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Gen 30	1 Sam 16-17	Ps 64	Mark 7:24 – 8:38
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Jacob's Strange Deal (Genesis 30:25-43)

Verse 25 of chapter 30 begins a peculiar story that very few seem to understand. But understanding Jacob's reasoning in his strange deal with Laban can help us to better see Jacob's character development.

Jacob had served Laban 14 years. Now he wished to depart and return to his father in Canaan. Laban, however, was eager to have Jacob remain, for God had blessed everything Jacob did while in Laban's household, and Laban had grown rich. "Name me your wages, and I will give it," Laban said (verse 28), hoping to entice Jacob to stay. "You shall not give me anything," Jacob replied. This is essential to understand, for an inattentive reading of the story can make it seem as if Jacob separated the colored and spotted sheep from Laban's flock and took them for his payment. He most emphatically did not. Jacob took out the colored and spotted sheep and gave them to Laban, whose sons took them away a distance of three days' journey (verse 36). This left Jacob with only the pure white sheep.

The last clause of verse 32, "and these shall be my wages," is a little confusing. The Hebrew literally says, "it shall be [i.e., in the future] my wages." Jacob was not saying that the spotted and colored sheep he removed from the flock would be his wages. Instead, "You shall not give me anything," were Jacob's words. The spotted and colored sheep were given to the sons of Laban, who drove them three days' journey away. Instead, Jacob was saying that *in the future* any spotted or colored sheep born in the flock that Jacob would tend would be his wages. But this seemed *impossible* to Laban—Jacob was left with only the white sheep! How could white sheep bear spotted and colored sheep? That is why Laban so hastily agreed to the deal: "Oh, that it were according to your word!" (verse 34).

Now, the beginning of verse 33 is most important. "So my righteousness will answer for me in the time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you...." This telling declaration marks a profound advancement in Jacob's character development. When Jacob arrived in Padan Aram he was a grasping manipulator who relied upon his own innate abilities and craft to obtain what he wanted. But 14 years of service for Laban—during which Laban consistently outwitted him, and during which God blessed him in all that he did—had produced a change in Jacob. He had now progressed to the point where he relied upon his righteous conduct to secure blessings and prosperity from God. That is a dramatic change of heart, a major development in right character!

Verse 37 begins the equally odd business of the poplar, almond and chestnut branches. Many commentators suggest some kind of magic practice, or that the peeled rods were intended to cause the sheep to imitate the partly colored rods by bringing forth partly colored sheep. Yet this is certainly *not* what Jacob was engaged in here. Notice verse 38: "And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink." The word "conceive" is translated

from the Hebrew *yacham*, literally meaning “to be hot,” and which, when speaking of animals, can mean “to be in heat.” By peeling the *fresh cut* rods (verse 37), Jacob caused the sap-filled meat of the rods to be exposed, thus possibly allowing the sap of the rods to mingle with the water in the watering troughs. Perhaps he believed this additive in the water would help to bring the animals to heat. It has also been suggested that the peeled rods were used as a sort of corralling fence, set up when the flocks came to drink to keep them together longer for mating. Verses 41-42 also inform us that Jacob practiced selective breeding, ensuring that the best of the flock would be subject to his treatment of the water.

But all this *did not* produce the spotted and colored sheep. These actions only aided Jacob in selecting which sheep would breed at what time. *God caused the unusual coloration of the sheep.* As Jacob said: “My righteousness will answer for me.” The production of colored sheep was God’s response to Jacob’s righteousness. Indeed, we later find out that Laban, seeing the results, kept changing the deal about which sheep Jacob would get—and, in every case, God followed suit with the coloration of sheep produced. Jacob explained to his wives: “God did not allow [Laban] to hurt me. If he said thus: ‘The speckled shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: ‘The streaked shall be your wages,’ then all the flocks bore streaked. So *God* has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me” (31:7-9).

Jacob had matured tremendously while in service to Laban. He had moved away from his grasping, manipulative ways and had come to the point where he understood that prosperity and protection are dependent on righteous conduct before God. And for that, God rewarded and prospered him. Jacob’s character, however, was to be further developed.

