

<sup>22</sup> And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. <sup>23</sup> Then he took <sup>w</sup>his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. <sup>24</sup> But God <sup>x</sup>had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you <sup>y</sup>speak to Jacob neither good nor bad." Abraham (Genesis 15), Abimelech (Genesis 20), Jacob (Genesis 28) and Jacob (Genesis 32) make this the 5<sup>th</sup> dream. Incidentally, the 400 years of captivity promised to Abraham leads to dreams which lead to the deliverer Moses in the next book while 400 years of "captivity" after Malachi preceded dreams (Matthew 1) which preceded Jesus' first coming and dreams are promised before His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming (Joel 2; Acts 2).

<sup>25</sup> So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead.

<sup>26</sup> And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and <sup>z</sup>carried away my daughters like captives *taken with the sword*? <sup>27</sup> 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? <sup>28</sup> And you did not allow me <sup>a</sup>to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now <sup>b</sup>you have done foolishly in *so* doing. <sup>29</sup> It is in my power to do you harm, but the <sup>c</sup>God of your father It is interesting that Laban's daddy didn't have the same God, while their great grandfather Terah had heard from the Lord (Genesis 11:31-12:1).<sup>1</sup> Nahor, then, was the breakdown of Laban's spiritual heritage. It didn't have to be simply **your father**. The fact that Laban has idols that Rachel could steal (verse 32) is indicative of a problem already. It should be pointed out that 117 years have passed since **Laban** and his parents sent Jacob's mother to his **father** (20 years of childlessness, plus 77 years of age Jacob was at time of his fleeing from Esau, plus 20 years of working for **Laban**).

spoke to me <sup>d</sup>last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.'  
<sup>30</sup> And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, *but why did you <sup>e</sup>steal my gods?*"

<sup>31</sup> Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was <sup>f</sup>afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.'<sup>32</sup> With whomever you find your gods, <sup>g</sup>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.

<sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> Now Rachel had taken the <sup>4</sup>household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them.

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<sup>w</sup> Gen. 13:8

<sup>x</sup> Gen. 20:3; 31:29; 46:2-4; Job 33:15; Matt. 1:20

<sup>y</sup> Gen. 24:50; 31:7, 29

<sup>z</sup> 1 Sam. 30:2

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 31:55; Ruth 1:9, 14; 1 Kin. 19:20; Acts 20:37

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. 13:13

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 28:13; 31:5, 24, 42, 53

<sup>1</sup>The word "had" found in 12:1 means that God had discussed the matter with Abraham, but the preceding verses in chapter 11 show that Terah made the journey as well.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. 31:24

<sup>e</sup> Gen. 31:19; Josh. 24:2; Judg. 17:5; 18:24

<sup>f</sup> Gen. 26:7; 32:7, 11

<sup>g</sup> Gen. 44:9

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *teraphim*

And Laban <sup>5</sup>searched all about the tent but did not find *them*. <sup>35</sup> And she said to her father, “Let it not displease my lord that I cannot <sup>h</sup>rise before you as is custom, and still should be. for the manner of women *is with me*.” Lady sickness, thus making the saddle unclean? Possible menstrual pain? Both of these are decent ideas. And he searched but did not find the <sup>6</sup>household idols.

<sup>36</sup> Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: “What *is* my <sup>7</sup>trespass? What *is* my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? <sup>37</sup> 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! <sup>38</sup> These twenty years I *have been* with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, an exaggeration? and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. <sup>39</sup> <sup>i</sup>That which was torn *by beasts* I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. <sup>j</sup>You required it from my hand, *whether* stolen by day or stolen by night. <sup>40</sup> There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. <sup>41</sup> Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I <sup>k</sup>served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and <sup>l</sup>you have changed my wages ten times. <sup>42</sup> <sup>m</sup>Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and <sup>n</sup>the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. <sup>o</sup>God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and <sup>p</sup>rebuked *you* last night.”

<sup>43</sup> 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?* <sup>44</sup> Now therefore, come, <sup>q</sup>let us make a <sup>8</sup>covenant, <sup>r</sup>you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.” This is quite a conundrum, having—in his words—lost his flocks and daughters and their maidservants; having chased them all for the last (figuratively speaking) week. His mood has seemingly been changed and he is now ready to be civil.

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<sup>5</sup> Lit. *felt*

<sup>h</sup> Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:32

<sup>6</sup> Heb. *teraphim*

<sup>7</sup> transgression

<sup>i</sup> Ex. 22:10

<sup>j</sup> Ex. 22:10–13

<sup>k</sup> Gen. 29:20, 27–30

<sup>l</sup> Gen. 31:7

<sup>m</sup> Gen. 31:5, 29, 53; Ps. 124:1, 2

<sup>n</sup> Gen. 31:53; Is. 8:13

<sup>o</sup> Gen. 29:32; Ex. 3:7

<sup>p</sup> Gen. 31:24, 29; 1 Chr. 12:17

<sup>q</sup> Gen. 21:27, 32; 26:28

<sup>8</sup> treaty

<sup>r</sup> Josh. 24:27