

These were wills. They were records. Particularly records of families. Not history. But the things you would collect: bills of sale, that sort of thing. I once went through a few hundred of these, listing the various proper names in them. You might say I made a telephone directory of this ancient town. It wasn't really a telephone directory because they didn't have telephones. But that was the thesis I wrote for my Ph.D.-- the study of this town from about 1400 B.C. in ancient Mesopotamia.

There in those tablets there were found some which proved that at that time the possession by a son-in-law of the household gods of his father-in-law would be taken after the father-in-law's death by any court as proof that that son-in-law had been designated as heir to of the man's property. So this passage in Genesis, if written in the time of the later Israelite kingdom, would have meant absolutely nothing to people! They were certainly given some explanation back in those days . . . but there is no explanation because in the time of Moses everybody knew exactly what it meant. And Laban had lost so much of his property which Jacob had earned and was taking away, he didn't want the rest of his property taken by Jacob going back after his death and going to the court and saying, See here, I have the household gods. That is the proof that Laban made me his heir instead of his sons.

Well, we're glad Jacob never actually did that. When Jacob thought that Laban would accuse him of such a thing, we read here in this chapter some pretty strong language that Jacob used to tell Laban what he thought that he was so low as to actually have taken his household gods!

But Laban was still a bit suspicious. So we read that before they separated they built a monument of stone. They said, The Lord watch between us that neither of us crosses over this to hurt the other. Because Laban wanted to be sure that Jacob would not come back and have those household gods and take away his property from his own sons after his death. Well, we're glad to read a few chs. later in Genesis that Jacob said to his people, Take any foreign gods you have in your possession and bury them. And they were buried and never used for that purpose for which they could have been used.

Now here is pretty good evidence that this account in Genesis was actually written at the time when this was perfectly common knowledge, and not written at a later period as the Wellhausen theory would claim.

Now as you look further in the OT you find many foreign kings mentioned. As you read about these foreign kings, the names seem very queer to us and they would have seemed just as queer to the ancient Hebrews. The Hebrews wrote in Hebrew letters, and the Babylonians and other people in that part of the world wrote in cuneiform signs. There were about 300 common ones and about 1000 others that occurred occasionally. Now has anyone ever read much about China in past times when they take these Chinese characters and they write the English in a certain way, Now when you read anything about China they have introduced an entirely new system of