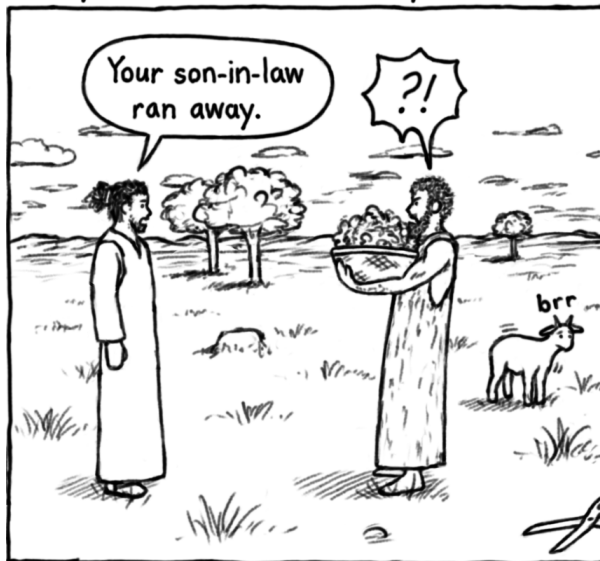
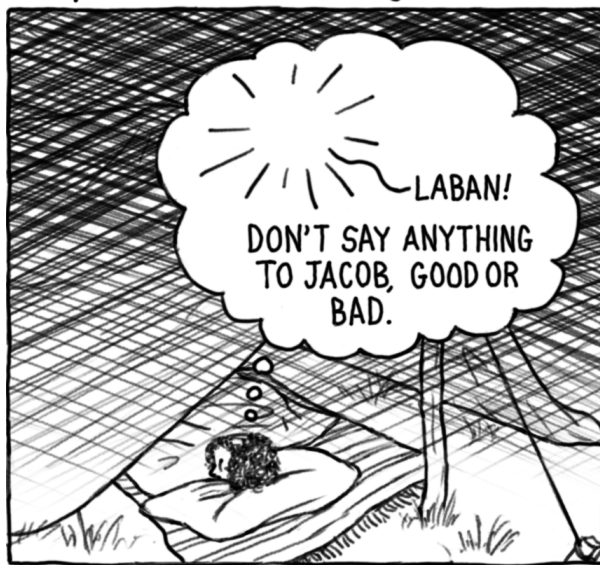


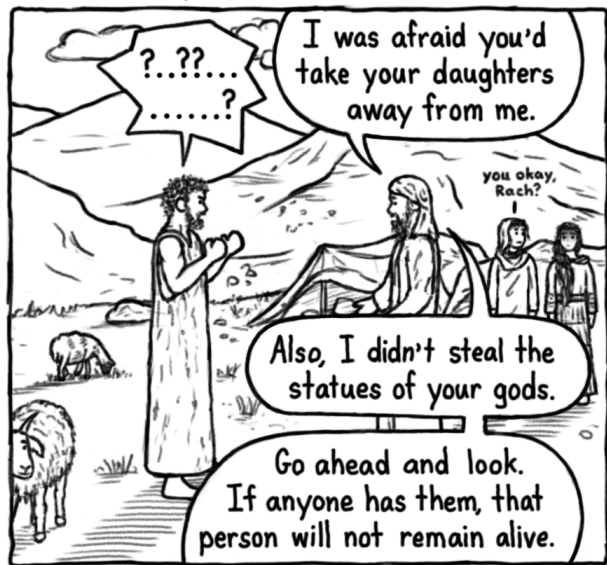
3 days after Jacob runs away...



