

Genesis 30:25-43 – The Invincible Faithfulness of God’s Promise

I. Jacob is Ready To Claim God’s Promise (25-30)

A. Jacob Prepares to Leave Laban (25-26)

1. Jacob desires to leave after Joseph’s birth (25)

- a. His favored wife finally gives birth to their first natural son
 - i. We will see that Joseph and Benjamin (Rachel’s sons) hold a special place in Jacob’s heart
 - ii. Perhaps he believes Joseph is his heir of promise
 - iii. He has completed his years of work for his wife
- b. Jacob desires to go back to his own country
 - i. In fourteen years, Jacob had never made Laban’s land his home
 - ii. He continually looked for the promise made to him at Bethel – Gen. 28:15 - *And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.*

2. Jacob has fulfilled his obligations to Laban (26)

- a. Although polite, Jacob does not ask but demands to be given his family and sent away
 - i. This is the same phrase Abraham’s servant used to leave Laban’s house is Gen. 24:54
- b. Jacob has served the required fourteen years for both Leah and Rachel and therefore no longer owes a debt of any kind to Laban
 - i. Jacob emphasizes his service, noting that Laban knows he has fulfilled his obligation
 - ii. There is no basis for dispute here. Jacob is a family member, not a slave or servant. He is justified in demanding his family.

B. Laban Doesn’t Want To Lose Jacob (27-28)

1. Laban Knows that Jacob is Blessed of God (27)

- a. Laban asks extremely politely – “If I have found favor in your eyes...”
- b. Laban admits that because Jacob is blessed, that blessing has benefited Laban (“Through you all the earth will be blessed?”)
- c. Though Laban clearly recognizes that it is God who has blessed him, he does not desire God. All he wants is more of the blessing.
- d. Just like Leah and Rachel in the last section, Laban is caught in the idolatry of his prosperity – he desires the gift instead of the gift giver.

2. Laban is willing to pay whatever it takes to keep Jacob (28)

- a. Laban desires Jacob to stay so badly he is willing to give anything
- b. Laban hungers for the prosperity he has come to know
- c. Jacob remembers the last time Laban made this statement (Gen. 29:15) – He was tricked into marrying Leah

C. Jacob Desires To Provide For His Own House (29-30)

1. Jacob points to his faithful service to Laban (29a)

- a. Jacob reminds Laban that he faithfully served him (though Laban tricked him into it)
- 2. Jacob points to Laban's prosperity with him (29b-30a)
 - a. Jacob points out that his herds grew under Jacob's care
 - b. Jacob points out that Laban had little when Jacob arrived
- 3. Jacob affirms that God has blessed Laban because of him (30b)
 - a. Jacob attributes the prosperity to God
 - b. Jacob tells Laban that indeed God has blessed Laban everywhere that Jacob has turned
- 4. Jacob declares it is his turn to build his household (30c)
 - a. Jacob now desires to receive some of the blessing for himself
 - i. Although Jacob is indeed blessed and has many sons, he still has absolutely no wealth
 - ii. Laban has been the recipient of all the blessing God has allowed Jacob to receive
 - b. Jacob's blessed status has worked well for Laban and his household, now Jacob is going to turn his attention to his own household.
 - c. Jacob desires to go back to the land of promise and reap the blessing of the Lord there as he continues to grow into a great nation

II. Laban Continues To Cheat Jacob (31-36)

A. Jacob and Laban Make a Deal (31-34)

- 1. Laban Asks Jacob To Name His Price (31a)
 - a. Laban understands Jacob's plight – he will offer him a piece of the blessings he has enjoyed.
 - i. He does not ask about Jacob's "wages" as if Jacob will continue to work for Laban – instead he offers to "give" Jacob something in exchange for him working Laban's flock
 - ii. Laban seems to be desperate now. Rather than lose the method of gaining prosperity, he is willing to part with some of his beloved riches.
 - b. Jacob refuses to be "given" anything
 - i. This reminds the reader of Abraham refusing to take anything from the king of Sodom
 - ii. Jacob remembers his previous arrangement with Laban (when he was tricked into marrying Leah) He won't make another deal like that.
- 2. Jacob names his terms (31b-33)
 - a. Jacob agrees to stay on one condition (31b)
 - i. Jacob does offer to stay if Laban will agree to his arrangement
 - b. Jacob wants all the rare discolored animals (32)
 - i. Jacob wants to go through the herd and take out all the speckled and spotted sheep and goats for his payment

ii. These would have been rare in Laban's herd. Most of the sheep were a solid white or gray, and most of the goats were a solid dark color.

