stole her father's household gods. We find that in Gen. 31:19 (reading text) . . .Then we read how when Laban came back and found that Jacob was gone, Laban pursued after Jacob with such a force that Jacob was afraid of what Laban would do to him. Jacob had a great number of flocks and herds, and he must have had a great many herdsmen. He had quite a force. So Laban raised enough force to sacre Jacob - would be a rather expensive proposition. In additio n to that Laban had to make a long, rapid trip to catch up with him. He had travelled for a long distance from where he lived down to - ward Palestine when Laban caught up with him. So it was quite an expensive undertaking, but when Laban caught up with him Laban did not take away any of his property. He did not take his daughters away from him. The thing Laban was excited about was these house- hold gods.

Why would Laban go to all this effort in order to get these household gods back? I'm sure that in the days of David when people read Genesis they must have puzzeled over that and won- dered why Laban was so excited about these household gods, that on account of them he would go to all this expense and effort in pueauinf = pursuing Jacob in order to get the household gods back. Remb ember =Remember how when Laban came to Jacob he said, Why have you stolen my gods? He demanded Jacob give them back to him and Jacob was very indignant. Jacob said I have not taken your household gods. He said(v.32) With whomsover thou findest thy gods let him not live. Jacob was so sure he didn't have them.He said Let's just -- youjust kill anybody you find your household gods in their possession. So Jacob permitted Laban to hunt all through his stuff to see if he had those household gods.

Then, you remember, it says after he had hunted everywhere he came into the tent of the differe t people and the last one he came to was Rachel's tent, and we read in v. 34 "Rachel had taken the images and put them in the camel's saddle and sat upon them, and Laban searched all the tent but found them not." She said to her father, Let it not displease my Lord that the == that I cannot rise up before thee for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched but found not the images." And Jacob was very angry. Jacob thought that was most disgusting that Laban would accuse him of stealing his household gods, and Jacob never sus- pected Rachel was sitting on them. Well, they weren't very big them were they? If she could sit on them and hide them so well that he would not even suspect he would have them.

During the middle ages there were some who raised the question Why did Laban go to all this expense to get back those household gods? Some said, They musthave been made of gold, very valuable. Well, the amount of gold she could sit on and hide that way so he would never suspect they were there would not pay the cost of Laban's expedition. That certainly is not the explanation of it. In David's time people must have wondered, Why did he go to all this difficulty to try to get those household gods back? Why was Jacob so disgusted that Laban would accuse him of stealing those household gods? What was the reason for it anyway?

People did not 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 house- hold gods were so important or else would not have told the story at all.

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