

good-bye. That's not fair!"

Look who was talking about being fair!

Jacob said, "I have served you well for the last twenty years. You have become rich because God was with me. He has blessed me in everything I did. But you would have sent me away without anything! God saw what you were up to! And he wasn't going to let you get away with it!"

See what happens when you are on God's side - and he is on yours!

So Uncle Laban said, "These are my daughters, and all these sheep are mine. But, I can't keep you from taking them. Let's not fight about it anymore. Let's make a deal. You can go your way, and I will go mine. We will make a pile of stones here to remind us that we agree not to try to cheat each other any longer."

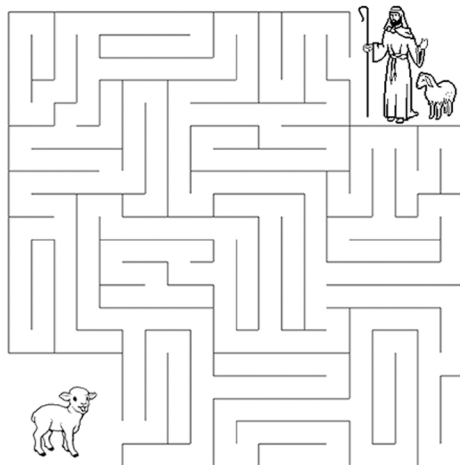
And so they made a pile of stones as a reminder of their agreement.

Laban said, "May God keep an eye on us both when we are apart, so that we will be true to our agreement." And so they called the place Mizpah, which means "God is watching over us."

With that, Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren good bye, and Jacob and his family set on their way, back to the home of Jacob's father.

And God was with Jacob, and blessed him in everything he did.

What a wonderful thing that is!





By Paul Dallgas-Frey

The Story of Jacob & Laban

Uncle Laban ...

...was getting grumpy in his old age.

"It's time for me to go back home," Jacob said to him one day.

"You had a few sheep and goats before I got here, and now you have many, many more because God has been with me. He has prospered the work of my hands. So now, let me take my wives, and my children and go back home."

"You have served me well," Uncle Laban said. "Name your price, and I will pay it." But I think he had his fingers crossed behind his back when he said that!

Jacob said, "I don't want any of your money. I'll tell you what. Let me care for your flocks a little bit longer. I'll take every black lamb and every spotted, speckled or striped goat and separate them from the rest. Let them be my wages."

"It's a deal," said Uncle Laban.

But then that very same day, Uncle Laban had his sons go through his flocks and take out all the black lambs and all the spotted and speckled goats! And then he had his sons take them far away.

He was trying to cheat Jacob.

Only he must have forgotten that when it came to cheating, Jacob was a master!

So Jacob stayed with Laban's flocks, even though all the black sheep, and all the spotted, speckled and striped goats were gone.

God was watching over Jacob - Laban didn't stand a chance of cheating him!

Where Jacob got this next idea, I don't know, but when he took Laban's flocks down to the watering place, he set tree branches in front of them that he had cut with a knife so that they were speckled and striped.

He faced the flock towards the branches. When the mother sheep and goats started having babies, all their babies were striped or spotted. How that worked, I haven't a clue - except that God must have had a hand in it!

So Jacob took the spotted and speckled and striped sheep and set them apart from the rest.

Whenever the strong, healthy sheep were having babies, Jacob set the striped branches in front of them. Whenever the weak ones were having babies he took the branches away.

That way, all the strong healthy sheep had spotted and speckled babies - and they belonged to Jacob. And all the solid babies were puny and weak. Those belonged to Laban.

So Jacob's flock grew and grew.

All the while Uncle Laban kept changing his mind. First, he said Jacob could have the spotted lambs, and then, when God made all the lambs come out spotted, Laban said, "No, I meant all the striped lambs!" And when all the new lambs were striped, he said, "No, I meant all the black lambs!" And then, all the lambs came out black. The old guy was really getting grumpy! He changed his mind over and over again, all the while trying to cheat Jacob out of his flock.

Finally, Jacob said to his wives Rachel and Leah, "I don't think your father likes me much these days - he is so grumpy! And I think he is trying to cheat me. Quick, get your things together, we are going back to the land of my fathers."

And so they packed all their belongings and ran away from Laban.

It wasn't until three days later that Laban found out his daughters were gone. He got his men together and went after Jacob. But in dream God told him not to hurt him.

Laban finally caught up with his runaway daughters and nephew.

He said to Jacob, "Why did you steal my daughters away from me! You didn't even say good-bye, or let me kiss my grandchildren