- Normally a shepherd received 10-20% of the herd as payment. This offer wasn't even close to that amount
- Jacob was offering to work as Laban's shepherd for only the rare animals.

iii. Why would Jacob make such a seemingly bad deal?

- God told him what to do. This is revealed to us in chapter 31

- Gen. 31:10-13 – "And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.'"

c. Jacob provides assurance so Laban cannot accuse him later (33)

- i. Jacob remembers what kind of man Laban is
- ii. He probably recognizes that Laban would likely accuse him of theft when Jacob's herd is bigger than Laban's
- iii. Jacob makes sure Laban knows that he won't find any animals in Jacob's herd that are not speckled, spotted, or striped.

3. Laban accepts Jacob's terms (34)

- a. This seems like a good deal to Laban – it is way less than the normal price for a shepherd's hire
- b. Also, if Jacob removes all the speckled and spotted animals, it would be much harder for any more to be born among the solid color animals.

B. Laban Again Works To Cheat Jacob (35-36)

1. Laban removes all discolored animals from his flock (35)

- a. That same day, Laban removes all the speckled and spotted animals from his herd so Jacob will have no animals among them
- b. Notice that it says he removed "all" the multi-colored animals

2. Laban moves the discolored animals three days away (36)

- a. He also moved the speckled animals three days away so that there would be no chance of cross breeding between the two flocks
- b. He also likely moved them so far so that Jacob wouldn't discover his treachery.

3. Jacob still tends Laban's flock (36)

- a. This tiny statement is amazing. Jacob would have no doubt knew something was not right when he walked through the flock to separate the speckled animals and there were none.
- b. It wouldn't have taken a rocket scientist to realize what Laban did
- c. Yet Jacob quietly continues to tend Laban's flock

C. Jacob will continue to Be Blessed Despite His Circumstances

- 1. Laban has done everything he can to make sure Jacob does not prosper
 - a. He has swindled an extra seven years of service from Jacob
 - b. He has cheated Jacob out of the speckled cattle
 - c. He has changed Jacob's agreed wages 10 times (See Gen. 31:7 - *And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.*)
- 2. God's blessing is not hindered by the evil works of men, or hard circumstances

III. Jacob Is Blessed Of God Despite His Superstitions (37-43)

A. Jacob Selectively Breeds Discolored Animals (37-40)

- 1. Jacob covers his bases with superstitious ritual (37-38)
 - a. Jacob peels stripes into tree branches (37)
 - b. Jacob places the branches where the flocks mate (38)
 - c. This is nothing more than superstition
 - i. It was commonly thought that something the animals see while they were mating would bring forth different kinds of offspring
 - ii. If the animals looked at striped rods while mating, they would bring forth striped offspring
 - iii. Although Jacob has received direction and a promise from God, he follows a superstitious custom just in case
 - iv. It seems that he is "covering all the bases" just in case God needs some help in blessing him.
 - v. He has been told that the animals will bring forth speckled and spotted offspring, but he is just not content to leave it in God's hands
- 2. The flocks produce discolored offspring (39)
 - a. Of course it is God who causes the offspring to be born as such
 - b. Even Jacob acknowledges this in the next chapter
- 3. Jacob separates his flock out from Laban's herd (40)
 - a. Jacob separates all the speckled offspring for his own when they are born
 - b. He grows his flock by removing them from Laban's

B. Jacob Selectively Breeds The Stronger Animals For His Own (41-42)

- 1. Jacob uses his superstition and some common sense to selectively breed stronger animals for himself
- 2. Not only will he be prosperous but his animals will be superior

C. Jacob Becomes Exceedingly Prosperous (43)

- 1. This goes on for six years and Jacob becomes very rich
- 2. He becomes so rich that he is even able to buy camels and servants

3. This should remind us again of Abraham's servant. He came to Laban with camels and jewels. Jacob came with nothing, but is leaving with Camels and riches.

Although the application of this text is difficult for us, the point is that God is faithful to His word. Once again, we see that no obstacle can hinder any promise that God has made. At Bethel, God promised Jacob that he would bring him back to the land and that he would have many descendants and much prosperity. God has brought him many sons, and now he has prospered Jacob in spite of all the things that made it unlikely.

God prospered Jacob through difficult circumstances. He worked for a cheat and liar who only wanted to take from him. Laban changed his wages repeatedly and cheated him out of many of the speckled and spotted animals. Yet God still prospered him.

God also prospered Jacob in spite of his own unbelief. Jacob should have trusted God rather than resorting to superstition and old wives tales about how spotted animals were born. Even though God had given Jacob specific instructions about what to do (see ch. 31), Jacob figured that he would "help out" just in case God wasn't able.

God prospered Jacob and blessed him because God is faithful – not because Jacob is so faithful.