

III. JACOB AND LABAN MEET IN MOUNT GILEAD (Genesis 31:25-42)

A. Laban Made His Accusations Against Jacob (Genesis 31:25-30).

1. Laban overtook Jacob in the mount (Genesis 31:25; see Genesis 31:21).
2. Laban pitched his tent in the mount of Gilead (Genesis 31:25).
  - a. Mt. Gilead—Located on the east side of the Jordan River.
  - b. Mt. Gilead—The location from which Gideon assembled his army (Judges 7:3).
3. Laban's complaints and accusations (Genesis 31:26-30).
  - a. The departure in secret
    - (1) Complaint: Laban was upset that Jacob had "stolen away unawares" (Genesis 31:26).
    - (2) Fact: This complaint was valid in that Jacob had indeed left without notice.
  - b. The daughters in captivity
    - (1) Complaint: Thou "hast carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword" (Genesis 31:26).
    - (2) Fact: This complaint is false. They were not captives but co-conspirators. They came voluntarily and happily. The only one that would do any capturing with the sword was Laban himself.
  - c. The devotion not permitted
    - (1) Complaint: "I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, ..." (Genesis 31:27, 28).
    - (2) Fact: This claim is laughable. There is no way that Laban would have done such thing. As for Laban he had only shown disdain and disrespect for his daughters in his treatment of them. (See Proverbs 22:24).
  - d. The deterring by God
    - (1) Complaint: Laban claims that it was in the power of his hand to do Jacob hurt (Genesis 31:29).
    - (2) Fact: Laban gave away his real intentions here. God had stopped him and warned him not to do any harm to Jacob or Jacob's family (See Genesis 31:13; Genesis 28:15; Psalm 91:7). Laban's boasted power was limited by the power of God (Psalm 76:10; See John 19:11).
  - e. The deities (false gods) that were stolen

- (1) Complaint: *“Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?”* (Genesis 31:30).
  - (2) Fact: A real complaint, Jacob did not know that Rachel had taken them. However, why would you want some false gods that couldn’t even help you? (Psalm 115:1-8; Psalm 135:15-18; Isaiah 40:19-20; Isaiah 46:1-13).
  - f. The desire for home
    - (1) Complaint: *“Thou sore longedst after thy father’s house”* (Genesis 31:30).
    - (2) Fact: Here is yet another hypocritical complaint. Laban disdains Jacob’s desire for his family yet complained he could not kiss his daughters farewell.
- B. Jacob Allowed Laban to Search for His Gods (Genesis 31:31-35).
1. Jacob’s complaint in response to Laban’s accusations (Genesis 31:31).
    - a. Complaint: *“I was afraid; for I said, Peradventure thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me”* (Genesis 31:31).
    - b. Fact: Jacob’s concerns were valid. He knew that Laban had shown himself to be an injurious person. In fact, this was validated further by Laban’s own testimony (Genesis 31:29). Secrecy was necessary for the safety and well-being of Jacob’s family and flocks.
  2. Jacob’s offer of death for anyone who had taken Laban’s gods (Genesis 31:32).
  3. Jacob’s ignorance of Rachel’s actions (Genesis 31:32).
  4. Laban’s search for his gods (Genesis 31:33-35).
    - a. Laban’s direction of search (Genesis 31:33).
      - (1) Laban’s course of search gives us an indication of his level of trust with the individuals. It is obvious that he trusted his son-in-law the least. It is interesting and surprising that it seems he trusts Rachel the most.
      - (2) We see partiality and man’s wisdom at play here. When a man, woman or child turns from the wisdom of God you can be sure that their wisdom is clouded by earthly wisdom.
    - b. Laban’s deficiency of evidence (Genesis 31:34-35).
      - (1) Laban moves from tent to tent looking for his gods (note again the order in which he moved).
        - (a) Beginning at Jacob’s

