laban behind. This departure is a type of the Exodus. Again, the Bible is full of typology.

Ex. 10:9: And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD.

But Jacob leaves without telling his father-in-law. It was fear that prevented him from doing so because he knew what type of person Laban was, and figured Laban would keep his daughters and grandkids and would only allow Jacob to leave alone. But it was God's will—didn't God tell him to depart (vs. 3)? So what was he afraid of?

Dr. Barnhouse said, "He sneaked away into the will of God instead of departing in triumph."

And as the family leaves we are told that Rachel stole her father's images. This is the first mention of "images" in the Bible.

So far we have the image of God, for God created man in His image, and we have the image of Adam, for Adam begot a son in his own image. Here we have Laban's images.

The Hebrew word here is teraphim; these were manmade images; sometimes this word in our Bible remains untranslated.

Judges 17:5: And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

It was translated here (Gen. 31:19) as images, perhaps to distinguish between household gods versus idols used in cultural or regional worship where these images or teraphim were placed in a place of worship.

So here we see Rachel once again acting in the flesh; this time she "steals" her father's images.

The Bible doesn't tell us why she took them just simply that she did. And what she did was wrong—she stole.

Perhaps Rachel worshipped these idols herself and did not want to be without them.

Or Rachel knew that Laban was an idolater and she didn't approve and this was her opportunity to rid her father of his idols.

Or these idols were made of some precious metal, such as gold or silver, and were worth a lot and Rachel figured through them she would get something of value from her dad because of what he did to her.

We can only surmise, but whatever the reason—Rachel took them.

Idolatry was forbidden by God.

Ex. 20:4: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

This commandment is missing from the Catholics' listing of the Ten Commandments even though it is in their Bible.

Instead they split the last commandment "Thou shalt not covet" into two: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." It is in the Catholic Catechism this way.

But when Laban discovers Jacob is gone, he pursues after him.

This is similar to an event that will happen a few hundred years later.

Ex. 14:8: And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

Ex. 14:9: But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

Jacob with eleven children and quite a number of livestock cannot move fast enough, Laban eventually catches up to him.

But as Laban is pursuing, God appears to him in a dream while he is sleeping telling him to be careful in his dealings with Jacob. Apparently Laban had evil intent toward Jacob. For God had told him, "Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad."

Imagine the change in Laban's demeanor when he awakes. God puts Laban in his place. "Yessir, anything you say, understood, got it, loud and clear!"

So when Laban meets Jacob, the accusations begin, but Laban's accusations are measured for he had been tempered by God:

"...thou hast stolen away unawares...and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?" Not true, Leah and Rachel left with Jacob willingly.

Laban continues and says, "Wherefore didst thou...not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp?" Yeah right! Do you think Laban would have done that? Jacob knows Laban, in verse 42 he says: "...thou hadst sent me away now empty..."

Laban tried to shame Jacob with kindness, that didn't work and now threatens him, but knows that God is watching.

And in verse 29 Laban says, "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt..." But we know what happened; God appeared to Laban and threatened him.

So Laban wants to get back at Jacob, finding no other occasion he finds an occasion with his gods. "...wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" Laban was still angry and envious that Jacob had been blessed with the speckled and spotted and ringstraked livestock.

But instead he is upset that Jacob stole his gods. One commentator said, "What kind of God is it who can be stolen?"

Before Jacob answers the accusation of having stolen Laban's gods, he tells Laban the truth: "I was afraid."

And then Jacob, with a clear conscience proclaimed his innocence and not knowing what Rachel had done told Laban that whoever had his "gods" was to die.

Little did he know, but Rachel would later end up dying in childbirth. Had he known that Rachel was the culprit he would not have pronounced this curse so hastily.

Laban then searches frantically for his "gods" but doesn't find them. Rachel had hid them in camel's saddle and she sat on the saddle and claimed it was the time of the month for her, so he didn't press her to get up off the saddle.

Deceit was a family trait, Rebekah, Jacob, Laban and now Rachel. But despite their failures we cannot help but see the hand of God.