David Anointed and Saul Rejected (1 Samuel 16)

The search for a new king begins appropriately enough in Bethlehem, meaning “House of Bread,” for out of David’s lineage would spring the Messiah, the true bread from heaven (16:1-4; Micah 5:2; John 6:58). Bethlehem had been the town of Ruth and Boaz. Indeed, Jesse and his family were their direct descendants.

Young David was a man after God’s own heart, who, unlike Saul, would perform all of God’s will (Acts 13:22; Psalm 40:8). The fact that God sought those who would serve Him with all their heart was well known (12:20; 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:5). We would do well to emulate this desired quality in our own lives by studying David’s relationship with God.

The name David means “Beloved.” His name is mentioned more than a thousand times in the Scriptures. David as shepherd (1 Samuel 16:11) was a picture of Yeshua Messiah. First of all, Yeshua is the *Good* Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep (John 10:11; Psalm 22). Secondly, Yeshua is the *Great* Shepherd who rules from heaven interceding with the Father for us (Hebrews 13:20; Psalm 23). And finally, Yeshua is the *Chief* Shepherd who brings the Kingdom of God, rewarding His own (1 Peter 5:4; Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 80:1).

David was anointed, i.e. set apart for a special purpose, by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13). Actually, this was the first of three anointings of David revealed in the Scriptures. You can read of the second anointing that takes place on the occasion of David assuming the kingship of Judah in 2 Samuel 2:4. And he is later anointed king of all Israel in 2 Samuel 5:3.

Saul, on the other hand, is rejected by God. The departure of God’s Spirit leaves him in a terrible spiritual, mental and emotional state. God’s Holy Spirit helps people to maintain sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). And to start with, Saul

was a man who exhibited weakness in his character, such as needing the approval of men (1 Samuel 15:30). The removal of God's Spirit only made things worse.

Amazingly, David a talented shepherd boy, had already achieved notoriety at a young age, not only for his musical ability, but also for his fighting skills (verse 18). He was a levelheaded, handsome young man with a pleasing personality—a natural to be chosen to perform in the court of the king. Saul immediately took to David with a real affection, making him his armorbearer. David's performance of soothing music on the harp was able to settle and refresh the disturbed state of Saul's mind.

The Philistine Champion (1 Samuel 17:1-30)

In chapter 17 we will read about David's great courage and faith in facing Goliath, the giant. The Philistines were forever taunting their neighbors the Israelites. The Philistines were in a superior position to the Israelites in trade and technology. One way the Philistines tried to keep the Israelites subservient was by their monopoly on instruments of iron. While the iron age had come to the Philistines, the Israelites were only able to manufacture implements made of the softer bronze. The ability to forge iron weapons gave the Philistines a decided military advantage over the Israelites.

On top of that, here comes Goliath of Gath, a one-man army who, at 9 feet 9 inches, would dwarf even the tallest of today's professional basketball players! It is interesting that Goliath is mentioned as being from Gath. When the Israelites first came to the Promised Land, they encountered giants throughout it: "There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:33). Most of them, however, were wiped out by Joshua: "And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities" (Joshua 11:21). But notice the next verse: "None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod" (verse 22). So this unusual lineage remained in these three Philistine cities only—and Goliath, 400 years later, was from Gath. Moreover, he was, we will later find out, not the only giant from that area (see 2 Samuel 21:15-22; 1 Chronicles 20:4-8).

The Hebrew expression translated "champion" in verse 4 literally means "a man who is a go-between." Goliath offered a one-on-one, man-to-man, winner-take-all challenge to the Israelites. There were no takers. Though Saul was head and shoulders above his own people, he was certainly no match for Goliath. This presented seemingly impossible odds that virtually checkmated the king of Israel.

Three of David's oldest brothers were among the fighting men on the battlefield. Young David's responsibilities included keeping the sheep back home with an occasional trip to the front lines to bring supplies to his brothers and their leaders. Every day, morning and evening, for nearly six weeks, Goliath would come out and defy Israel to accept his challenge (verse 16). It frightened the wits out of the Israelite soldiers.

