

# GENESIS 31

## Jacob Flees From Laban to Canaan

5/30/2023  
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### KEYWORD

God (Plural)  
God (Singular)  
LORD  
GOD  
Lord  
lord  
El Olam  
Bara  
Asah  
Beth  
Numbers

### REVERANCE

Elohim (The Trinity)  
El  
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)  
Jehovah & or Yahweh  
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai  
Man the Master  
Everlasting God  
God creating from nothing  
God making or assembling from existent materials  
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

### Keywords

"create" (bara), "make" (asah), and "form" (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 - All the three are used.

*Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need*

### PRAYER

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**Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.**

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

**Jesus let your Holy spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.**

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

**In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!**

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# GENESIS 31

## REVIEW

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Genesis 31 is a long, eventful chapter that follows Jacob from his last days in a twenty-year career as Laban's servant.

It ends with Jacob standing with his wives and children, as a free man, in the borderlands of the promised land of Canaan.

This chapter begins with two revelations.

First, Jacob learned that Laban's sons were dangerously angry with him for taking such a large portion of Laban's profits and that he had also lost the favor of Laban himself.

Second, God spoke to Jacob once more and commanded him to return to his own people in Canaan and He also promised to be with him in verses 1–3.

Jacob knew that he had to leave in as much as he was afraid that his wives, Laban's daughters, wouldn't want to go and afraid that Laban wouldn't let him go.

Regardless he immediately sent for his wives to see if they will support the move.

And so he made his case:

- Laban no longer favors him.
- Even after twenty years of faithful service, Laban continually cheats him.

For once Rachel and Leah agreed, despite their longstanding rivalry and described their decision bitterly, in financial terms.

They won't get any inheritance from Laban, anyway and so they'll go with Jacob.

Next, Jacob decided to skip any confrontation with Laban.

In the past, Laban had talked Jacob into seemingly terrible agreements, though God has blessed Jacob even in those circumstances.

Worse, Jacob is concerned that Laban may forbid Jacob to leave with all the people and property that he sees as ultimately belonging to him.

Jacob doesn't give Laban the chance to object. He just packs and leaves in a hurry.

Three days later, Laban heard that Jacob is gone.

He saddles up with his kinsman and gives chase, catching up with Jacob's large company in the hill country of Gilead.

Unexpectedly warned by God not to "say anything to Jacob, either good or bad," Laban moderated his words to Jacob.

Instead of expressing his wrath, Laban sounded hurt.

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## GENESIS 31

If Jacob had only told him he was leaving, Laban would have thrown him a party, or so he says.

Laban spoke as if Jacob tried to steal Laban's chance to kiss his daughters and grandchildren goodbye.

He understood that Jacob longed for his father's household, but why did Jacob steal Laban's house gods in verses 22–30?

Jacob answered Laban honestly.

- He thought Laban would take his daughters, Jacob's wives, away by force.
- He also insists he did not take Laban's idols, not knowing that Rachel did exactly that.

Jacob puts his beloved wife's life at risk when he foolishly promised that anyone found with the idols will die in verses 31–32.

So Jacob allowed Laban to search the camp.

However due to Rachel's quick thinking, and deception, Laban found nothing.

Feeling righteously indignant, Jacob finally expressed all of his fury to Laban, not just about the idol search, but also about twenty years of shabby treatment in spite of Jacob's faithful service.

And that only God's protection and blessing had kept him from leaving empty-handed to return to his own people in verses 33–42.

However Laban disagreed and still believed his daughters and their children and all that Jacob possessed belonged to him.

But because Jacob's God warned Laban, though, Laban won't fight for them instead, he offered an alternative both to protect himself in the future and to take control of the situation.

He proposed a covenant that both men will swear never to cross over the point where they stand in order to do the other harm in verses 43–50 to which Jacob agreed.

The covenant was made and recognized with the building of a heap of stones, a sacrifice upon an altar, and the sharing of a meal.

Finally, Laban rides off and Jacob turns to face his homeland as a free man in verses 51–55.

