### Genesis

## Chapter 31

1However, Jacob happened to overhear Laban’s sons saying:  
  
 ‘Jacob has taken everything that belongs to our father and all our father’s property… All of his glory!’  
  
2So Jacob realized that Laban [wasn’t happy to see him anymore].  
  
3Then the Lord said to Jacob:  
  
 ‘Now, return to your family and to your father’s land, and I’ll be with you.’  
  
  
4So Jacob sent for LeAh and RachEl, [who were] out in the plains with the flocks, 5and he said to them:  
  
 ‘I know that your father is no longer [happy to see me]. However, the God of my father is still with me. 6For even though I’ve served your father with all my might, 7and he deceived me by changing what he owed me to [just] 10 lambs… God hasn’t allowed him to [wrong me]. 8Because, if he would’ve said:  
  
 ‘The speckled will be your reward...’  
  
 ‘...then all the cattle would give birth to the speckled. And if he would’ve said:  
  
 ‘The white ones will be your reward...’  
  
 ‘...then all the cattle would’ve been born white.  
  
 9‘Therefore, it was God who’s taken all these cattle from your father and given them to me! 10For during the time that the cattle were pregnant with their young, I fell asleep and {Look!} I dreamed that I saw billy goats and rams jumping on the nanny goats and sheep that were all speckled, striped, and spotted with ash-colored spots.  
  
 11‘Then a messenger from God called to me in that dream, shouting:  
  
 ‘Jacob!’  
  
 ‘And I said,  
  
 ‘What is it?’  
  
 12‘And he said:  
  
 [‘Jehovah says:]  
  
 ‘Look up and see the billy goats and rams jumping on the nanny goats and sheep… They are all speckled, striped, and spotted with ash-colored spots. I’ve seen all things that Laban did to you... 13For I’m the God who appeared to you at BethEl where you poured oil out on a pillar to Me and [where you] swore an oath to Me.  
  
 ‘So now, get up and leave this land. Return to the land of your birth, and I’ll be with you!’  
  
14Then RachEl and LeAh asked:  
  
 ‘And what about our inheritances in the house of our father?  
  
 15‘Does he now consider us strangers?  
  
 ‘He sold us and then he spent our money!  
  
 16‘Therefore, all the wealth and glory that God has taken from our father also belongs to us and to our children. So you should do whatever God has told you to do!’  
  
17Well at that, Jacob got up and mounted his women and children on their camels, 18along with all the possessions and provisions he’d obtained in MesoPotamia and all [the servants and animals] that belonged to him, so he could return to his father (IsaAc) in the land of CanaAn, 19as Laban was off shearing his sheep.  
  
But then, RachEl also stole her father’s idols.  
  
20Meanwhile, Jacob didn’t let Laban the Syrian know that he was running away… 21He and all who were his just left, crossing the river and traveling on to Mount GileAd.  
  
22Well, it was three days later that Laban the Syrian was finally told that Jacob was gone... 23So he gathered his brothers and he chased after them, catching up with them after 7 days at Mount GileAd!  
  
24However, God came to Laban the Syrian in his sleep that night and said to him:  
  
 ‘Be very careful not to say anything bad about Jacob.’  
  
  
25So when Laban caught up with Jacob (Jacob had camped on the mountain, and Laban had stationed his brothers all around the mountain), 26he asked Jacob:  
  
 ‘What have you done? Why did you run away secretly, then steal from me and use swords to take my daughters as captives?  
  
 27‘If you had just told me first, I’d have happily sent you away with singing, tambourines, and harps!  
  
 28‘Didn’t you consider me worthy to hug my children and my daughters before you did such a foolish thing?  
  
 29‘And now, even though I have enough power in my hands to harm you, the God of your father spoke to me yesterday and said:  
  
 ‘Be very careful to never say anything bad about Jacob.’  
  
 30‘So go on, because you really wanted to return to the house of your father.  
  
 ‘However, why did you steal my gods?’  
  
31And Jacob replied to Laban:  
  
 ‘[I left secretly] because I was afraid that you’d take your daughters and all my possessions away from me!’  
  