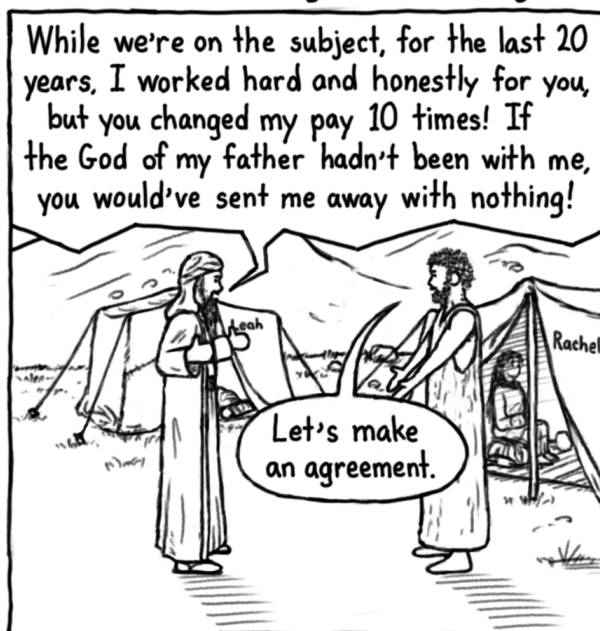
6 days later, Laban is closing in on Jacob...



The next day...



Laban searches through Jacob's things, but finds nothing...



Lesson 5

James 3:16

Are you jealous? Are you concerned only about getting ahead? Then your life will be a mess. You will be doing all kinds of evil things.

Laban Chases Jacob

Genesis 31:22–55

²²On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had run away. ²³He took his relatives with him and went after Jacob. Seven days later he caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴Then God came to Laban, the Aramean, in a dream at night. He said to him, “Be careful. Do not say anything to Jacob, whether it is good or bad.”

²⁵Jacob had set up his tent in the hill country of Gilead. That’s where Laban caught up with him. Laban and his relatives camped there too. ²⁶Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You have tricked me. You have taken my daughters away like prisoners of war. ²⁷Why did you run away in secret and trick me? Why didn’t you tell me? Then I could have sent you away happily. We could have sung to the music of tambourines and harps. ²⁸You didn’t even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You have done a foolish thing. ²⁹I have the power to harm you. But last night the God of your father spoke to me. He said, ‘Be careful. Do not say anything to Jacob, whether it is good or bad.’ ³⁰Now you have run away. You longed to go back to your father’s home. But why did you have to steal the statues of my gods?”

³¹Jacob answered Laban, “I was afraid. I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force. ³²But if you find anyone who has the statues of your gods, that person will not remain alive. While our relatives are watching, look for yourself. See if there’s anything of yours here with me. If you find anything belonging to you, take it.” But Jacob didn’t know that Rachel had stolen the statues.

³³So Laban went into Jacob’s tent and Leah’s tent. He went into the tent of their two female servants. But he didn’t find anything. After he came out of Leah’s tent, he entered Rachel’s tent. ³⁴Rachel was the one who had taken the statues of Laban’s family gods. She had put them inside her camel’s saddle. She was sitting on them. Laban searched the whole tent. But he didn’t find anything.

³⁵Rachel said to her father, “I’m sorry, sir. I can’t get up for you right now. But don’t be angry with me. I’m having my monthly period.” So he searched everywhere but couldn’t find the statues of his gods.

³⁶Jacob was very angry with Laban. “What is my crime?” he asked. “What have I done to you that you hunt me down like this? ³⁷You have searched through all my things. What have you found that belongs to your family? Put it here in front of your relatives and mine. Let them decide between the two of us.

³⁸“I’ve been with you for 20 years now. The little ones of your sheep and goats were not dead when they were born. I haven’t eaten rams from your flocks. ³⁹I didn’t bring you animals torn apart by wild beasts. I made up for the loss myself. Also, you made me pay for anything stolen by day or night. ⁴⁰And what was

my life like? The heat burned me in the daytime. And it was so cold at night that I froze. I couldn't sleep.

⁴¹That's what it was like for the 20 years I was living with you. I worked for 14 years to marry your two daughters. I worked for six years to get my share of your flocks. You changed my pay ten times. ⁴²But the God of my father was with me. He is the God of Abraham and the God Isaac worshipped. If He hadn't been with me, you would surely have sent me away without anything to show for all my work. But God has seen my hard times. He has seen all the work my hands have done. So last night He warned you."

⁴³Laban answered Jacob, "The women are my daughters. The children are my children. The flocks are my flocks. Everything you see is mine. But what can I do today about these daughters of mine? What can I do about the children they've had? ⁴⁴Come now. Let's make a formal agreement, you and I. Let it be a witness between us."