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*That's it, The Summary of Genesis 31*

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# GENESIS 31

## GEN 31: 1

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And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.

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It wasn't that Jacob had taken anything that belonged to Laban but that his wealth was increasing in proportion to Laban's wealth which made Laban's sons envious.

Envy always distorts the truth. Jacob's age at this time was about 97.

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## GEN 31: 2

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And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.

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The envy of Laban's sons poisoned Laban's heart against Jacob.

Laban had begun to understand that God had blessed him because of Jacob's service and that he had become extremely wealthy through the diligence of Jacob and now to see Jacob wealthy too began to bother Laban and became envious towards Jacob.

Envy is bad not only on its own, but also for the company it keeps.

In 1 Corinthians 3:3 we read that:

*For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*

And in James 3:16:

*For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

Envy is no small sin. It put Jesus on the cross. We read in Matthew 27:18 that:

*For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.*

However God wants to deliver us from envy:

*For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another (Titus 3:3).*

So instead we should have love for one another for:

*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy (1 Corinthians 13:4).*

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## GEN 31: 3

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# GENESIS 31

And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

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It is interesting how God prepares us for a move.

It is sort of a disruptive pattern to our routines. Things aren't like they were. The circumstances change and things aren't as pleasant anymore.

**God begins to stir up things around us.**

This is often the purpose of God as He is ready to move us on.

Probably, by nature, we are homebodies.

We like to feel comfortable and secure in our home.

There is nothing wrong with this feeling, but sometimes God wants to move us on and we may be reluctant to move because we are content there.

So, God may begin to create situations that **make us uncomfortable** where we are and we **begin to think about moving** again.

Jacob had begun to settle down in Padan-aram but God wanted him to go back to the Promised Land now.

The brothers of the wives of Jacob became jealous and began to speak evil of him and Laban began to scowl at him; so, Jacob thought it was time to go home.

The LORD spoke to Jacob giving him His word that He will be with him.

Once we have the word of God, we, then, step forth in faith.

Faith in the word and not in our feelings.

**Many people step forth in the faith of their feelings, but we need to step out in the faith of God's word.**

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## GEN 31: 4

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And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock.

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Jacob was about 70 or 80 miles away from his wives near the southern borders; so he sent for them to come to him so that he can tell them what was on his heart and how he felt.

Jacob wanted to separate and return to the Promised Land; however this wasn't going to be an easy thing.

Laban was going to be reluctant to let them go and may try to keep them by force.

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# GENESIS 31

## GEN 31: 5-9

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And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me.

(Even though Laban tried to cheat Jacob, God protected him all the time.

God showed Jacob that He was greater and able to overcome what any man might do to him.

God's presence was with Jacob, just as God had promised in Genesis 28:15.

We read in Psalm 118:6 that:

*The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?)*

<sup>6</sup>And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

(Jacob not only believed that he had acted properly toward Laban, but he also believed that his wives knew of his righteous conduct and Laban's unfair treatment of him.)

<sup>7</sup>And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

(Ten times is said to mean, merely "numerous times," after the customary Hebrew usage.

The number ten expresses the idea of completeness.

It is used in Revelation simply to express multiplicity, as in the case of the "ten horns" in Revelation 18.

Fortunately no matter what Laban did, every change turned out to the benefit of Jacob.)

<sup>8</sup>If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

(Basically when Laban would say "the spotted goats will be your wages," the Lord would cause all the new goats to be born spotted.

When Laban changed it to striped goats, the Lord would supernaturally cause all the new goats to be striped.

However Laban attempted to cheat Jacob, the Lord caused Jacob to prosper instead.)

<sup>9</sup>Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.

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Jacob's implication to his wives is threefold:

1. Jacob acknowledges that God brought him the riches that he now possesses.
  2. Your father should be mad at God, not me.
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# GENESIS 31

3. If you stick with me, you will have God on your side.

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## GEN 31: 10

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And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled.

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Actually Jacob was tending only the solid colored animals of Laban, but in his dream the offspring were spotted and streaked.

