

Genesis 31:49

also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another."

How many of you are familiar with today's verse? Kind of sounds familiar? What if we look at the phrase in the KJV: ***The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.***

Here is another hint where you may have read it.



Does it look familiar now? What people do is buy this necklace or charm, and will keep half for themselves and give the other half to someone that they love as a reminder that they are thinking of them and saying that the Lord is also watching over them when they are apart. Which sounds good and fine, if you just read that one verse or phrase by itself: ***The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.*** And reading it just like that it does make what people think or intend it to be, sounds loving and sweet.

Now it's time to burst your bubble, especially if you do have one of these charms. How so? Well, with all scripture, you must always read it in its context, and that context in this case is the verse before (48) and after (50) verse 49 (or read all of chapter 31). Let's read the three verses together and see if you can get what is really being said in this phrase.

† **Genesis 31:48-50** *And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us--see, God is witness between you and me!"*

Or how about from the NLT version:

† **Genesis 31:48-50 (NLT2)** *Then Laban declared, “This pile of stones will stand as a witness to remind us of the covenant we have made today.” This explains why it was called Galeed—“Witness Pile.” But it was also called Mizpah (which means “watchtower”), for Laban said, “May the LORD keep watch between us to make sure that we keep this covenant when we are out of each other’s sight. If you mistreat my daughters or if you marry other wives, God will see it even if no one else does. He is a witness to this covenant between us.*

You see, this was between Jacob and Laban (Jacob’s father-in-law). Jacob had worked for Laban for 20 years, and Laban constantly cheated Jacob.

† **Genesis 31:41** *Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.*

So Jacob was tired of being cheated by his father-in-law and was leaving or escaping with his wives and sons, heading back to Isaac, his father, and the land where he was born and raised in. But Laban found out and pursued Jacob and his family for seven days until he caught up with him.

† **Genesis 31:22-23** *And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days’ journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead.*

And God spoke to Laban in a dream telling him not to harm Jacob or his family.

† **Genesis 31:24** *But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, “Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.”*

I would encourage you to read the entire story in Genesis chapter 31. But to make a long story short. In today’s verse, this was after Laban and his brethren caught up with Jacob and they all sat down together and talked.

Now, after knowing all of that, and if you read verses 48-50 again, you realize this had nothing to do with “*I love you my son-in-law*” or “*I love you my father-in-law*” but it was a statement more like. “*I don’t trust you Laban*” and “*I don’t trust you Jacob*” Also that you better watch out because God is watching you, not for protection, but to see if you will keep the covenant we just made and if you are really going to take care of your family like you said you would.

So, by giving that necklace or charm to someone, what it really means is that you don’t trust him or her. Read it for yourself. *If you mistreat my daughters or if you marry other wives, God will see it even if no one else does. He is a witness to this covenant between us.*

But I say all of this to remind you, and to show you how easy it can be to twist God's word to make it say what you want it to say, or to make it fit your situation.

The only way to quote God's word correctly, is to read it all, not just those common ones everyone knows, but the entire bible. Even for your favorite verses that you love to share and quote, go back and read several verses before and after them to make sure you are actually using or quoting God's word in its correct context.

† **Psalm 119:140** *Your word is very pure; Therefore Your servant loves it.*

† **Psalm 119:160** *The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.*

† **Acts 17:11** *These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*