

— Genesis 31.17-55 —  
Genesis Series 78  
**Jacob Flees, Laban Pursues**

Gen 31 <sup>17</sup> Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. <sup>20</sup> And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. <sup>21</sup> So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead. <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.

► Our text is an example of one of the main patterns in

Scripture — the \_\_\_\_\_ pattern:

– God's people go to a foreign \_\_\_\_\_, which initially is a means of \_\_\_\_\_.

– It turns into a land of affliction due to an \_\_\_\_\_ ruler.

– God's people's own \_\_\_\_\_ are also exposed.

– God in mercy \_\_\_\_\_ his people.

– The evil ruler \_\_\_\_\_ God's people, resulting in a final \_\_\_\_\_, where God defeats him.

► When Laban overtakes Jacob, God has already intervened, warning Laban in a \_\_\_\_\_.

<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.

► Laban cannot resist fallen man's impulse to \_\_\_\_\_ himself and \_\_\_\_\_ the righteous.

<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?"

► Jacob answers truthfully and with openheartedness that Laban does not \_\_\_\_\_. Jacob also responds openhandedly to Laban's charge of the \_\_\_\_\_ of his 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.

Prov 26 <sup>4</sup> Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him. <sup>5</sup> Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Mt 10 <sup>16</sup> "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." (ESV)

► So Laban searches for his gods. The whole time, Rachel is \_\_\_\_\_ on 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.

– When your gods need you to deliver them, that's a good sign your gods are \_\_\_\_\_.

– All of this is a \_\_\_\_\_ call to Laban, but he still doesn't get it. Such is the power of \_\_\_\_\_.

Lk 16 <sup>30</sup> “[I]f one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.”

<sup>31</sup> But he said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.”

2Tm 2 <sup>25</sup> if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, <sup>26</sup> and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

► Now Jacob tells Laban the truth he \_\_\_\_\_ to hear and \_\_\_\_\_ to hear, and we learn for the first time details about Jacob's \_\_\_\_\_ years of service to Laban.

<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.”

► Laban answers with more self-righteous \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ innuendos.

<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.”

► Laban gives us a masterclass in the underhanded \_\_\_\_\_ of unbelieving rhetoric. What does Laban say is the reason for the covenant, and what is the *real* reason for the covenant?

<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!”

► Jacob is not a \_\_\_\_\_ put-\_\_\_\_\_ like Laban, so he agrees to the covenant in spite Laban's self-righteous posturing.

<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.

► God always effects final deliverance from Pharaoh, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of that deliverance differs in the providence of God.