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## GEN 31: 11-13

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And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I.

(Here once again is a direct reference to Jesus Christ.

We also learn that the blessing of the production of sheep and goats described in Genesis 30:37-43 was revealed to Jacob in a dream.)

<sup>12</sup>And He said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled; for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

(This explains that Jacob's deal with Laban, his use of colored sticks, and his eventual success in Genesis 30:31-43 were all due to God's direct influence.

In other words, Jacob was not attempting to biologically influence the flock's color by using the sticks, he was simply using them as part of God's pre-arranged plan in verses 10 & 12.

Jacob wants Rachel and Leah to understand that the Lord is not only providing and protecting him but that He is also the one directing him.

He's about to tell them it's time to move away from their father and homeland.

He wants it to be clear this direction is coming from God and not necessarily his own wanting.)

<sup>13</sup>I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me; now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

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God told Jacob to go back to Bethel, back to the place where he first encountered the LORD in a personal way.

This was Jacob's way of returning to his first love and first works (as would be later described in Revelation 2:4-5).

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# GENESIS 31

It is good to remember times and places where the LORD did great works for us and has met us in wonderful ways.

As we remember them, God reminds us He is still the same God who met our needs then and wants to meet our needs now.

Twenty years ago Jacob vowed a vow at **Beth-el** (*house of God*) that if the LORD would be with him and take him safely to Haran and bring him again to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by covenant; then he would give a tenth of all he had to God.

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## GEN 31: 14-15

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And Rachel and Leah answered

(Rachel's place as the favorite wife is again evidenced by her being mentioned first)

and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?

(The dowry that was given was, in a sense, alimony in advance.

*Alimony is financial support that a person is ordered by a court to give to their spouse during separation or following divorce; maintenance.*

Women had no rights in that culture and day.

They could not get a divorce, but their husband could divorce them for any reason or cause.

So in order to protect women, a dowry was arranged in advance.

The father of the bride was to watch over and manage this trust so that the bride could be financially taken care of in case she was divorced by her husband.

- Jacob had served seven years each for Leah and Rachel.
- These were years of great prosperity for Laban.

He should have set aside this money, in a trust, for his daughters; but, he spent it on himself and they resented it.

Therefore they were happy to leave their homeland with Jacob and return to Bethel and the land promised to Jacob.)

<sup>15</sup>Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.

(Leah & Rachel they too feel they've been mistreated by Laban.

It's not immediately clear why they say that he has treated them as foreigners, though it might mean he was distant or cold to them once they were married to Jacob.

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# GENESIS 31

It's possible they are identifying with Jacob.

Their father claimed him as family but then mistreated him as a foreigner and in the process he mistreated his own daughters, as well.

On the other hand, it's not hard to understand what the women mean—that their father sold them and devoured their money.

Laban used trickery and his daughter's marriages to get 14 years of labor out of Jacob.

That was good for Laban, but it also meant withholding money from his own daughters and grandchildren.

The two sisters had been married to a man who became an indentured servant, a kind of property, belonging to Laban.

In that sense, they were sold into slavery, as well, to their own father.

Now any money paid to a father by a bridegroom would customarily be saved and given to the bride in the inheritance when the father died.

Jacob's only dowry was his service, so there was no money waiting for Rachel and Leah when their father died.

He had already "devoured" it all in using up Jacob's work for him.

Further, Laban's most recent attempt to cheat Jacob meant yet another moment where the interests of Laban's own daughters came second to his greed.

Despite Leah and Rachel's intense rivalry (Genesis 30:8), they are in agreement on this issue.)

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## GEN 31: 16

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For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's; now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

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Their support of Jacob was very significant. It was a huge undertaking to move such a large family.

If not for the support of his wives, Jacob perhaps would not have done what the LORD had told him to do.

This may be the first time in quite a while when the sisters Leah and Rachel agreed on anything.

They agreed in uniting against a common enemy – their father Laban.

