

Genesis 31.22-55

“Yikes! Your Dad is Coming!!”

Jacob – Now over 100 yrs Old – Facing BIGGEST Crisis of his LIFE!

BEEN Here Before – Jacob LIFETIME of Lying > KNOWN for Bad Endings
 20 yrs Earlier LEFT Home – LIED to Father ISAAC, Conspired with MOTHER
 Lied to BROTHER Esau – STOLE Birthright & Blessing – Wants to Kill Jacob!
 NOW Bad Ending w/ Father-in-Law Laban - Out of Town FLEECING Sheep
 Seizing MOMENT of Opportunity JACOB & Daughters Fleeced him & FLED!

BAD Endings TODAY on Corporate Level –

Your Termination Letter delivered Security Guard with Empty Box
 WAITS at your DESK while you PACK Personal Items in 10 Agonizing Minutes
 WALKS you to FRONT Door & Takes your LANYARD with ENTRY CARD
 SURPRISE! No Time to Hack Corporate Computers or Break Coffee Machine
 Reminded me 10 yrs old Friends & I Boyhood Mischief BACKFIRED in Faces
 Vivid MEMORIES of Getting Caught – PLAN for Harmless Fun Discovered
 Not sure what Jacob said to Wives, in BIG TROUBLE *“Yikes! Your Dad is Coming!!”*

1. Caught – Running from Avenger

vs. 17,21 Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels. He drove away all his livestock, all his property that he had gained... He fled with all that he had and arose and crossed the Euphrates, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

ENDS 2nd Act of Drama in Chapter 31

1st Act: Jacob HEARS Brothers in Law COMPLAIN he has Stolen their HERDS

2nd Act BEGINS – Secret meeting with Wives – Rachel & Leah – Plan to FLEE

Just KNOW will be FINAL Scene: Act 3 – Laban will NOT Allow their Escape!
 JACOB & 4 Mothers...1 MIGHT be Pregnant...12 little kids AT LEAST
 RUNNING from TROUBLE – 10 DAYS! Distance of 300 miles / over 480 k's
 TIRED, AFRAID – Pushing LARGE Herds – Sheep, Goats, Camels

a. Determined

vs. 22,23 When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead....

Papa LABAN - Deceitful Dad - held TIGHT Grip on FAMILY & FORTUNE

At least Several HUNDRED Homeboys Packing HEAT

HONOR Spurned, PRIDE Wounded, Betrayed by FAMILY, Finances Looted
 Along with ANGRY Bros in Law THINK they've been ROBBED TOO!

v. 25 And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead.

Arrive at NIGHT – Camp NEAR the Jacob CARAVAN – Know they're Caught

Word > “pitching tent” – Not Normal Hebrew word for Simple Act

POUNING / THRUSTING Object INTO Something: HOSTILE Night Sound

ANGRY Men – Slamming things Around – Seething Rage wait Morning Sun

b. Dream

v. 24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

God of COVENANT Defends his WAYWARD Sons – Dreams to AVENGERS

Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife...” Genesis 20.2,3

Just like God saved Abraham’s BACON thru Dream, Saves GRANDSON Jacob
So also this 3rd Patriarch must be INGLORIOUSLY Extricated by Merciful God

v. 24 ...“Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

WORDS and DEEDS are Seen by God of Providence and PROTECTION

Laban fears THIS GOD: Sent Abe’s Servant 100 yrs before for Sister Rebekah

c. Delusion

LABAN & Security Guards ARRIVE – Dramatic Moment of High Suspense...

Laban Now over 150 yrs old - Offended BEDOUIN Chief > Early SENILITY?

v. 26 Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword?

Begins with TONE of WOUNDED DIGNITY! “What have you done...!!”

CAPTIVES? – LABAN been Prison Warden for Jacob’s 20 yr Captivity!

ONLY NOW has their Family found FREEDOM FROM Lying Laban

NOTICE Daughters NOT Run & Embrace him, “Daddy, you SAVED Us!!”

v. 27 Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre?

NEWS CAMERAS were there RECORD the SNICKERS and Shocked Looks

LABAN? a Party for Them! Lives in State Legalized Marijuana: Been Smokin!

v. 28 And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly.

Party Promise NOT Impressive – Now tries NAME CALLING --- You FOOL!

