

## Genesis 31:22-55 **Covenant at Mizpah**

<sup>22</sup> And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. <sup>23</sup> Then he took 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 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."

<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 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 to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. <sup>29</sup> 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.' <sup>30</sup> "And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" <sup>31</sup> Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' <sup>32</sup> "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.

<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 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. <sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> 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? <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, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. <sup>39</sup> 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. <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 served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. <sup>42</sup> 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."

<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, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." <sup>45</sup> So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. <sup>46</sup> Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. <sup>47</sup> Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. <sup>48</sup> And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, <sup>49</sup> also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and

me when we are absent one from another. <sup>50</sup> 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!"

<sup>51</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. <sup>52</sup> 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. <sup>53</sup> 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. <sup>54</sup> 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. <sup>55</sup> And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place. NKJV

#### Facts Revealed:

- ✧ Laban learned that Jacob had left three days after Jacob had gone.
- ✧ Laban took his brethren and went in pursuit of Jacob and overtook him on the seventh day in the mountains of Gilead.
  - Gilead is the area east of the Jordan that Moses gave to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and to half of the tribe of Manasseh which they had taken from Og the king of Bashan and Sihon the king of the Amorites. [Numbers 32:33]
- ✧ Elohiym (God) had spoken to Laban the Syrian in a dream the sixth night warning him not to say anything good or bad to Jacob.
  - So we realize that God can and will speak even to idolaters when He wants to and to protect His chosen people.
- ✧ Laban asked Jacob why he had left secretly, and told him he had the power to do harm since he had his brethren with him, but that Elohey (God of) Jacob's father had warned him the night before not to say anything to Jacob either good or bad.
- ✧ Laban acknowledged Jacob had a desire to return to his father's house but asked why Jacob had stolen his gods. Indicating by confession that Laban knew he was an idolater even though he knew about the God of Abraham and Isaac.
- ✧ Laban, many years before, had already acknowledged the move of God as Abraham's servant told of how he met Rebekah Laban's sister and Laban saw that it was from The Lord. [Genesis 24:50] Yet like many today he chose not to acknowledge God but he made images for himself and called them gods. [Romans 1:21-23]
- ✧ This reveals human nature and the desire in the heart of mankind to disregard the evidences that speak so clearly of God and in their humanistic thinking they replace the revealed knowledge of God with something men have dreamed up, like the belief in evolution, The belief in humanism (*thinking mankind is the ultimate end of the evolutionary process*), belief in atheism, or any other cultic or occult belief that tends to replace the acknowledgment of God.
- ✧ Jacob's answer indicates that he deemed Laban as untrustworthy since Laban had told Jacob to name his price and was excited by Jacob's choice, but as he saw Jacob being blessed by the choice Laban had changed the terms of the agreement ten times. This being the case, Jacob could also expect Laban to renege on his daughters and their children as well.
- ✧ Jacob, not knowing that Rachel had stolen Laban's idols, and confident of his own innocence, said that whoever was found with Laban's idols would die, so he offered to let Laban search all the things he had with him publicly in front of all his brethren to identify anything that belonged to Laban and to prove that he was innocent of any wrong doing.

- ✧ Rachel had hidden the idols in the camel's saddle and sat on them, indicating that the images were about the size of the images many Catholic believers have in their homes and in their cars believing that the images offer protection, health, prosperity, and many other things pointing to gratify some aspect of their personal desires and self image.
- ✧ In righteous indignation Jacob challenged Laban to produce any evidence he had found in his search through Jacob's things and allow the witnesses to judge between them.
- ✧ Then Jacob recounted the faithfulness of his service to Laban as agreed.
- ✧ Here we learn that:
  - Jacob had served Laban 20 years, 14 years for Leah and Rachel, six years for the herds and flocks.
  - Laban had changed the agreement ten times is confirmed.
  - Jacob was well aware that God had protected him through the entire process and it was only because God intervened that Laban had not taken everything from him, and that was the reason God had rebuked Laban in the dream the night before.
- ✧ Jacob's firstborn came after he had served Laban seven years, so the oldest of his children would be about 13 years old, and the youngest very young.
- ✧ Laban claimed that everything Jacob had belonged to Laban proving the validity of Jacob's concern and fear.
- ✧ Acknowledging that he could do nothing about it Laban suggested a covenant between them to be a witness between them to which Jacob agreed and set up a pillar and then they made a great heap of stones which Laban called Jegar Sahadutha but Jacob called it Galeed.
- ✧ It was also called Mizpah because Laban said, "May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from another, if you afflict my daughters, if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, see, Elohiym is witness between you and me. Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 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. The God of Abraham, of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us."
- ✧ So the name **Mizpah** means: God is witness that you don't do my daughters wrong and that neither of us will not pass this point to harm the other.
  - I wish the Syrians today would honor this covenant made by one of their fathers and would refrain from seeking ways to destroy Israel the descendants of Jacob.
- ✧ Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and they ate the banquet and spent the night.
- ✧ Next morning Laban kissed his daughters and their children, blessed them and departed to return home.