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# GENESIS 31

## GEN 31: 17-18

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Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels;

(Scripture does not explicitly indicate if Jacob packed up his family and left immediately after hearing that his wives would support him in the move away from Laban.

We're not told how much time it took, but the implication is that they moved with some haste.

Jacob wanted to get away without Laban knowing he was gone.

Jacob had become wealthy and he had acquired camels, the preferred method of travel for women and children at the time.

He apparently had enough camels to carry four wives and 11 sons.

Men, this caravan of Jacob's family and worldly goods would become very long.)

<sup>18</sup>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.

(Jacob's property included much livestock "on the hoof," as well as servants, donkeys, and belongings.

Unfortunately they can't move too quickly, for that reason.

Jacob left Canaan with next to nothing: sleeping alone on a rock in Genesis 28:11 and having no dowry to offer for a wife.

Now he returns to his homeland a wealthy man with a large family.

God had blessed Jacob, just as He said He would in Genesis 28:12-15.)

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## GEN 31: 19-21

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

(This verse steps back to let us know that, before they pulled out, Rachel went to her father's house while he was out, and stole his "household gods."

These household gods were, apparently, a collection of small, commonly used idols; these are referred to in the original Hebrew using the word *teraphim*.

**The teraphim** were objects worshipped as gods, consulted for oracles, and believed to be the custodians and promoters of human happiness.

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## GENESIS 31

They were variously made of wood, precious metals, or stone, and seemed to have been of different sizes ranging from small and easily concealed objects to a figure the equivalent of a human bust.

They evidently bore some resemblance to the human figure, and some have supposed that they were carved images of the devotee's ancestors.

Similar objects are referred to in Judges 17:5 and 2 Kings 23:24.

This however raises a question:

Why would Rachel steal them? Several possibilities are suggested by scholars.

1. Perhaps Rachel's reasons were spiritual; she might have thought these gods provided protection or fertility and didn't want to lose that by leaving them behind.
2. We know that Rachel worshiped the God of Jacob, at least at times, but it's likely that she and others in her family also worshiped other gods, as well, hoping to be blessed by all of them.
3. It's also possible that Rachel was emotionally attached to these household idols, as familiar items from her childhood.
4. She perhaps thought that having them would comfort her in leaving behind her homeland.
5. Perhaps she did not want her father to inquire of them, to use them as tools of divination to catch them (as he may have previously done, as in Genesis 30:27).
6. Perhaps it was because such idols were often used as deeds to property and she thought that by taking the idols she took whatever inheritance might be left to Laban's children.
7. Perhaps Rachel stole the *teraphim* simply to get back at her father, whom she felt had mistreated her, her husband, and her whole family.
8. According to some Jewish traditions, Rachel took the *teraphim* because she wanted to keep her father Laban from idolatry.
9. Most simply, and probably most likely, Rachel took these items simply as one last act of rebellion and revenge against her father.

(Whatever her reason, stealing them will soon endanger her life.)

<sup>20</sup>And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

(Jacob tricked Laban. Literally, he deceived the deceiver.)

Jacob somehow managed to pack up his family and all of his belongings and leave without Laban knowing that it was happening.

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# GENESIS 31

But again God had already told Jacob to go and had promised him safe passage.

Jacob's fear and deceptive departure showed that he lacked confidence in God and His promise, and he relied more on his own wisdom and ability.

Jacob could have announced his departure and gone in the glory of an army with banners.

But fear made it impossible to reap the full measure of blessing.

He sneaked away into the will of God instead of departing in triumph.)

<sup>21</sup>So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, (This is river Euphrates) and set his face toward the mount Gilead.

(It was nearly 300 miles (482 kilometers) from Haran to the mountains of Gilead.

These mountains lay eastward from the territories later possessed by Rueben and Gad, extending from Mount Hermon to the mountains of Moab, and called in the New Testament, Trachonitis.

This journey was longer and more difficult psychologically than it was physically for Jacob.

He left the place of safety, where he lived in a comfortable servitude, to go to a place where God called him, but there were many dangerous enemies such as his brother Esau, who had sworn to kill him.)

