

# Genesis 31:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

## Analysis

**If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said ...** This passage belongs to the Jacob narratives which demonstrate God's sovereign election overriding human merit and the transformation of a deceiver into Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. The Jacob cycle shows how divine purposes advance through flawed individuals whom God graciously transforms.

Key themes include God's sovereign choice ("the older shall serve the younger"), the consequences of deception and family dysfunction, exile and return patterns, wrestling with God leading to blessing, and covenant renewal across generations. Jacob's character development from manipulative deceiver to mature patriarch demonstrates sanctification's lifelong process.

Theologically significant aspects include:

1. divine election based on grace not merit (Romans 9:10-13)
2. God's faithfulness to covenant promises despite human unfaithfulness
3. discipline as evidence of divine love and means of transformation
4. generational patterns of sin requiring divine intervention to break
5. prayer and wrestling with God as legitimate expressions of faith.

Jacob's limp after wrestling God symbolizes how divine encounters leave permanent marks, transforming our approach to life and dependence on God rather than our own cunning.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

## Interlinear Text

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כָּל	יִלְד	וּ	שָׁכֶךָ	בָּ	יִהְיֶה	תְּ	נְקָדָם	יְמִם	וְאָמֵן	רַ	כְּ	הַ	אָמֵן	
H518	H3541	If he said	speckled	H1961	shall be thy hire	bare								H3605
		H559	H5348		H7939	H3205								
אָמֵן	רַ	כְּ	הַ	וְאָמֵן	נְקָדָם	יְמִם	וְאָמֵן	רַ	כְּ	הַ	וְאָמֵן	נְקָדָם	יְמִם	
all the cattle	speckled	H518	H3541	If he said	ringstraked	H1961								
H6629	H5348			H559	H6124									
שָׁכֶךָ	בָּ	כָּל	יִלְד	וּ	כָּל	בָּ	שָׁכֶךָ	בָּ	כָּל	יִלְד	וּ	שָׁכֶךָ	בָּ	
shall be thy hire	bare	H3605	all the cattle	ringstraked	H6629	H6124								
H7939	H3205													

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 30:32** (Parallel theme): I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire.