

## EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

### Message #68

### Genesis 30:25-43

One of the most beloved Psalms is Psalm 37. Charles Spurgeon said that the Lord put this Psalm in the Bible to “calm the minds” of his chosen flock. Two of the most famous verses in this Psalm say - “I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread. All day long he is gracious and lends; and his descendants are a blessing” (Psalm 37:25-26). What did David mean by this, when there was a time in his own life when he did literally beg for bread (i.e. I Samuel 21:1-6)? What David meant was even though there may be times of hardships and transitory times when God’s people find themselves under financial distress, when all is said and done, as we near life’s end, **God’s faithful people will discover they have been blessed by God all throughout life.**

Jacob found himself working for a deceptive cheapskate for twenty years, whose name was Laban. Laban gave Jacob a place to stay and food to eat, but he never wanted him to get ahead. He gave him just enough to get by. The truth is, **Laban was prospering because of the presence of Jacob**, but he was too stingy and proud to do something tangible about it. In this text, Jacob decided it was time to confront Laban and in the next chapter God decides it is time for Jacob to leave.

Jacob’s approach to business goes against the grain of the self-promotion, aggressive strategy found in most books on how to get ahead. Jacob literally looked out first for the welfare of the company and he did this for many years.

**WHEN A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GOD WORKS FOR SOME STINGY CHEAT WHO DOES NOT FAIRLY COMPENSATE THAT SERVANT, GOD WILL PROSPER THE FAITHFUL SERVANT AND EVENTUALLY REMOVE THE FAITHFUL SERVANT TO A NEW PLACE.**

This is an employer/employee passage, one that certainly has N.T. implications, for Paul challenged employers to take good care of employees because God is monitoring and will pay back the generosity or lack thereof (Ephesians 6:8-9).

**INTERACTION #1** - Jacob requests that Laban let him leave. 30:25-26

Jacob’s family had increased dramatically with the birth of eleven sons and one daughter, which was a sovereign blessing of God in direct connection to what God promised Jacob (Genesis 28:3, 14). After the birth of Joseph, Jacob’s twelfth child, he decided it was time to leave and the thing that prompted all of this was the fact that Laban had not been paying him properly. He had cheated him out of wages ten times (Genesis 31:7). The Hebrew word “serve” (30:26), is one that means to labor or work for another (Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 598). Jacob could honestly say, “My work record speaks for itself, I have worked hard and you know I deserve this.” Laban was prospering, while Jacob was having a hard time meeting the needs of his own household (30:30). It was time for him to leave and get a new job.

**INTERACTION #2** - Laban appeals to Jacob to stay. 30:27-28

When you are about to lose a good employee, it is time to act fast especially when you know you are prospering because of it. The words “I have divined” indicate that Laban had divinely observed that Jacob had a special relationship with God and was the reason God was blessing him. Laban knew if Jacob left it would not only mean a major loss of his finances, but also of God’s blessings.

**INTERACTION #3** - Jacob informs Laban it is time for him to care for his own family.  
30:29-30

Jacob reminds Laban of the increase which has come to him through his work and says it is time for his family to prosper. It was time for Jacob to, as John Phillips said, lay “the foundations of his own financial future” (*Exploring Genesis*, p. 247).

**INTERACTION #4** - Laban offers Jacob anything he wants to stay. 30:31a

Laban says, name your price and I’ll pay it. Laban is finally admitting the value of the relationship Jacob has with God.

**INTERACTION #5** - Jacob agrees to stay as long as Laban meets his request. 30:31b-33

Jacob proposed a plan of financial prosperity in which he would remove all odd colored animals. Now typically sheep are normally white (Psalm 147:16; Song of Solomon 4:2; 6:6; Daniel 7:9) and goats are normally black or brown-black. So for Jacob to take all the speckled and spotted cattle and the brown sheep and the spotted and speckled goats as his pay and then only count the speckled and spotted among the goats and the brown sheep as his (30:33) was a real demonstration of faith in God. Jacob is truly relying on God for his prosperity.

**INTERACTION #6** - Laban agrees to Jacob’s terms. 30:34-36

Laban agreed because he figured the chances of producing spotted animals is slim. He removed all the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats and any that had any white and the black ones among the sheep. Laban put those in the care of his sons and put about 60 miles between them. In other words, Laban is a ruthless, self-centered boss who is trying to eliminate any possible means of prosperity for Jacob and that will eventually cause God to take Jacob away (Genesis 31:11-12, 38-42).

**INTERACTION #7** - Jacob does what he humanly can to gain prosperity. 30:37-42

Jacob was convinced that by placing peeled branches in the watering troughs, directly in front of breeding stock that it would result in streaked, speckled or spotted increase. The implication of verse 39 is that it worked. Not only was there a color difference, but a strength difference (30:42). Jacob gave credit for this increase to God (Genesis 31 :9).

## **INTERACTION #8 - Jacob prospered in every way. 30:43**

God prospered Jacob in everything, not just cattle. Everything he touched was now turning to gold because of God's blessings. This prosperity was just the beginning. In fact, this will be part of the process that will take Jacob away from Laban and back to the land of his people.

### **Lessons for the employee:**

- 1) Stay faithful to God on your job because God is carefully observing your personal situation and in His time, He will settle the score.
- 2) Trust in God to care for you for He will always provide for those faithful to Him.
- 3) Work diligently at your job. Do everything humanly possible to make your company prosper. Don't focus on becoming wealthy, focus on doing a good job.

### **Lessons for the employer:**

- 1) Take good care of one faithful to God for much of your prosperity depends on that.
- 2) If you lose one faithful because you were not adequately caring for that one, your business loses.
- 3) Make sure your help can adequately take good care of their family.
- 4) God will do to you what you do to others. He will be as generous to you as you are to them.