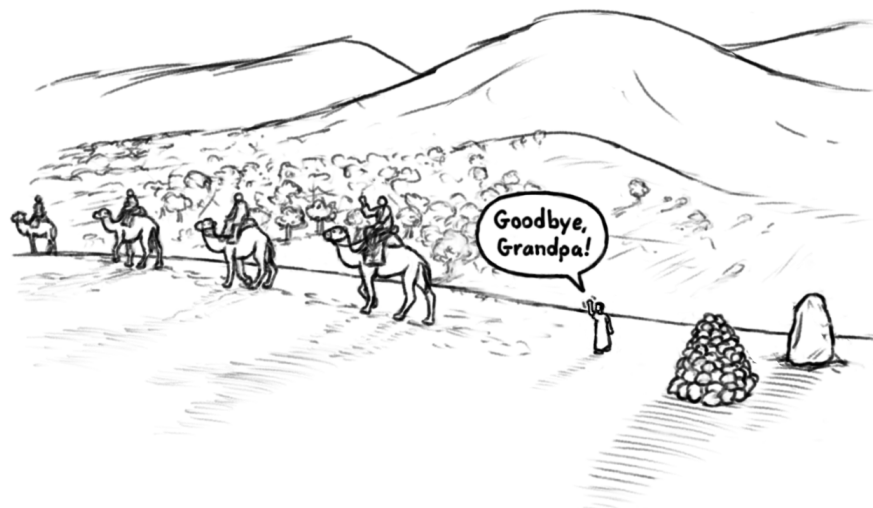
⁴⁵So Jacob set up a stone as a way to remember. ⁴⁶He said to his relatives, "Get some stones." So they took stones and put them in a pile. And they ate there by it. ⁴⁷Laban named the pile of stones Jegar Sahadutha. Jacob named it Galeed.

⁴⁸Laban said, "This pile of stones is a witness between you and me today." That's why it was named Galeed. ⁴⁹It was also called Mizpah. That's because Laban said, "May the Lord keep watch between you and me when we are away from each other. ⁵⁰Don't treat my daughters badly. Don't get married to any women besides my daughters. There isn't anyone here to see what we're doing. But remember that God is a witness between you and me."

⁵¹Laban also said to Jacob, "Here is this pile of stones. And here is this stone I've set up. I've set them up between you and me. ⁵²This pile is a witness. And this stone is a witness. They are witnesses that I won't go past this pile to harm you. And they are witnesses that you won't go past this pile and this stone to harm me. ⁵³The God of Abraham and Nahor is also the God of their father. May their God decide which of us is right."

So Jacob made a promise using the name of the God his father Isaac worshipped. ⁵⁴He offered a sacrifice there in the hill country. And he invited his relatives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent the night there.

⁵⁵Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters. He gave them his blessing. Then he left and returned home.



Questions

- 1 What did Laban do when he was told Jacob had run away? Laban took his _____ with him and went _____ Jacob. (Gen. 31:23)
- 2 How many days did it take Laban to catch up with Jacob in the hill country of Gilead? It took Laban _____ days to catch up with Jacob. (Gen. 31:23)
- 3 How did God speak to Laban one night? God spoke to Laban in a _____. (Gen. 31:24)
- 4 What did God say to Laban in the dream? God told Laban to be _____ and not say _____ to Jacob, whether it was good or bad. (Gen. 31:24)
- 5 How many questions did Laban ask Jacob before Jacob could answer? Before Jacob could respond, Laban asked Jacob _____ questions. (Gen. 31:26–30)



There goes Laban not saying anything!



Think about how Laban had treated Jacob unfairly for twenty years.

- 6 Do you think Laban was telling the truth when he said that if Jacob had told Laban he was leaving, Laban would have sent him away happily, and they would have sung to the music of tambourines and harps together? (Yes/No) _____. (Gen. 31:27)



Sometimes, like Laban, the person who has done wrong will turn the story around, making himself or herself look the victim and the other person look bad. However, God knows the truth.

