

# Genesis 31:52

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

## Analysis

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**This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and t...** This passage belongs to the Jacob narratives which demonstrate God's sovereign election overriding human merit and the transformation of a deceiver into Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. The Jacob cycle shows how divine purposes advance through flawed individuals whom God graciously transforms.

Key themes include God's sovereign choice ("the older shall serve the younger"), the consequences of deception and family dysfunction, exile and return patterns, wrestling with God leading to blessing, and covenant renewal across generations. Jacob's character development from manipulative deceiver to mature patriarch demonstrates sanctification's lifelong process.

Theologically significant aspects include:

1. divine election based on grace not merit (Romans 9:10-13)
2. God's faithfulness to covenant promises despite human unfaithfulness
3. discipline as evidence of divine love and means of transformation
4. generational patterns of sin requiring divine intervention to break
5. prayer and wrestling with God as legitimate expressions of faith.

Jacob's limp after wrestling God symbolizes how divine encounters leave permanent marks, transforming our approach to life and dependence on God rather than our own cunning.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

## Interlinear Text

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עֵד	הַגֵּל	הַזֶּה	וְעַד	הַמִּצָּבָה	אִם	אֲנִי	לֹא
be witness	This heap	H2088	be witness	and this pillar	H518	H589	H3808
H5707	H1530		H5713	H4676			
תַּעֲבֹר	אֶת	הַגֵּל	הַזֶּה	וְאִם	אֲנִי	לֹא	
that I will not pass over	H413	H853	This heap	H2088	H518	H859	H3808
H5674			H1530				
תַּעֲבֹר	אֶת	הַגֵּל	הַזֶּה	וְאֵת	הַמִּצָּבָה		
that I will not pass over	H413	H853	This heap	H2088	H853	and this pillar	
H5674			H1530			H4676	
הַזֶּה	לְרָעָה:						
H2063	unto me for harm						
	H7451						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 31:48** (Witness): And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;