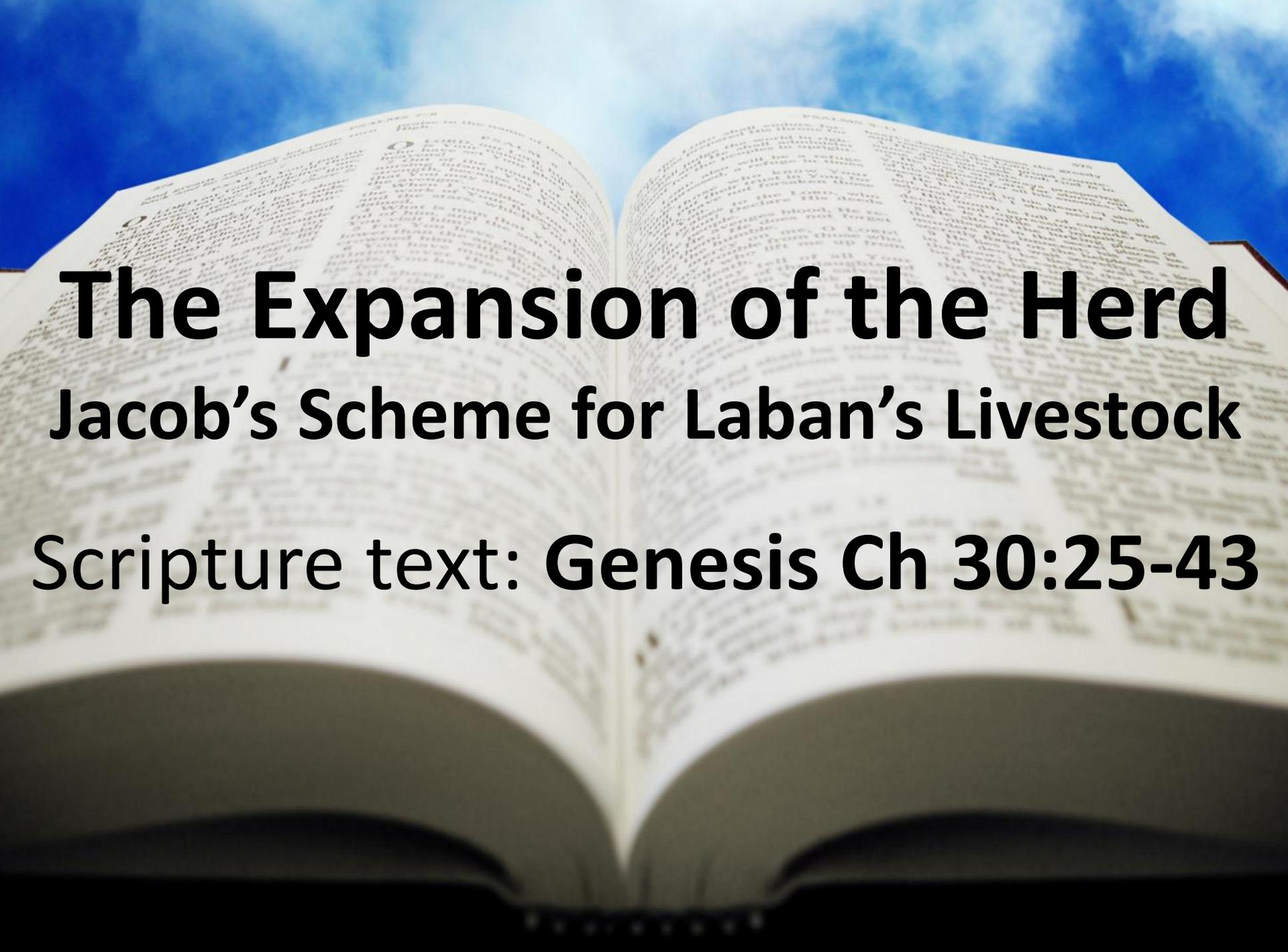


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open book is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, but it is mostly out of focus. The background is a bright blue sky with some light clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

The Expansion of the Herd

Jacob's Scheme for Laban's Livestock

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 30:25-43**

The expansion of Jacob's possessions at the expense of Laban (Genesis 30:25–43)

This is an unusual story of Jacob's acquiring wealth. This clever man outwitted another opponent, **or so it seemed**. But **Jacob's victory owed more to God than he might have realized at the time.**

Jacob's Scheme for Laban's Livestock

Genesis 24:54-58 And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, **"Send me away to my master."** Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." But he said to them, **"Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."** They said, "Let us call the young woman and ask her." And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go."

Genesis 30:25-28 As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "**Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country.** Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go, for you know the service that I have given you." But Laban said to him, "**If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it.**"

Laban, by divination???

1 Samuel 15:22-24 And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, **as in obeying the voice of the LORD?** Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, and to listen than the fat of rams. **For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.**" Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, **because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.**

Jacob had served for fourteen years, **and he realized that he must strike out on his own and provide for his large family.** He asked Laban to send him away; however, **the crafty Syrian** was not about to lose so **valuable a son-in-law.** Jacob had worked fourteen years for his two wives; now he could work for the cattle he would need in order to get established on his own. Of course, **Laban covered the evil motive of his plan by using the Lord's name (v. 27) and by asking Jacob to choose the terms.**

Genesis 30:27-31 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it." Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now **when shall I provide for my own household also?**" He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "**You shall not give me anything.** If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it:

When Jacob appealed to Laban for permission to go home, Laban bargained for him to stay (vv. 27–28, 31).

Here was oriental diplomacy—two bedouin leaders cautiously on their guard as they negotiated. Laban stated he had learned by divination that God had prospered him because of Jacob. He may have looked for omens, or may have simply perceived.

“Name me your wages, and I will give it.”

Laban asked, but Jacob refused a gift, for the last time he accepted Laban’s “gift” he was deceived (Genesis 29:19). Jacob offered to work as Laban’s shepherd, if Laban would give him the “rejects” of the flocks and herds. Oriental sheep are white and goats brown or black. By accepting the striped, spotted, and speckled animals, **Jacob was apparently giving Laban the better deal.** It was certainly an act of faith on Jacob’s part.

But the schemer went to work. Instead of trusting God to meet the need (see 31:9, and 28:15, 20), Jacob used his own plan. The special rods and sticks at the troughs probably did not influence the sheep; **it was God who determined what kind of sheep and goats would be conceived.** However, Jacob did use “**selective breeding**” (vv. 40–43) so that only the stronger cattle conceived. We learn from 31:7–8 that **Laban changed the terms of the contract several times as he saw Jacob’s flocks increasing, but God overruled Laban and made Jacob a wealthy man.**

Dark-colored sheep were an omen for good, and perhaps an inordinate amount of them spoke of this (v. 32). **Jacob agreed that God had blessed Laban (v. 30).** Thus Jacob proposed a plan by which he would gain little. He would receive as wages for his work the black and multicolored goats—the rarer kind—and speckled and spotted sheep which would be born. **Laban thought this over and quickly closed the deal (v. 34).** He could see only advantages for himself.

Genesis 30:31-34 He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "**You shall not give me anything.** If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and **they shall be my wages.** So **my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you.** Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." Laban said, "**Good! Let it be as you have said.**"

Genesis 30:35-36 But that day **Laban removed** the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and **put them in the charge of his sons**. And he **set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob**, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock.

Jacob's plan was most risky. Nevertheless he was looking out for his own interests, hoping to prosper from this.

But Laban's ploy **added to the risk**. For greater security, Laban immediately removed all the animals of abnormal color, **giving them to his sons and not to Jacob**. And as an additional precaution **he placed a three-day journey between them**. Thus he was seeking to ensure that Jacob would have a difficult time acquiring a large herd.

Genesis 30:37-39 Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and **peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks.** He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the **flocks bred in front of the sticks and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.**

God blessed Jacob in an unusual way. Here there is a wordplay on the name Laban for as Jacob peeled back the bark on the sticks and exposed the white (lāḇān), he saw his flocks grow. He played the Laban game and won—**he outwitted “Whitey.”**

Clearly, as Jacob later admitted (Gen. 31:7–12), **God intervened to fulfill the expectations Jacob had in the branches.** The peeled branches, placed in the watering troughs, appeared to make his animals reproductive as they mated in front of the troughs. In addition, Jacob used selective breeding by mating the stronger animals for himself and the weak female goats and sheep for Laban. But **this was not the only time God's part in Jacob's success was much greater than it seemed to an observer.**

Genesis 31:7-10 yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But **God did not permit him to harm me.** If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. **Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.** In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.

So Jacob was greatly prospered (Gen. 30:43) in fulfillment of God's promise at Bethel, and **at the expense of Laban, who now received in part the recompense due him.** A fascinating struggle developed between Jacob and Laban. Laban's injustice and deception preceded Jacob's project, just as Isaac's attempt to bless Esau had earlier prompted Jacob's deception. In both cases the attempt to defraud Jacob **was actually overcome by Jacob.** Afterward, however, **Jacob viewed his real gain as divine blessing,** though he had to accept the effects (fear and danger) of his craftiness.

1 Peter 2:15-20 For this is the will of God, **that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.** Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but **living as servants of God.** Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. **Fear God.** Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

Ephesians 6:5-8 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Colossians 3:22-25 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Matthew 24:43-47 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

Genesis 26:12-16 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The **LORD** blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the **Philistines envied him.** (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) And Abimelech said to Isaac, "**Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.**"

Genesis 28:1-4 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, "**You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.** May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"

Genesis 29:14-18 and Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh!" And he stayed with him a month. Then Laban said to Jacob, "**Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?**" Now Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "**I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.**"

Genesis 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, **for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.**

The Blessing of God has been upon Jacob, for coming to Padden-aram with only a rod in his hand, to becoming very wealthy. Which resembles the wealth of Abraham.

Genesis 24:35 The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys.

Genesis 26:12-13 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. **The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.**

Genesis 30:40-43 And Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks, but for the feebler of the flock he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. **Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.**