- 7 Did Laban notice the statues of his gods missing? (Yes/No) _____. (Gen. 31:30)
- 8 What was Jacob's response to Laban as to why Jacob had run away in secret? Jacob said that he had been _____, because he had thought Laban would take his _____ away from Jacob by _____. (Gen. 31:31)
- 9 What did Jacob say would happen to the person who had the statues of Laban's gods? Jacob told Laban that the person who had the statues would _____ remain _____. (Gen. 31:32)



It wasn't long after this that Rachel died giving birth to her second child, Benjamin.

- 10 Did Jacob know who stole the statues? (Yes/No) _____. (Gen. 31:32)
- 11 What was the order of the tents Laban searched? Laban searched first _____ tent, then _____ tent, then the tent of Leah's and Rachel's two female _____, and lastly _____ tent. (Gen. 31:33)



Rachel, the one Laban expected the least to have stolen his statues, was the one who actually did.

- 12 Where did Rachel hide the statues of Laban's family gods? Rachel put them inside her camel's _____ and **S**_____ (rhymes with "hat") on them. (Gen. 31:34)
- 13 What was the excuse Rachel gave her father as to why she couldn't get up from sitting on her camel's saddle? Rachel told her father she was having her monthly _____. (Gen. 31:35)
- 14 What was Jacob's response when Laban found nothing? Jacob was very _____. (Gen. 31:36)
- 15 What was Jacob's life like since tricking his father and stealing his brother's blessing? For _____ years the heat _____ Jacob in the daytime, and the cold at night _____ him so he couldn't _____. For _____ of those years, Jacob had to _____ to marry Laban's two daughters, and for the _____ remaining years, Jacob had to _____ to get his share of the flocks. During that time, Laban changed Jacob's pay _____ times. (Gen. 31:40-41)
- 16 Even though Jacob's life was very hard, who was still with him? _____ was still with Jacob. (Gen. 31:42)
- 17 What did Laban ask Jacob to do? Laban asked Jacob to make a formal _____ between the two of them. (Gen. 31:44)
- 18 What did Jacob do as a way to remember the formal agreement between him and Laban? Jacob set up a _____ as a way to remember. (Gen. 31:45)
- 19 Who else brought stones? Jacob's _____ also brought stones. (Gen. 31:46)
- 20 What did all those stones make? Those stones made a _____. (Gen. 31:46)
- 21 What did everyone do afterward? Everyone _____ by the pile of stones. (Gen. 31:46)
- 22 What did Laban ask the Lord to do when Laban and Jacob were away from each other? Laban asked the Lord to keep _____ between Laban and Jacob when they were away from each other. (Gen. 31:48)
- 23 What did Laban ask Jacob not to do? Laban asked Jacob not to treat Laban's daughters _____ or get _____ to any women besides Laban's daughters. (Gen. 31:50)

- 24 After saying these things, what did Laban set up between him and Jacob? Laban set up between him and Jacob the pile of _____ and the stone. (Gen. 31:51)



Although it sounds like Laban is confused about whether it was him or Jacob who set up the stone, what Laban probably meant by “set up” is that, before making his formal agreement, Laban had moved and now stood so that the stone Jacob had set up and the pile of stones Jacob’s relatives had made were positioned between him and Jacob.

- 25 What did the pile of stones and the stone mean? The pile of stones was a _____ and the stone was a _____. They were witnesses that Laban wouldn’t go _____ the pile of stones to harm Jacob, and Jacob wouldn’t go _____ the pile of stones and the stone to harm Laban. (Gen. 31:52)
- 26 Who did Laban say should decide which person, Jacob or Laban, was right? Laban said that the _____ whom Abraham, Nahor, and Abraham and Nahor’s father worshipped should decide. (Gen. 31:53)



Nahor was Abraham’s brother and also Laban’s grandfather.

- 27 When Jacob made his promise, what name did he use? Jacob used the name of the _____ his father, Isaac, worshipped. (Gen. 31:53)
- 28 When did Laban leave to go back home? Laban spent the night there and left _____ the next _____. (Gen. 31:55)



Laban must have left very lonely. Jealousy destroys relationships.

How did the Holy Spirit speak to you this week as you studied these Bible verses? In other words, what did you learn this week from reading God’s Word?
