

Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.

**Genesis
32:01; to 33:20;
Jacob Returns to Canaan.
Graeme Morrison**



How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

No wonder so many unbelievers (and Christians) are **reluctant to do business** with Christians.

They know that while God may be with us, we do not always act in a godly way.

Dr. James Dobson tells an amusing story which illustrates a common tendency. A certain medical student felt that he could simplistically and single handedly take on a mental patient who had certain delusions by logically setting everything straight in his mind.

You see, this patient thought that he was dead. The aspiring doctor believed that all he needed to do was **rationally prove to this man that he could not be dead.**

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

**Sitting down beside this man,
the intern asked him if dead people could bleed.**

The patient said that he was certain they could not.

**The intern then pricked the finger of the patient
and triumphantly asked him
what he thought now that blood appeared.**

**“Well, I’ll be!” he responded,
“Dead people can bleed after all.”**

**Preconceived ideas
are very difficult to shed,
even in the light of undeniable facts.**

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

**We need to realize that we can be
very much like the mental patient,**

We can see this when we come to Genesis 32:28;

**We might be unwilling to admit that 32:28;
could be true: “And he said, “Your name shall
no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven
with God and with men and have prevailed.”**

**How could God possibly imply,
much worse clearly state,
that Jacob had fought with Him and won?**

**How can man prevail over God?
And how can it be said that Jacob
contended with men and won?**

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

Had not all of **Jacob's previous striving**
been in the power of the flesh?

Had it not **brought about only negative results?**

Had **God** not clearly indicated in the record
of these events that **such conduct**
cannot be condoned, nor should it be imitated?

Why, then, does verse 28 say that
Jacob has contended with God and men and won?

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

We like the insane man, have in mind that our presupposition is correct, and thus no facts could ever successfully contradict it.

Men cannot prevail with God, we reasoned, no matter what Moses wrote in 32:28; But we would be wrong.

Much of Jacob's striving was wrong. Indeed, all of his efforts at self help were wrong until we come to Genesis 32.

But just because Jacob's previous striving was sinful does not mean that all striving is such.

The Covenant of Peace. 31:43-55;

There is a striving which God commends and to which He even surrenders, so to speak.

It is that kind of striving which we need to look for as we come to this chapter in the life of Jacob.

Genesis 32 is the pivotal chapter so far as Jacob's life is concerned.

He is a vastly different man here from the person we have come to know in previous chapters.

The preoccupation which obsesses Jacob is the necessity of facing his brother Esau, from whom he has deceptively obtained the birthright and the blessing of his father.

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

**While the results were consistent
with the revealed will of God,
the means employed were not pleasing to Him.**

The result was a “brother offended.” (Prov 18:19;)

**When Jacob had left Canaan for Paddan aram,
his mother had told him that he would only need to
be gone for “a few days.” (27:44;)
Then, when Esau’s anger had cooled,
she would send for him. (27:45;)**

**Twenty years had passed and, so far as we are told,
he had never heard from his mother.**

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

That must have led Jacob to conclude that Esau still harboured a grudge against him.

Jacob thus had good reason to fear a confrontation with his brother.

From a divine point of view chapter 32 was the turning point of Jacob's spiritual life.

Jacob had bargained, even with God, up to this time.

In Genesis 28 after the vision of the heavenly ladder Jacob made a vow, but it was much more of a bargain with God than a surrender to Him

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

“Then Jacob made a vow, saying,

If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the LORD will be my God.”

“And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house; and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee. (Gen 28:20-22;)

This sounds like a bargain with God.

In return for God’s presence, protection, and provision, Jacob would let God be his God.

Of all that God gave to him in the form of wealth, Jacob would return ten percent.

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

**In effect, Jacob has made God his agent
and offered Him the normal fee.**

**What a far cry from what a man's response
to the living God should be!**

**All of Jacob's deceitful practices
which we have seen over the years of his life
are the result of a fundamental misconception.**

**Jacob felt that spiritual blessings
could be secured
by carnal methods and means.**

How to Win With God and Men Genesis. 32:1-32;

Jacob rightly believed that God had promised to make him, not Esau, the heir of promise with the rights of the first born.

He valued this blessing while Esau despised it.

What he did not yet know was that he did not have to connive and scheme in order to obtain the promised blessings of God.