#### Jacob rebukes Laban

**31:36: And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?**

**31:37: Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.**

**31:38: This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.**

**31:39: That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.**

**31:40: Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.**

**31:41: Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.**

**31:42: Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.**

Now its Jacob's turn; Laban had his say, couldn't find his stolen gods, and now Jacob responds.

The anger that Jacob had stymied all these years finally came to the surface.

Vs. 36, "I have not sinned against you."

Vs. 38, "I have faithfully served you twenty years."

Vs. 38, "I took such good care of your flock that none miscarried."

Vs. 38, "I did not eat or enrich myself at the expense of what belonged to you."

Vs. 39, "Whatever animal was killed or stolen I replaced it with my own—I never brought it you and said look this was killed."



Vs. 40, “I was responsible to care for your sheep; I even stayed up late in the cold to watch out for thieves and wolves.”

Vs. 41, “Everything I have, I have worked for—you gave me nothing.”

Vs. 41, “Ten times you changed the terms of our contract.” Remember Laban broke the agreement he had with Jacob for Rachel.

Vs. 42, “Had it not been that God was with me you would have sent me away empty—with nothing.”

Jacob used Laban’s confession of his encounter with God against him; “God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.”

Interestingly, in this passage Jacob calls God the “Fear of Isaac,” it is only in this chapter that this name of the Lord is found. We will look at this in next passage we study.

### Jacob and Laban make a covenant

**31:43: And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?**

**31:44: Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.**

**31:45: And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.**

**31:46: And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.**

**31:47: And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.**

**31:48: And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;**

**31:49: And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.**

**31:50: If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.**

**31:51: And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee;**

**31:52: This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.**

**31:53: The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.**

**31:54: Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.**

**31:55: And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.**

Laban patiently listens to Jacob, takes it in and when Jacob is done he reminds him that all he has was because of him.

Laban reminds Jacob that when he arrived he had nothing, and now he has wives, children and livestock. Laban says, “All you see is mine.” Basically: “I gave it to you.”

This is the difference between a carnal man and a spiritual man. A carnal man sees everything he has as being a product of his work and a spiritual man sees it as coming from God.

Now, there is the principle of hard work, Jacob worked hard and God blessed him. If you don't work you do not give God an opportunity to bless you.

2 Thess. 3:10: For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Laban is upset, bitter and resentful, but knows that there is nothing he can do. He cannot take his anger out on Jacob or the Lord God would get him and he knows that.

And now he does the only thing he can do—he makes a covenant with Jacob. This way he can still feel good about the whole thing. This the third covenant a Hebrew makes with a Gentile (see Gen. 21:27 and Gen. 26:28).

So they gathered stones and set them up in a pillar; this pillar would be a memorial to the covenant between them.

They couldn't live together so they parted ways.

Laban called the place Jegar-sahadutha, this is in Aramaic which means “heap of testimony” and Jacob called it Galeed, this is in Hebrew which also means “heap of testimony.”

It is interesting that God inserts the Aramaic expression here which indicates that Moses probably knew both languages.

I want to digress a little and remind you that the Pentateuch and much of the OT were originally written in Paleo-Hebrew completely different from the current Hebrew alphabet.

The current Hebrew alphabet was developed in Assyria around 800BC while the Jews were in exile there. Once their new alphabet was in place they began transliterating large portions of Scripture into the newer version of their alphabet.

So Jacob and Laban make a covenant promising not cross over the line and Laban made Jacob swear that he wouldn't take any other wives besides those he had—Laban's daughters. Laban swore on the God of Abraham and Nahor, the God of their father (Terah). But Jacob swore on the Fear of Isaac. Likely a reference to fact that Isaac was still alive and still worshipped God and as a reminder to Laban that it is this God that instills fear in people. Remember that Jacob capitalized on Laban's confession that God appeared to him and put the "fear of God" in him.

They had one final meal together and in the morning Laban kisses his grandchildren and daughters—notice they are collectively called sons and daughters—he departs never to see them again. And this point on we never hear from Laban again—he is no longer mentioned in the scriptures.

Laban never sought to follow God, there is no indication that he did. Never once does he acknowledge the role God played in blessing Jacob; he merely resented and coveted the blessing of God on Jacob.