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## GEN 31: 22-24

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And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

(This shows that Jacob and his family lived some distance from Laban. He didn't notice their departure for three days.)

<sup>23</sup>And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.

(In that three-day span, Jacob's huge caravan made it all the way to and across the Euphrates River and was heading toward the hill country of Gilead.

So Laban gathered some kinsman and gave a chase for a full week covering about 300 miles.

For Jacob, this would have been the tenth day of his journey implying his company had about ten days to cover somewhat less than that, for he would have stationed his flocks strategically for departure.

As a matter of fact, we learned in Genesis 30:36 that Jacob had stationed them 3 days journey from Laban; and that means Jacob traveled about 250 miles to reach the place of their confrontation.)

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# GENESIS 31

<sup>24</sup>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.

(God protected Jacob by warning Laban against his evil intentions towards Jacob in a dream and asked him to leave Jacob alone.)

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## GEN 31: 25-27

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Then Laban overtook Jacob, Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount; and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

(At this point, Jacob was not far from the Jordan River and the Promised Land.

This shows that he traveled quickly and that Laban was determined to pursue him this far.)

<sup>26</sup>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?

(Laban begins, ironically, with the same words Jacob said to him on Jacob's wedding night some 13 years earlier:

"What have you done?"

Laban's first two accusations are that Jacob tricked him in this sudden departure and, worse, that Jacob had carried Laban's two daughters away as if they were captives or prisoners not knowing that both Rachel and Leah expressed their full support for Jacob's plan to leave and return to his own homeland.)

<sup>27</sup>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?

(Since God had warned Laban to speak softly to Jacob, he was trying to be nice and made up this story, with a lot of hypocrisy, about a going away party.)

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## GEN 31: 28-29

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

(The objection from Laban in this verse is at least somewhat believable.

I mean Jacob left without giving Laban a chance to kiss his daughters and grandchildren farewell, something that would break any father's heart.

Although Laban's daughters did not seem to mind leaving without saying goodbye to their father, but Laban's appeal here is not entirely unrealistic.

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# GENESIS 31

So Laban concluded by saying that Jacob did foolishly.

One thing that helps Genesis to resonate so deeply is stories like these, in which readers can see the validity of both points of view.

Was Jacob wise to run without warning and give Laban no chance to try to manipulate him in some new way?

Or Is Laban right that such action is dishonorable, no matter how dishonorable Laban himself had been?

Write us a comment with what you think ☺)

<sup>29</sup>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.

Perhaps Laban means that he has the capability to physically harm Jacob and/or take by force from Jacob what Laban does not wish to release.

Or Laban could mean that it would be within his legal rights to restrain Jacob or his wives, children, or belongings as escaped property that rightly belongs to him.

Whatever he might mean, he tells Jacob he won't do it. Why?

The God of Jacob's father warned him not to say anything good or bad to Jacob.

The point of that expression is that God does not want Laban to contradict Jacob.

By this statement, from Laban, Jacob received more evidence that God is with him, protecting him, even from his own father-in-law.

It's interesting that Laban recognizes the Lord as the God of Jacob's father, Isaac.

Laban would well remember when Abraham's servant came to his household many years earlier to find a wife for Isaac.

The servant had proclaimed repeatedly that his master's God was providing for his master.

Laban indeed believed that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob was a powerful God who provided for their best interests..

## GEN 31: 30

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

Laban is trying to attribute to Jacob, very magnanimously, a good motivation for fleeing.

# GENESIS 31

This also is the first Scriptural reference to heathen gods and it is amusing but also but tragic that a man has gods that can be stolen.

Remember that we read where Rachel took these little idols.

They're called the "terriphim," and they were idols that were used for purposes of divination.

They were thought to be oracles through which God spoke to the people and were often used for guidance.

In addition to spiritual issues, the house idols may have been seen as a kind of legal marker indicating who was the true owner or inheritor of the estate.

Laban might be legitimately concerned that Jacob will return after his death and demand to take an inheritance.

