

that's yours, you just take. Laban had a big expeditionary force. It was a big thing to chase Jacob this way with such an expedition. He did it in ~~xxxx~~ order to get these images.

Now in the Middle Ages people wondered why did Laban go to all this trouble to get these images? Some said, They must have been made of gold. They would be so valuable then, they would pay the full cost of the expedition and leave Laban a lot over. If they were made of gold, and he hunted so thoroughly, how could Rachel just sit on them and he not even suspect they were there? They can't have been very big. They must have been fairly small things. So the intrinsic value is hardly an explanation of why they were so important to Laban.

All thru the ages we've not know why these were so important to Laban. But Jacob recognized it was important to Laban. Jacob thought, That's a terrible accusation to make that I would steal his household gods. Look what Jacob did. V. 35 tells us, Laban searched but found not the images. And (v.36) when he searched and didn't find them Jacob said, Isn't this awful that Laban would accuse me of such athing as this.

So we read several vv. in which Jacob tells Laban off for accusing him of something he wouldn't think of doing. Why was it such a terrible thing to steal his household gods? that Jacob would feel so disgusted with Laban for accusing him of such a thing, and that Laban would never suspect Rachel was sitting on them when he would go to all this trouble to hunt everywhere else?

We had no answer to this. We did not know until we discovered these tablets in Northern Mesopotamia. This new set of tablets we began to discover in 1926, a collection of a few thousand tablets of contracts, and legal arrangements of one sort and another. A great many wills, marriage agreements and all that sort of thing. which come from a group of people who lived in Haran at this time and show their customs, many of which are very different from the customs of Babylonia.

From these we learn that among those people if a man wanted to designated a son-in-law as heir to all of his property, he entrusted to that son-in-law his household gods, so that if a man would come to court in that area and say, Look here, my father-in-law designated his property not to go to his sons, but to go to me. Here are his household gods as proof of it. The man could take all his property. And Jacob had amassed a large part of Laban's property by his hard work and clever thinking, and now Laban thought, He's going to get all the rest of it when I die and my sons won't get anything. That's probably what Rachel thought too.

But she didn't tell Jacob about it. It was well worth all the effort on Laban's part, and all the expense of pursuing after him to get the household gods. It was well worth it when we figure what those household gods amounted to in the legal system of that day.

That was forgotten. It was in no other people that I know of.