

SALT Church
Genesis 31
“The God of My Father”
July 29, 2026
“In the Beginning”

Recap:

31 Now Jacob heard the words of Laban’s sons, saying, “Jacob has taken away all that was our father’s, and from what was our father’s he has acquired all this wealth.”² And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before.³ Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.”

- The implication here is that Jacob was distressed over what was going to happen.
 - It sounds like the sons of Laban were getting ready to take Jacobs wealth because they believed that all of his wealth had come from Laban.
 - It also sounds like Jacob has been talking to God about this issue and the Lord says that it is time to go.
 - The phrase “and I will be with you” is very important for Jacob will need The Lords protection.

4 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock,⁵ and said to them, “I see your father’s countenance, that

it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me.

- The title of this chapter is “The God of My Father”
 - This is what our focus should be on in this and all chapters of the Bible.
 - What is God doing in the life of those that He loves and those that do not belong to Him?

Jacob pleads his case to his wives:

⁶And you know that with all my might I have served your father. ⁷Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me.

- In our western culture we cannot imagine working for anyone, especially our father-in-law for 20 years with 10 different wage adjustments.
 - From the tone of this conversation the wage adjustment do not sound favorable.
 - But God... what a wonderful phrase!

⁸If he said thus: ‘The speckled shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore speckled.

- **That’s God!**

And if he said thus: ‘The streaked shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked.

- **That’s God also!**

⁹So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.

¹⁰ “And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. ¹¹ Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, ‘Jacob.’ And I said, ‘Here I am.’ ¹² And He said, ‘Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. ¹³ I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.’ ”

- After 20 years and 11 children it was finally time to go home.
- Jacob had learned many lessons during those 20 years
- Now, we hear the fruit of this very difficult experience, “God is the one had been at work for Jacobs good.” (Romans 8:28)

¹⁴ Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, “Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? ¹⁵ Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. ¹⁶ For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children’s; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it.”

- Sounds like Jacob is not the only one that has learned a thing or two.
- It is shocking how these two women could finally agree on something.
 - It is important to see that their faith in the Lord had grown as well but as you will see they are far from perfect.

17 Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels.

- Camels are symbols of wealth and Jacob who left with little is returning home with wealth.
 - Keep in mind that everything at home also belongs to him.

18 And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

- It is difficult for us to imagine not seeing our parents for 20 years
- It is even more difficult imagining 20 years without a letter or some form of communication.
 - Notice how God used the tension to move Jacob out of his homeland and now He is using tension to move Jacob back.

19 Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep,

- The fact that Laban had gone to shear his sheep is an important fact.
 - Apparently this is something that was done every spring and it is recorded in historical documents that hundreds of men would meet and shear the sheep and sale the wool at the market.
 - This event would take several days depending on the size of your flock and several days in travel.
 - So, with Laban off to shear his sheep the coast would be clear to get out of town.

and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's.

- Why would Rachel do this?
 - She clearly believes in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so what in the world is going on?
 - Historic records tell us that it was common for people in the region of Mesopotamia to have “house hold gods”
 - They would seek guidance and blessing from these tiny human-like figures.
 - What would Rachel want with these tiny figures?
 - More on this in a moment

²⁰ And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee.

- There is a play on words here,
 - Jacob and Rachel are stealing
 - They are two peas of the same pod.

²¹ So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

- We must understand that this is a large group of people and animals.
 - They will need the three-day head start but even with three days between them, Laban will catch up to them.

²² And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. ²³ Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for

seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead.

- It took Laban seven days to pack up and catch with Jacob and his family of 16.

²⁴ 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.”

- I love the “But God...” phrases in the Bible.

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

²⁶ 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? ²⁷ 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? ²⁸ And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. ²⁹ 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.’

³⁰ And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?”

³¹ Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.’ ³² 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.

³³ 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. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.

³⁶ 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? ³⁷ 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! ³⁸ 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. ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night,

and my sleep departed from my eyes. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴² 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.”

Laban’s Covenant with Jacob

⁴³ 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? ⁴⁴ Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.”

⁴⁵ So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶ Then Jacob said to his brethren, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. ⁴⁷ Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. ⁴⁸ And Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me this day.” Therefore its name was called Galeed, ⁴⁹ also Mizpah, because he said, “May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. ⁵⁰ 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!”

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