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## GEN 31: 31-32

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And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid; for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me. <sup>32</sup>With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live;

(Jacob, not knowing his beloved wife Rachel stole the household idols, proclaimed his innocence and pronounced a harsh curse on the thief, not knowing that he actually invited judgment on his own wife.)

before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee, For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

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There is a code that is called the "Hammurabi Stone."

A code of laws which are quite extensive and are in many ways parallel to the commandments that God gave to Moses.

In one of the laws of the Hammurabi code, it deals with the subject of stealing another man's idols and it was a capital offense.

So, Jacob, no doubt, familiar with the code of Hammurabi after spending several years in the area of Babylon, told Laban to search and whoever had the gods, let him die.

He also told him to look around and if he saw anything that was his to take it with him.

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## GEN 31: 33-34

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# GENESIS 31

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.

(Laban was confident that his idols had been stolen. He made a thorough search of Jacob's tents.)

<sup>34</sup>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.

(Rachel learned the ways of deception well from her father – and perhaps also from her husband.)

She succeeded in deceiving her father about the idols.)

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## GEN 31: 35

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

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The whole time Laban was searching, Jacob was thinking of the injustice of Laban's accusation.

But as it turns out, Rachel learned a thing or two about deception from her father.

Here, she speaks very respectfully to her father, more respectfully than we have heard her speak thus far either to Jacob or about her father.

She calls him "lord" and then deceives him.

She asks that he not be angry that she doesn't stand up in his presence since, she says, the "way of women" is on her.

Rachel is claiming that she is having her menstrual period, so she can't get up from where she is sitting.

Though Israel's laws regarding ceremonial cleanliness would not be given for many centuries in Leviticus 15:19–21, this would have agreed with the cultural views of her era.

Her clothes, and anything she sat on, would have been considered "untouchable" at that time.

Laban would not have dared touch her, or her saddle, or have asked her to stand, as a result.

Laban believed his daughter, at least to the extent that he never searches the saddle she's sitting on.

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# GENESIS 31

And so, he never finds his stolen idols.

Thanks to Rachel's lie, not only is Laban's accusation left unproven, Laban appears very foolish for making it.

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## GEN 31: 36-38

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And Jacob was wrath, 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?

(Now Jacob began a long, angry speech against Laban.

He finally told his father-in-law off in a way that we, as readers, may have wanted to hear him do much sooner.

He laid out all of his frustration with Laban, making the case for why Laban did not deserve better treatment from him, and why he attempted to escape without a confrontation.)

<sup>37</sup>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?

(Jacob fully and sarcastically expressed his rage, demanding that Laban set in front of the witnesses the stolen goods he claimed Jacob had taken from him.

Jacob knew Laban didn't have anything to show and as such he demonstrated how false Laban's accusation really was.

Given the opportunity to hammer Laban for a dishonorable act, one which Laban cannot defend, Jacob does not hold back and wallops him bulungi 😊)

<sup>38</sup>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.

---

Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban for pursuing him and accusing him of stealing.

It is likely that this anger built up in Jacob for a long time – perhaps 20 years. Perhaps in his mind, he practiced this speech over and over again.

Jacob reminded Laban that in the twenty years that he had served him faithfully and with integrity and that none of his flock had miscarried neither had he eaten any of his rams.

It was the shepherd's prerogative to eat of the flock, but Jacob had not done that.

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## GEN 31: 39

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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.

---

# GENESIS 31

According to Hammurabi's laws, a shepherd who presented the remnants of a sheep torn by a wild beast as evidence, was not liable for the losses that Jacob described.

The prophet Amos made mention of shepherds retrieving just such evidence in Genesis 3:12, indicating that it was a well-established custom that in such cases, the owner of the flock, not the shepherd, made good the loss.

However Laban had exceeded his lawful rights in requiring of Jacob that he bear the loss of all animals lost in such a manner.

This was later incorporated into the Divine Law in Exodus 22:13.

