

“Gods in the Life of Rachel”
Genesis 31:17-19, 26, 30-35

Introduction: Exodus 20:3- *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”*

1. The commandment had not yet been engraved in the stone and handed over to Israel, but Jacob knew it well. His grandfather had abandoned idolatry and the worship of false gods in that very same land of Mesopotamia years before. Jacob knew that no believer could worship a false god, nor could a believer tolerate the presence of graven images in his home.
2. Jacob’s wives, however, were true daughters of Laban. Laban’s daughters, particularly Rachel, felt the pull and tug of Laban’s superstitions, and Rachel kept some of Laban’s household images in her home. Jacob had to address the task of getting rid of old gods.
3. Deuteronomy 6:14- *“Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you”*
4. Psalms 81:9- *“There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.”*

Body: For some time now, Jacob had been motivated by Rachel and riches. However, marriage or money cannot make one truly happy. In chapter 31, the Lord calls Jacob to get his family and fortunes out of the land of Mesopotamia and back to Canaan (Gen. 31:3) like God called his grandfather (Gen. 12:1). Jacob pulls his two wives aside and shares with them Laban’s dislike (vs. 4-5) and dishonesty (vs. 6-9). Jacob may have got his girls and gold (Gen. 29:1-30), but he also got their gods. Notice how the story unfolds.

I. Rachel Believing Her Gods Genesis 31:17-19

- A. The reason that Rachel stole her father’s idols is because she had seen them in the home from childhood days and had seen her father reverence them. He had taught her well.
 1. Laban used Baal of the oil press to ensure that his vats were filled with oil.
 2. Laban used Baal of the vats and jugs to ensure that the oil and wine would remain sweet and good.
 3. Laban used Baal of the olive press, a god who could produce oil of olive to be eaten with bread, to be used for cooking, to be rubbed into one’s aching limbs.
 4. Laban used Baal of the highways and of the beehives and of the barley and wheat.
 5. Without them, Laban believed, the fertility of his fields and cattle would be gone.
- B. Rachel also knew of Jacob’s God and had been brought into a personal relationship with Him, but she still stood in awe of her father’s gods.

II. Rachel Bearing Her Gods Genesis 31:20-22

- A. As Jacob fled from the face of Laban, Jacob had no idea that Rachel stole Laban’s household gods. All along the way in Rachel’s saddlebag were the gods of Laban.
- B. Laban would cover a distance of some three hundred miles in pursuit of his gods. Genesis 31:22-30
- C. When Laban catches up with Jacob, we see his bias (31:25-28), bitterness (31:29), and blindness (31:30).

III. Rachel Burying Her Gods

A. In the Dress Genesis 31:30-35

1. And there we have it—the wretched nature of idolatry, the fierce, satanic grip it gets upon a soul.
2. Just last night Laban had met with the true and living God (31:24); yet he still referred to the wretched little clay idols as his gods (31:30).
3. “My gods!” cried Laban. Behind the image there lurks the demon; the worship of the idol gives the demon a hold upon the devotee. “My gods!” cried Laban. Gods indeed! Mighty gods!
4. Gods that could be stolen! Gods that could be packed up like old pots and pans and stuffed into a bag! Gods that could be bounced and jostled over three hundred miles without word or whimper! Gods that could influence wind and weather, it was believed, yet gods that could not even cry out to Laban.
5. “My gods!” Laban cried with the voice of the true God yet ringing in his soul.
6. The death sentence is pronounced and Laban begins to poke and prod to find his gods. Genesis 31:31-35

B. In the Dirt Genesis 35:1-4

1. Could it be a possibility that the gods in Rachel’s life affected her?
 - a. The gods Affected her Assessment Genesis 29:30
 - b. The gods Affected her Attitude Genesis 29:31, 32, 34, 30:1-2, 14-15
 - c. The gods Affected her Actions Genesis 30:1-8
2. Rachel finally got what she wanted, but it cost her life. Genesis 30:1, 30:22-24, 35:16-20
3. This is not the only burial in this chapter.
 - a. Burial of the gods Genesis 35:4
 - b. Burial of Deborah Genesis 35:8
 - c. Burial of Rachel Genesis 35:16-20
 - d. Burial of Isaac Genesis 35:27-29

Conclusion: “god” (Webster) – “A false god; a heathen deity; an idol. Any person or thing exalted too much in estimation, or deified and honored as the chief good.” I John 5:21

1. I Thessalonians 5:23- “*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
2. Deuteronomy 6:5- “*And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*”
3. Matthew 22:37- “*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*”
4. Mark 12:30- “*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*”
5. Luke 10:27- “*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*”

6. Psalm 63:1- *“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is”*

- Are we loving the Lord with all of our spirit, soul, and body, or are we loving our gods more?
- Joshua 24:23