- (b) On to Leah's tent
  - (c) Then unto the two maidservant's tents
  - (d) Finally ending at Rachel's tent
  - (2) Rachel hid the images so Laban could not find them (Genesis 31:34-35).
    - (a) Rachel's hiding of the images—by placing them in the camel's furniture and sitting upon them (Note: One sees the hiding of one's sin [Psalm 19:12; Psalm 90:8]).
    - (b) Rachel's deception—by claiming a falsehood and hiding of the evidence (Note: This was an outright lie. In the book of the Psalms the Psalmist speaks of a presumptuous sin [See Psalm 19:13]).
- C. Jacob Made His Accusations Against Laban (Genesis 31:36-42).
- 1. Jacob questioned the reason for Laban's hot pursuit (Genesis 31:36-37).
    - a. Jacob's four-fold question of Laban's actions.
      - (1) *"What is my trespass?"*
      - (2) *"What is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?"*
      - (3) *"Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff..."*
      - (4) *What hast thou found of all thy household stuff?"*
    - b. Jacob's request of proof of wrongdoing (Genesis 31:37).
      - (1) *"Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren..."*
      - (2) *That they may judge betwixt us both."*
  - 2. Jacob reminded Laban of his faithful service (Genesis 31:38-41).
    - a. Jacob rebukes Laban for his actions.
    - b. Twenty years Jacob had served Laban.
    - c. He had faithfully taken care of all that was Laban's.
    - d. Fourteen years he had served Laban for his two daughters.
    - e. Six years for Laban's cattle.
    - f. Laban had changed his wages ten times (See Leviticus 19:13; Luke 10:7; Colossians 4:1).
  - 3. Jacob told Laban of God's intervention (Genesis 31:42).
    - a. *"Except the God of my father... had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty."* (See Genesis 31:11-13)
    - b. *God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."* (See Genesis 31:24)
      - (1) The Lord had protected and helped Jacob while in Laban's house.
      - (2) The Lord had prospered the hand of Jacob while in Laban's house.
      - (3) The Lord would continue to protect and prosper Jacob.

IV. JACOB AND LABAN MAKE A COVENANT (Genesis 31:43-55)

- A. Jacob and Laban Made a Memorial of a Heap of Stones (Genesis 31:43-47)
1. Laban and Jacob made a covenant between each other (Genesis 31:43-45).
    - a. The person making the covenant—“*Laban answered... let us make a covenant*” (Genesis 31:43, 44).
      - (1) It was Laban that asked for this peace covenant. This speaks volumes about his situation.
      - (2) Jacob had rebuked Laban strongly, and Laban could not refute any of it. Laban knew that Jacob was right and so did those with him.
      - (3) Laban had to save face, therefore, he asked for this peace covenant. Note: This is reminiscent of the enemies of Israel today. They asked for peace treaties only when things aren’t going their way or regroup in order to fight another day.
    - b. The preface in the proposal—“*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?*” (Genesis 31:43)
      - (1) Laban knew that events had turned against him, he knew had to change his approach.
      - (2) Laban had to make it look like he was being a charitable man, giving up his rights in the cause of peace. Laban was a cheat and would pervert anything to improve his own outcome.
  2. Laban and Jacob ate upon these heap of stones (Genesis 31:46).
    - a. They had made a heap of stones.
    - b. They did eat there upon them.
  3. Laban and Jacob called the heap a different name (Genesis 31:47).
    - a. Laban called it *Jegar-sahadutha*.
    - b. Jacob called it *Galeed*. This name means *heap of witness*.
- B. Jacob and Laban Make a Covenant (Genesis 31:48-53)
1. The covenant was so the Lord would watch over both (Genesis 31:49, 53).
    - a. Location also called *Mizpah* (Genesis 31:49).
      - (1) *Mizpah*: meaning *watchtower*.
      - (2) “*The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another* (Genesis 31:49).
    - b. That God would judge between them (Genesis 31:53).
  2. The pillar was set as a boundary between them both (Genesis 31:51-52)
- C. Jacob Makes a Sacrifice and Laban Returns Home (Genesis 31:54-55)