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## GEN 31: 40-41

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

(In addition to protecting Laban's flocks and paying for losses due to animal attacks, Jacob pointed out that the work was difficult.

As a shepherd, he endured blistering hot days, freezing cold nights, and too little sleep.

During the day the temperatures would rise to 120 degrees and falls as low as 55 degrees at night.

Frost occurred occasionally even during the hottest seasons.

Laban was silenced by this protest. He immediately changed the subject 😊)

<sup>41</sup>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.

---

Jacob is rehearsing the troubles he has gone through in the service of Laban and Laban's ingratitude by changing his wages ten different times.

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## GEN 31: 42

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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.

---

Jacob was upset and knew that if God hadn't intervened, at this point, Laban would have taken everything that he had and he would have gone back home empty.

It was good that Jacob saw God's presence and protection in all this.

---

# GENESIS 31

Unfortunately, nowhere did Jacob claim God as *his* own; he referred to God as the **Fear** of his father **Isaac** and the **God** of his grandfather **Abraham**.

The name "Fear of Isaac" appears only in this chapter in the Bible.

It may be a reference to the fear Laban himself experienced when the Lord told him to, in essence, leave Jacob alone.

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## GEN 31: 43

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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?

---

Laban insists that Jacob's wives, children, flocks, and possessions are all legally his.

He believes he is the rightful owner, since Jacob came to possess them all as a kind of indentured servant belonging to Laban.

In other words, everything that Jacob owns is ultimately owned by Laban, in his eyes.

However, Laban has been visited by the "Fear of Isaac" in a dream.

God warned him, in essence, not to harm Jacob and so concluded by giving up:

"What can I do" to save or protect my daughters and grandchildren?

In the end, Laban refused to acknowledge that his daughters are running away from him and are not being dragged away against their will.

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## GEN 31: 44-47

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

(Now Laban suggested they make a covenant to fully resolve their dispute.

In part, the point of this covenant will be to establish a permanent separation between Laban and Jacob.

Laban knew that he cannot compete against the blessing and protection of Jacob's God.

So he decided it will be better to simply keep his distance from now on and to keep Jacob from returning to claim any more of his property or inheritance.)

<sup>45</sup>And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.

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# GENESIS 31

(This pillar is similar to the one Jacob erected from his stone pillow, after the Lord appeared to him in a dream at Bethel in Genesis 28:18.

He set up another pillar after Rachel died in Genesis 35:14, 20. These pillars marked significant events in Jacob's life.)

<sup>46</sup>And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap; and they did eat there upon the heap. <sup>47</sup>And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha; but Jacob called it Galeed.

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So they made a covenant and Laban called the place Jegarsahadutha, an Aramaic word which means “a heap of witness” and Jacob called it Galeed, a Hebrew word meaning the same.

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## GEN 31: 48-49

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And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; <sup>49</sup>And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

---

Now Laban also gave the place a second name, or possibly referred to an existing name for this location.

*Mizpah* is a Hebrew word meaning "watchtower."

The idea is, *"If you do wrong, God will see it and may He punish."*

In effect, the pillar of Mizpah meant:

*If you come over on my side of this line, the pact is void and I will kill you.*

The covenant breaker would need God to take care of him, because the other would shoot to kill.

**Mizpah** was never meant to be a nice sentiment as many people today who have taken it for a pleasant benediction.

The idea was for the LORD to watch over Jacob, sort of like watching over a thief 😊

Anyways Laban indicated it as a prayer of sorts that the Lord would watch the behavior of both parties to ensure they stick to the agreement once they are out of sight of each other.

Of course this stipulation is almost comical, coming from Laban.

The entire reason Jacob left, taking his wives, children, and flocks, is that Laban has repeatedly cheated, lied, and manipulated him.

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# GENESIS 31

For some twenty years, Jacob and his family—including Laban's own daughters have suffered for the sake of Laban's greed.

But now, Laban invokes God as a witness, as if Jacob is the one who need to be monitored and held in check.

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## GEN 31: 50-52

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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.

