

- Catch sessions you missed at [www.htchurch.com/genesis](http://www.htchurch.com/genesis)
- Don't forget our summer reading: *God Meant It For Good*, by RT Kendall.

**Jacob Comes Into Disfavor (Gen. 31: 1-13)**

*1 Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." 2 And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before. 3 Then the LORD 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, 5 and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. 6 And you know that with all my might I have served your father. 7 Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. 8 If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. 9 So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.*

*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 gray-spotted. 11 Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' 12 And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.'"*

- Jacob’s cousins felt he had taken their wealth, or their future inheritance.
- Jacob calls a summit meeting, and he needs his wives’ support.
- He begins defensively, but also points out that it’s God who has prospered him. God caused the animals to mate in such a way that Jacob would be prospered by it, and it had nothing to do with the folklore that Jacob was putting his trust in.
- It’s significant that God has observed what Laban is doing to him. We can see in other places where God observes how His people are being treated by others!
- This seems to be a reference to the Angel of the LORD, which scholars believe is a reference to Christ. This particular angel speaks as though He were God Himself.

**The Sisters Respond; Departure (Gen. 31:14-21)**

*14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, “Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? 15 Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. 16 For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children’s; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it.”*

*17 Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. 18 And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. 19 Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father’s. 20 And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. 21 So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.*

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- There's a right way to leave, and...
- The sisters are in rare agreement – trouble ahead! Notice: the responses of Rachel and Leah are full of bitterness. They feel that they are forgotten and that they have also been treated poorly.
  - What does it mean that Laban has consumed their money?
  - Their willingness to go off with Jacob is very significant.
- Laban is in the season of shearing, which enabled them to leave more easily.

**The Household Idols**

- Many ancient cultures had household idols, small statues of a human head and torso. They were considered to give prosperity to the household. They could also have been used for divination. Why did Rachel steal them?
  - Spite? Monetary gain?
  - Securing leadership of the family?

**A Chase And A Confrontation (Gen. 31:22-30)**

*22 And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. 23 Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. 24 But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."*

*25 So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. (cont'd next page)*

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26 And Laban said to Jacob: “What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? 27 Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? 28 And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. 29 It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.’ 30 And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father’s house, but why did you steal my gods?”

- He was able to overtake him in a few days because Jacob was not traveling light.
- In the meanwhile, Laban was given pause because God had spoken to him and told him to be cautious. Laban is a great picture of a worldly man in whom there is a lot of mixture. Laban softens his tone a little because (a) he has some fear of God, and (b) he recognizes Jacob’s understandable wish to return home.

### **Jacob’s Reply and Rachel’s Deception (Gen. 31:31-35)**

31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.’ 32 With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you.” For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob’s tent, into Leah’s tent, and into the two maids’ tents, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah’s tent and entered Rachel’s tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel’s saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them. 35 And she said to her father, “Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me.” And he searched but did not find the household idols.

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- Jacob explains that he was afraid. He was certainly outnumbered. Laban had seven brothers, and no doubt there were lots of angry cousins.
- Jacob announces a sentence of death for the thief.
- Laban made a complete search, including the tent of the women. Rachel deceives him by saying she cannot get up because she is menstruating. Never dreaming she would defile his gods in that way, Laban leaves satisfied.

**Jacob Rebukes Laban (Gen. 31:36-42)**

*36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: “What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37 Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! 38 These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. 39 That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. 40 There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. 41 Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. 42 Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”*

- God has intervened to protect him from Laban’s greed. Jacob refers to God as the Fear of Isaac, meaning the one that Isaac reveres.

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**A Covenant and a Parting of the Ways (Gen. 31:43-55)**

*43 And Laban answered and said to Jacob, “These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? 44 Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.”*

- Laban cannot harm his own flesh and blood and proposes a covenant.

*45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. 46 Then Jacob said to his brethren, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. 47 Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore its name was called Galeed, 49 also Mizpah, because he said, “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. 50 If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us—see, God is witness between you and me!”*

- A stone or pillar could be placed as a memorial of a covenant. Laban names it a heap of witness in Aramaic, and Jacob calls it the same thing, in Hebrew.
- Mizpah means a *watchtower*. A god was often invoked to watch the parties to a covenant. Laban invokes the God of Jacob directly by His covenant name

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*51 Then Laban said to Jacob, “Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52 This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. 55 And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.*

- In addition to the protections Laban secured for his daughters, this covenant was also what we would nowadays call a non-aggression treaty.
- Laban may be convinced that Abraham and their ancestors had the same god.
- This is a final break between the branches of the family of Terah.
  - Laban represented the line of Nahor.
  - The Moabites and Ammonites, children of Lot, represented the line of Haran.
  - Jacob represents the third branch, through Abraham.

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