Then, one day, David happened to be there to hear Goliath's challenge. What really got to David was the blasphemous reproach brought on the armies of the living God (verse 26). The word "uncircumcised" was a clear indication that the Philistines were not in a covenant relationship with the living God as the Israelites were. Goliath was the enemy of God's people.

David immediately recognized that it was wrong to allow this situation to continue.

David believed it was necessary to intervene at this momentous time. It was not a matter of pride or vainglory on his part. His motives were selfless, yet he had to endure the criticisms of his brothers (verse 28).

Psalm 64

In **Psalm 64**, last in the group of four psalms here, David prays for protection from those plotting against him and meditates on the sudden judgment that awaits the wicked.

The rebels “encourage themselves” by scheming and coming up with the “perfect plan” (compare verses 5-6). By saying that the inward thought and heart of man are “deep” (verse 6), David seems to be saying that they are hidden deep down where no one would see, following the question in verse 5. But Someone does see. *The Nelson Study Bible* states: “The arrogance of the wicked in their plots against the righteous is a continuing theme in the Psalms (Ps. 9;10; 12). *Who will see* [they think to themselves]: The wicked do not know, or do not care, that there is One who sees (73:11), and who will repay (75:7)” (note on Psalm 64:5-6). Jeremiah quoted God as saying: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? *I, the Lord*, search the heart, / test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Indeed, David believes that God will punish the wicked based on the principle of just retribution. Their “arrows” or “bitter words” (verses 3-4) God will shoot back at them (verse 7). “He will make them stumble over their own tongue” (verse 8) is not a reference to stuttering but that their own words will ultimately trip them up and bring them down. In essence, what they plan to do to others will “come back to bite them” and bring about their own downfall (compare Galatians 6:7).

This will be a lesson to all (Psalm 64:9). In addition to *fearing* God, they will “declare the work of God,” passing on to others what they have witnessed, and “wisely consider” what He has done (same verse). In light of God’s faithfulness, David in verse 10 encourages the godly to trust and rely on Him.

Mark 7:24-8:38

This portion opens with the event concerning the Greek woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit who entreated Yeshua to heal her. His response was that He was to tend to the children of Israel first. The woman knew and understood His Words, but her response was one of such faith, understanding, and contriteness that He healed her daughter with just a word. The woman returned home to find her daughter well.

Yeshua then heals a deaf man who was also tongue-tied with simply some spittle and with His touch and command. His works were greatly published throughout the land that He made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak (fulfilling prophecy of The Messiah).

Yeshua again feeds a great mass of people with only seven loaves of bread and a few fish.

Following this, He and His disciples traveled by boat to parts of DImanutha and the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, ‘trying Him’. He was greatly bothered by this because they were always asking Him for a sign, at this time, Yeshua denied them anything and He left them.

Yeshua and His disciples again entered the boat and Yeshua warns them about the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herodes. When the disciples thought Yeshua was speaking about bread, Yeshua was astonished at them and their lack of knowledge and understanding.

He literally told them they were still hard of heart.

Yeshua heals a blind man so that he saw clearly, touching the man's eyes two times.

Yeshua questions His disciples concerning His reputation, asking them, "who do men say that I am?" They answered Him all they had heard from the people. Then Yeshua asked them, "who do YOU say that I am?"

Kepha answered, "You are the Messiah." Yeshua warned them to tell no one about Who He was. After that, He began to teach them that He has to suffer much, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days to rise again. Kepha responded in an argumentative fashion and was rebuked for it by Yeshua.

Yeshua called His taught ones near along with the crowd that was there and told them:

"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his stake, and follow Me.

For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for the sake of Me and the Good News, he shall save it.

For what shall it profit a man if he gains all the world, and loses his own life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinning generation, of him the Son of Adam also shall be ashamed when He comes in the esteem of His Father with the set-apart messengers."