(Laban's first stipulation is that Jacob not oppress his daughters or take any other wives in addition to his daughters.

Apparently it was common for a covenant between a man and the foreign husband of his daughter to make this agreement.

In theory, Laban intends this as a protection for his daughters.

Of course, this sounds like a joke.

Laban had been guilty of both oppression and causing Jacob to marry multiple women.

Even his daughters agree that their father had practically sold them, and made no provision for their inheritance.

So this seems like nothing more than an attempt to save face—one last chance to pretend that he only has his family's best interests at heart.)

<sup>51</sup>And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; <sup>52</sup>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.

---

So, Laban is saying if Jacob afflicts his daughters in any way that God will be the witness and they made a covenant not to pass over a certain heap or pillar to do each other harm.

There is wisdom in having some separation from in-laws.

The Bible says, *therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife* in Genesis 2:24.

Laban and Jacob seemed to have more problems than most families, so their separation was extreme.

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## GEN 31: 53-55

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# GENESIS 31

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.

(Laban's choice of oaths to uphold his end of the covenant is interesting.

He acknowledged the power of the God of Abraham and also worshiped the gods of Nahor and swore by both of them.

Jacob, however, swore only by God, using the title "Fear of Isaac."

This name for God is used only twice in the Bible, both times in this chapter.

It is used in connection with Laban and God's direct intervention to keep Laban from harming Jacob.)

<sup>54</sup>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.

(Now Jacob concluded the agreement by offering a sacrifice upon an altar and by sharing another meal with Laban and his kinsman.

This eating of bread was likely more than just a meal, but part of the covenant process itself.

Finally, everyone retreated to their tents and went to bed, ending what must have been a momentous, emotional, and exhausting day.)

<sup>55</sup>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.

After a proper good-bye, Laban saw his daughters and grandchildren for the last time.

Jacob took his family to Canaan and never returned to where Laban lived.

- This is the last we hear of Laban in the Bible, and it is good that this is the end of him.
- Laban is of the world, and Jacob needed to be freed from this world in order to live wholeheartedly for the God of his fathers.

Morris quoted on Laban that:

*Rather than seeking to follow the truth of God's plan as witnessed by Jacob, he merely resented and coveted the blessing of God on Jacob.*

*He finally ended up with neither.*

*His life constitutes a sober warning to a great host of semireligious but fundamentally self-worshipping and self-seeking men and women today.*

Rachel and Leah were wrong to look to their father Laban for their *portion or inheritance* in Genesis 31:14 once they were married to Jacob.

# GENESIS 31

He now was their portion and inheritance.

*Since you are saved and joined to Christ, appraise the world and ask, 'Is there yet any portion for me?' If you think there is, you are mistaken.*

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## **THE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY ARE:**

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1. Dishonesty and deceit will keep you running from your past and will cause you to lose the things you love the most.
  2. Jacob had to flee his home in Canaan because he lied to his father and stole the blessing that belonged to his brother.
  3. Laban lost his family due to his dishonesty and they ran away from him because he wasn't trustworthy.
  4. It's better to be honest and up-front in our relationships.
- 
1. Honesty isn't always easy, but it is necessary to retain the people we love the most.
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We will start from Chapter 32 next week ...

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## **IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW**

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- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
  - But right now I repent of my sins
  - I make you my Lord
  - I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
  - I need you, Jesus
  - Be my savior
  - So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God
- 

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

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## **LET'S STANDUP FOR THE FINAL BLESSING**

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EXPOUNDING GOD'S WORD BY

**ABDI** JOSEPH



## GENESIS 31

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:

- Be with you, bless you and keep you
  - May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you peace
  - May your heart be filled with his love
  - May you walk in the spirit
  - May you be strengthened by the work of his Holy spirit in your inner man
  - May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His word, His will and His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that's pleasing unto him
  - And may God increase your faith and your trust
  - May he work in your life in a beautiful way as he natures you and as he leads you into that path of fellowship with him self
  - May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus
  - And May the Lord and his blessings be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ
  - Amen
- 