32And he added:  
  
 ‘But whoever you find that has [stolen] your gods won’t [be allowed to] live in the presence of our family. Just look around for anything I might have that’s yours and take it back!’  
  
[Well, Laban searched], but he couldn’t find anything (Jacob didn’t realize that his wife RachEl had stolen [the idols]). 33Laban went in and searched LeAh’s tent, then Jacob’s tent, and then the tent of the two female servants, and he found nothing.  
  
Lastly, he entered RachEl’s tent. 34However, RachEl had hidden the idols among the camel’s packs and she was sitting on them. 35[And when her father asked to check her camel], she told him:  
  
 ‘Don’t be impudent, sir! I can’t get up and stand before you, because it isn’t my way and it isn’t customary for women!’  
  
Well, Laban searched throughout the [camp] and he couldn’t find the idols, 36which made Jacob very angry... So he argued with Laban and asked him:  
  
 ‘What wrong have I done to you and what’s my sin that caused you to chase after me 37and then search all the furnishings in my [tents]?  
  
 ‘What have you found [that] came from your home? Lay it out here between your relatives and mine, and let them decide!  
  
 38‘I’ve been with you for 20 years, and during all that time, your sheep and nanny goats didn’t fail to give birth… And I didn’t eat any of the rams from your herds. 39All that I ever took was the wild animals that I didn’t bring to you!  
  
 ‘I [even paid] for anything that was stolen during the day or night, 40as I was dried out with the heat of the day, [chilled] by frost in the night… And I seldom ever got much sleep!  
  
 41‘During those 20 years that I stayed in your house, I served you for 14 years for your two daughters. [Then I spent the next] 6 years among your sheep… Just to have you fraudulently set my wages as 10 lambs!  
  
 42‘So if it weren’t for the God of my father AbraHam and for the fact that [you’re] afraid of IsaAc’s [God], you’d have even sent me away empty-handed!  
  
 ‘Yet, it was because God saw how I was humiliated and how hard I’ve worked for you, that He [scolded you] last night!’  
  
43Then Laban replied:  
  
 ‘These are my daughters and my sons… Yes, the cattle are mine, and everything that you see belongs to my daughters and me!  
  
 ‘But, what should I do to them today, or to their children?  
  
 44‘Come on, let’s conclude a treaty between you and me that will serve as a witness between us. And although nobody else is here, {Look!} God will serve as the witness between you and me.’  
  
45So then, Jacob found a [large] stone and he erected it as a pillar. 46And Jacob told his family to gather some stones. So they brought stones and made a pile, then they [shared bread] on top of the pile.  
  
And thereafter, Laban said:  
  
 ‘This [pile of stones] will serve as the witnesses between you and me today.’  
  
47So Laban called it ‘The [Stone] Pile of Testimony,’ while Jacob referred to it as ‘The Witness [Stone] Pile.'  
  
48And Laban said to Jacob:  
  
 ‘Look at this pile and pillar that I’ve erected between you and me… This Witness [Stone] Pile and this [Stone] Pile of Testimony. We’ll call them, The [Stone] Pile Witnesses.’  
  
49And thereafter, [Laban] referred to this place as The Watchtower, for he said:  
  
 ‘May God keep watch over you and me, because we’re about to leave each other. 50But if you should humble my daughters by taking other women in addition to them, you’ll see that someone who’s with us is watching… For God is the witness between you and me.’  
  
51Then Laban continued:  
  
 ‘Look! This pile of stones and this pillar are the witnesses 52that I won’t come beyond this pillar to do anything bad to you, and you won’t come [beyond this pillar] to me.  
  
 53‘May the God of AbraHam and the God of NaHor judge between us!’  
  
Then Jacob swore by the fear of his father IsaAc, 54and he offered a sacrifice on the mountain. He called his family together and they ate and drank, then they all went to sleep on the mountain.  
  
55And when Laban got up in the morning, he kissed his daughters and [their] sons and blest them, and then Laban turned around and went back to his home.