

concerned about the fact that his household gods had disappeared, his teraphim, which Rachel had taken without letting Jacob know.

We read in ch. 36 how Laban declared to Jacob how he had stolen his household gods. Jacob was very much upset at the suggestion he would have done such a thing. Jacob said, You come and search through my property, you search everybody that I have with me, and if you find those household gods in anybody's things that person will be killed." Jacob never would have said that if he'd known Rachel had them! Because Jacob loved Rachel very very much. But then they came and examined all the different things there, and they examined the different people in Jacob's family one after another and left Rachel to the very last.

They came to the tent where Rachel was and we read that Rachel was sitting on the household stuff. She had gotten a few things together and was sitting on them, and they looked all around and never thought of their being there so they ~~xxx~~ must have been rather small things because they gave up and admitted they could not find them.

Jacob was very much upset and he reproached Laban for suspecting him for doing such a terrible thing as stealing his household gods. Now until the time of Wellhausen--or at the time of Wellhausen, nobody had any idea why it was so important that Jacob was supposed to have these household gods. Nobody could understand what the reason would be why Laban would be so excited about it. You go back to the time when the critics say this story was written i.e. in the time of the later Israelite kingdom, and nobody then would have any reason to understand why this was so important. No explanation of it is given in the story here, in the Bible as to why it was important.

In the Middle Ages there were some who said these household gods much have been made of gold. But to have enough gold in them to pay for Laban's getting (together) this large expedition and pursuing all this time until he caught up to Jacob, just would not be enough to pay for the expedition. If they were small enough that she could hide them that you could never suspect she was sitting on them. What was the reason why these were so important? nobody knew in the time of the later Israelite kingdom. Nobody knew until quite recently. The Bible doesn't explain this at all.

If you look at an account somebody wrote 40 years ago, of a farm and mentioned things about the horses and about the harness, etc. nobody would explain why those things were important because everybody knew. Today farmers use tractors and machinery almost entirely, and those facts that everybody knew 30 years ago, 40 years ago, are largely forgotten. today. Nobody bothered to explain them in those days because everybody knew them. Today we don't know anything about them. It must be that way with the teraphim. Nobody knew until within the present century why these teraphim were important. Then an expedition went into N. Mesopotamia into the area where Laban had lived. There they dug into a hill and there they found remains from the time of Laban. There they found a group of Babylonian tablets from this particular town.