

When Laban came to Jacob he criticized J and said, Why have you stolen my gods? He demanded he give them back. J was very indignant. He said, I haven't taken your gods! J said in v. 32, With whomsoever thou findest thy gods let him ~~be~~ not live. Jacob was so sure he did not have them. He said, you just kill anybody in whose possession you find these household gods. Jacob permitted ~~XXXXXX~~ Laban to hunt all thro his stuff to see if he had those household gods. After he had hunted everywhere he came into the tents of the different ones, and in v. 34 he came into Rachel's . . . and he searched but found not the images. Then Jacob was very angry . . . Laban never suspected Rachel was sitting on them. They weren't very big then, were they? If she could sit on them and hide them so well that he would not suspect she had them. During the Middle Ages there were some who raised the question, Why did Laban go to all this expense to try to get back those household gods? Some said, They must have been made of gold, very valuable. Well, the amt. of gold you could sit on and hide that way would not pay the cost of Laban's expedition. That is not the explanation. In David's time people must have wondered, Why did he go to all this difficulty to try to get back those gods? Why was Jacob so disgusted Laban would accuse him of stealing them? What was the reason? People didn't know. If this story had been written as the critics said, in the time of David or later, it would stand to reason that the story would either tell us why the household gods were so important, or else it would not have told the story at all, because it was a mystery why it would be. It remained a mystery 1000 yrs. to the time of Christ, and it remained a mystery up until 1928.

In 1928 there was excavated in N. Mesopotamia, in a region where Laban lived, there were excavated the family records of a number of families who lived up there in that area. In those records -- it's not a history someone wrote about the family, it's a deed to their property, their wills, that sort of thing. In them we learn a great deal about the customs of that time. We find from that that at that time, in that area, if a person wanted to have his property not go to his son, or if he had no son, he wanted it to go to a son in law, he would give that son in law his household gods to take charge of, so that after a man's death if a son-in-law came to the court and said, See these household gods, my father in law gave them to me to take care of that showed that he left all his property to me. Laban had already lost a great part of his property to J through his earning it from him, now he wanted his son to get what was left. That was why Rachel stole them, we can be sure of that. But we're glad J did not know anything about it. He was not a party to it. He was indignant. If you want to read something that is ironical read this last part of ch. 31 where J lashed out at L for accusing him for being so low down as to ~~steal~~ steal those idols and told him what he thought of him! Here it was proven that it was all a lie. It is very interesting. I think L still had his doubts about it, for we read they each put up a pillar there, & when they put this pillar up L said, We're going to call this a witness between me and thee this day. The Lord watch between me and thee while we are absent from one another that you don't cross over this line and come up here to steal that property from my son if you have got those household gods hidden away somewhere.