More Laban speaks MORE FOOLISH he IS!

v. 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 say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’

Another TACTIC – Plays BULLY!! “I can BEAT You Up you Know!!”

Well...I could but YOUR GOD told me I Better Not Try!

v. 30 And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house...

FINALLY – Forced to ADMIT Jacob had GOOD Reason to Leave > See Family

We all FEEL that Here – Imagine 20 yrs Passing with NO COMMUNICATION!

2. Confrontation – Rising into Action

JACOB is Going to make his WIVES PROUD of him – Stands Up to their Dad

FIRST Jacob going to make his FAVORITE Wife scarred to DEATH!

a. deities

v. 19 Rachel stole her father's household gods – Little Detail of their Departure

Jacob is NOT TOLD of her THEFT / We're NOT Told WHY she TOOK them

Some Comm: CRITICAL – At Heart Beautiful Rachel IDOLATRESS, maybe??

Some: PREVENT Laban from CONSULTING them to FIND their Flight PLAN



Learned MUCH about Historical/Cultural Background of Genesis from NUZI
 Hurrian administrative center near Hurrian capital at Kirkuk in northern Iraq
 Late 1920's found 5,000+ family & administrative archives span 6 generations
 library of clay tablets dating from 1600 to 1350 BC
 shed light on many of the customs that are documented in the Scriptures

NUZI tablets: Household gods bestow RIGHTS of INHERITANCE, Validate Jacob
 Or, maybe Rachel wants PLAY it SAFE – Like Athenians Paul met, Many gods!
 BETTER Protection to have GOD of Jacob & god of LABAN for Long Journey

Served in Hawaii historic Congregational church, Prestigious in Small Town
 Excited Formal Letter from Mayor, Gov. to come PRAY at Official Event!

Great Moment for Jesus in Public Square! Mormon Elder, RC Priest,
 Buddhist Priest, and Ancient Hawaiian Religious Chanter!

Cover ALL Bases – EACH of Us call on our god – Maybe Building be SAFE!

WHATEVER these gods CAN or Cannot DO – Laban wants them BACK!

v. 30 “...why did you steal my gods?”

Flying BLIND: No Protection, Direction, Security - like lost SMART PHONE!

b. Deception

vs. 31,32 Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it.” Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

WEB of Lies that held Jacob’s Family together almost Brought Death to Rachel!

Jacob uses MASCULINE Tense, thinking one of his MEN took the gods

Character Weakness of HOLY FAMILY – telling too many LIES

Jacob & Mother Rebekah steal blessing from ISAAC with Lies

Rebekah lies to get ISAAC to Send JACOB out with SECURE BLESSING

God of Jacob PROTECTED Favorite Wife of Patriarch – with More Lies!

SUSPENSE builds LABAN Searches Tents: Leah, Zilpah, Bilhah, now Rachel...

Rachel lies with STRAIGHT Face and FLUSTERED Father fails to find PHONE

v. 35 She said to her father, “Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me.” So he searched but did not find the household gods.

“A woman would have simply checked, a man would not dream of trying” M. Bal

c. Defense – Jacob’s PATIENCE is EXHAUSTED

vs. 36.37 Then Jacob became angry and berated Laban. Jacob said to Laban, “What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? 37For you have felt through all my goods; what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two.

Makes SPEECH he’s been WAITING 20 yrs to Say....

Like SAMUEL's Farewell Defense before Israel / PAUL to Ephesian ELDERS
SHAMES Laban before his SONS & Soldiers – HE is the TRUE FOOL

“Here twenty years of angry frustration burst out in a diatribe of ferocious
intensity.”
G. Wenham

vs. 38-42 These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. What was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you. I bore the loss of it myself. From my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. There I was: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. 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 have changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.”

Let Relatives serve as JUDGE & JURY – CONFIRM Innocence of JACOB

Jacob does NOT have his gods (so he thought) OR his Sheep, PROPERTY

The only thing the both agree on is that Jacob's God has protected and prospered him.
John Walton

Jacob still a Spiritual WORK in Progress – God is Faithfully drawing him...

GRANDPA'S God and PAPA'S God is going to More & More HIS God

v. 43 Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine...

