

Genesis 31 New American Standard Bible

Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth."² And Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, and behold, it was not *friendly* toward him as *it had been* before.³ Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."⁴ So Jacob sent *word* and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field,⁵ and said to them, "I see your father's attitude, that it is not *friendly* toward me as *it was* before, but the God of my father has been with me.

⁶ You know that I have served your father with all my strength. ⁷ Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to do me harm. ⁸ If he said this: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flock delivered speckled; and if he said this: 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock delivered striped. ⁹ So God has taken away your father's livestock and given *them* to me. ¹⁰ And it came about at the time when the flock was breeding that I raised my eyes and saw in a dream—and behold—the male goats that were mating *were* striped, speckled, or mottled.

¹¹ Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob'; and I said, 'Here I am.' ¹² He said, 'Now raise your eyes and see *that* all the male goats that are mating are striped, speckled, or mottled; for I have seen everything that Laban has been doing to you. ¹³ I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a memorial stone, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.'" ¹⁴ Rachel and Leah said to him, "Do we still have any share or inheritance in our father's house? ¹⁵ Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price.

¹⁶ Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children; now then, do whatever God has told you." ¹⁷ Then Jacob stood up and put his children and his wives on camels; ¹⁸ and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had acquired, the livestock he possessed which he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. ¹⁹ Laban had gone to shear his flock, and Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's. ²⁰ And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing. ²¹ So he fled with all that he had; and he got up and crossed the *Euphrates* River, and set out for the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Pursues Jacob

²² When Laban was informed on the third day that Jacob had fled, ²³ he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him *a distance of seven days'* journey, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴ However, God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad." ²⁵ And Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead.

²⁶ Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? ²⁷ Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with tambourine and with lyre; ²⁸ and did not allow me to kiss my grandchildren and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. ²⁹ It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.' ³⁰ Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; *but* why did you

steal my gods?" ³¹ Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³² The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our relatives point out what is yours among my belongings and take *it* for yourself." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

³³ So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two slave women, 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 and put them in the camel's saddlebag, and she sat on them. So Laban searched through all the tent, but did not find *them*. ³⁵ And she said to her father, "May my lord not be angry that I cannot stand in your presence, because the way of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household idols.

³⁶ Then Jacob became angry and argued with Laban; and Jacob said to Laban, "What is my offense? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me? ³⁷ Though you have searched through all my property, what have you found of all your household property? Set *it* here in front of my relatives and your relatives, so that they may decide between the two of us. ³⁸ For these twenty years I *have been* with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten the rams of your flocks. ³⁹ I did not *even* bring to you that which was torn *by wild animals*; I took the loss myself. You demanded it of my hand *whether* stolen by day or stolen by night.

⁴⁰ *This is how* I was: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹ For these twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times. ⁴² If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night."

The Covenant of Mizpah

⁴³ Then Laban replied to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my grandchildren, the flocks are my flocks, and everything that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these daughters of mine or to their children to whom they have given birth? ⁴⁴ So now come, let's make a covenant, you and I, and it shall be a witness between you and me." ⁴⁵ Then Jacob took a stone and set it up *as* a memorial stone. ⁴⁶ Jacob said to his relatives, "Gather stones." So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap.

⁴⁷ Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. ⁴⁸ Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore it was named Galeed, ⁴⁹ and Mizpah, for he said, "May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other. ⁵⁰ If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, *although* no one is with us, see, God is witness between you and me." ⁵¹ Laban also said to Jacob, "Behold this heap and behold the memorial stone which I have set between you and me.

⁵² This heap is a witness, and the memorial stone is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and you will not pass by this heap and this memorial stone to me, for harm. ⁵³ The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. ⁵⁴ Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his relatives to the meal; and they ate the meal and spent the night on

the mountain. ⁵⁵ Then early in the morning Laban got up, and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- 1 What questions were provoked within you?
- 2 Did anything confuse you?
- 3 Did anything move you emotionally?
- 4 Did God instruct you to do something?
- 5 Did you gain any insight into God's character

1. Laban's sons saw that Jacob had schemed to remove from them their possessions and, along with Laban, were aggrieved. Where they justified in holding this position?
2. Jacob knew it was time for him to leave his uncle. God had instructed him to go home to the land promised to Abraham.
3. When God declares I will be with you, you just know it is all going to be well.
4. Jacob makes his preparation to leave. He justifies himself to his relatives. Laban attempts to actually justify causing him financial loss, but Jacob reminds him that God was on his side.
5. Jacob acknowledged it had been God who had made him rich and Laban poor.
6. It was God in a dream who spoke to Jacob and revealed Laban's attempts to rob him.
7. God reminds Jacob who he is.
8. The two sisters, Rachel and Leah, come to terms with the situation regarding leaving and reason in their hearts their leaving is justified.
9. Unannounced Jacob, his wives and livestock, flee without saying goodbye. Was this right?
10. If leaving wasn't enough, Rachel steals the family icons from Laban. Why does she do this?
11. After three days Laban is in pursuit of Jacob and is ready to do him harm, but God visits Laban in a dream and warns him off.
12. Laban accuses Jacob of a great deception. Did he have a valid point?
13. Laban gave the impression to Jacob that he would have liked to of sent them on their way with his blessing. Was this true?
14. Laban reveals his intent in pursuit of Jacob, but it was the warning from God that restrained him.
15. Jacob's willingness to let him search his camp, reveals Jacob has no idea that someone had stolen them. He even consented to put such a person to death.
16. Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel, he would have never of put her life on the line. He clearly did not know what she had done.
17. Laban, having searched the camp, found nothing. Rachel would have made a good poker player as she bluffed her way to freedom.
18. Jacob's anger arose within him and he addresses Laban's impetuous action.
19. Had Jacob of known it was Rachel who had stolen the icons, would he have been so bold?

20. Jacob's frustration towards Laban erupts – twenty years of being abused chronologically comes flowing out of his mouth.
21. Supressed anger is very unhealthy and very unwise, keep a short account.
22. Jacob says I sought to do right by you even though you did me so many wrongs.
23. Jacob calls Laban's bluff and wins this battle.
24. Laban concedes his inevitable fate and to safeguard his future, he makes a covenant with Jacob regarding boundaries, even though he would have rather taken back his possessions.
25. This covenant created a new boundary line and a new border.
26. Laban left somewhat frustrated.