Then OLD MAN Laban has SENIOR MOMENT – Memory Lapse

REVISION of History, FORGOT Jacob WORKED for all he was Taking HOME

... But what can I do this day for these my daughters or for their children whom they have borne? > **REALIZES if he CLAIMS them he Pays their Keep!**

Laban is the classic example of sin's irrationality. The deluded scoundrel, who has repeatedly cheated Jacob, unabashedly complains that Jacob has wronged him! He is blind to significance of the dream that vindicates Jacob and condemns him. He is deaf to the silence of his daughters, which shouts out against his delusion...Laban is a man without excuse...He is without excuse for hardening his heart against God out of love for himself. Bruce Waltke

3. Covenant – Revelation of the Almighty

a. Truce

LABAN is Clearly BEATEN at his own GAME of TREACHERY, Deceit
 Came 300 miles only to be EMBARRASSED by FOLLY of his PLAN
 v. 44 Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I. And let it be a witness between you and me.”

COVENANT – LEGAL Contract of Ancient NEAR EAST

Laban MET his Match – Wants to go HOME with some SECURITY

JACOB is Younger, Smarter, Richer, and More Powerful – Now Laban Scarred!

COVENANT between EQUALS – DEFENSE Treaty

TWO: Witnesses, piles of Stones, Names, Meals, Promises, gods

Covenant SEALED w/ CUSTOMARY RITUAL Meals / Eat Sacrificed Animals

v. 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

Jacob does not PLAY POLITICALLY Correct game of PLURALISM

OLD LABAN can believe in gods of his Grandpa, Jacob swears to LIVING God

JACOB only takes OATH for ONE God – Abe & Fear of ISAAC

Perhaps this God was not yet fully the God of Jacob. Jacob's experience was not yet complete. But he at least recognized him as the God who has intervened in history in a real way. Iain Duguid

One VS. Shows how BADLY we Understand & Interpret Word of God!

COVENANT between Laban & Jacob > Based on SUSPICION of E/Other

Designed to PROTECT E/Other from E/Other's Hostility or Ill Treatment

2 STONE Markers / 2 LANGUAGES / 2 G/gods - Binding Covenant RATIFIED

v. 49 Laban said, "The LORD watch between you and me, when we are out of one another's sight"

v. 49 And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. King James Version

Mizpah "Benediction"?? – Church Services or Weddings?? Esp in KJV

Here in Genesis they express suspicion. Laban does not trust Jacob, and Jacob does not trust Laban. They both regret that they will have no means to keep an eye on one another and prevent mischief-making, so they commend one another to the watchful eye of deity. John Walton

PITY CHURCH or MARRIED Couple that Needs such Restraint from Hostility!

b. Triumph – Why is this in the BIBLE??

Conflict Resolution? Honesty the Best Policy? Need for Compromise? Mercy?

David v. Goliath / Elijah v. Baal on Mt. Carmel / Jesus wilderness Temptation

LABAN becomes Laughingstock of WHOLE FAMILY & ARMED MEN

HOUSEHOLD gods – Security, Guidance, Status STOLEN, Not Protect Selves!

Isaiah 46.1-10

Genesis 50.20

Colossians 2.13-15

2 Peter 3.18

v. 3

v. 24

Genesis 31.²² When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, ²³he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, “Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.” ²⁵And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁶And Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? ²⁷Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? ²⁸And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. ²⁹It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’ ³⁰And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?” ³¹Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³²Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it.” Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. ³³So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two female servants, but he did not find them. And he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's. ³⁴Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle and sat on them. Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them. ³⁵And she said to her father, “Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the way of women is upon me.” So he searched but did not find the household gods. ³⁶Then Jacob became angry and berated Laban. Jacob said to Laban, “What is my offense? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? ³⁷For you have felt through all my goods; what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. ³⁸These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. ³⁹What was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you. I bore the loss of it myself. From my

hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. ⁴⁰There I was: by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹These 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 have changed my wages ten times. ⁴²If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.” ⁴³Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day for these my daughters or for their children whom they have borne? ⁴⁴Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I. And let it be a witness between you and me.” ⁴⁵So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶And Jacob said to his kinsmen, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. ⁴⁷Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. ⁴⁸Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” Therefore he named it Galeed, ⁴⁹and Mizpah, for he said, “The LORD watch between you and me, when we are out of one another's sight. ⁵⁰If you oppress my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.” ⁵¹Then Laban said to Jacob, “See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. ⁵²This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, to do harm. ⁵³The 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, ⁵⁴and Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his kinsmen to eat bread. They ate bread and spent the night in the hill country. ⁵⁵Early in the morning Laban arose and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned home.