The encounter which **Jacob** will have with the **Angel of Yahweh** will correct this error and will instruct **Jacob** as to how and why **spiritual blessings** must be obtained **through spiritual means.**

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

Jacob Travels Home.

**As Jacob left Gilead,
the angels of God met him. (32:1-2;)**

**God's company of angels camped
with Jacob's company of people.**

**Jacob named the place Mahanaim.
(Double Camp.)**

An Angelic Reception. Gen 32:1-2;

**“Now as Jacob went on his way,
the angels of God met him.**

And Jacob said when he saw them,

“This is God’s camp.”

So he named that place Mahanaim. (Gen 32:1-2;)

**The appearance of the angels
in Gen 32:1-2; sets the tone for the entire chapter.**

**In his first personal encounter with God at Bethel,
angels had played a part
in the heavenly vision of Jacob:**

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

“And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.” (Gen 28:12;)

In that dramatic revelation Jacob came to realize that he was in a holy place, a place where heaven and earth met.

In fact, it was a place of access between heaven and earth; it was “the gate of heaven.” (Gen 28:17;)

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

**In chapter 28 it was
the presence of God that was stressed.**

**While God promised to be with Jacob,
to provide and protect him in the land of Laban,
nevertheless God was present
in a special way in the land of Canaan.**

Jacob must someday return.

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

Now as Jacob is returning to the land of Canaan, God sent His angels to meet him in a special way. This was intended, to underscore the power of God.

In chapter 28 Jacob was leaving the land of Canaan. God wanted him to realize the special significance of this land so that he would always look forward to the time of his return.

Now, however, Jacob is returning to the land. The fact most prominent in Jacob's mind is the hostility of his brother Esau.

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

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If Laban had been angry and intended to do harm to him, how much more was Esau to be expected to be hostile?

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

What more **assuring experience** could come to **Jacob** than to be met by a host of angels, reminding him of **God's infinite power to protect him from Esau's fury just as He had done in the case of Laban. (31:24;)**

Jacob saw that where he camped there was another camp, **normally unseen. (2 Kings 6:16-17;)**

It was **the angelic host of God,** who would protect him regardless of what dangers lay ahead.

An Angelic Reception. 32:1-2;

Jacob concluded that God's camp was there where the angels met him.

What better place for him to make camp than alongside the angelic campsite?

Where could a man be any safer?

And so the name of the place was called **Mahanaim, "two camps."**

From such a point of security **Jacob would send ahead messengers**, who would seek to **soften the anger of Esau** in preparation for the arrival of Jacob and his household.

It would seem that the events of the rest of the chapter take place at this camp.

Jacob's Return (Gilead to Mahanaim.)

CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

Dothan •

Shechem •

Bethel (Luz) •

• Ai

Jericho •

Mt. Moriah

Salem (Jerusalem) •

Bethlehem (Ephrath) •

Mamre •

Hebron (Kirjath-arba) •

Gerar •

Beersheba •

Rehoboth •

Beer-lahai-roi? •

Wilderness of Paran ↓

Edomites

Mt. Seir

Hobah? •

Damascus •

• Laish (Dan)

Sea of Chinnereth

Gilead

• Mahanaim? •

• Succoth

Penuel

Peniel

Jabbok R.

Arnon R.

Ammonites

Moabites

Zered R.

Jacob Prepares To Meet Esau. 32:3;

**Jacob sent messengers to Edom
to tell Esau he was coming. (32:3;)**

**They returned saying
“Esau is coming!”
and 400 men are with him.**

Jacob feared Esau would destroy him.

**He divided the people
into two companies.**

He called upon God.

Jacob Prepares To Meet Esau. 32:3-6;

Then Jacob sent messengers before him
to his brother Esau
in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

He also **commanded them** saying,
Thus you shall say to my lord Esau:-

Thus says your servant Jacob,
“I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now;
and I have oxen and donkeys and flocks
and male and female servants; and I have sent
to tell my lord, that I may find favour in your sight.”

And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came
to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming
to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”
(Genesis 32:3-6).

Jacob Prepares To Meet Esau. 32:3;

Jacob felt compelled to contact his brother Esau.

To some extent he wished to bring about a reconciliation. He wished to inform his brother of his approach and, even more, to assure him of his kind intentions.

The substance of his message to Esau was that he had returned a wealthy man.

In this case he was not coming back in order to place a claim on his father's wealth.

Jacob sought to assure Esau that his return was a friendly and non threatening one.

All that he sought was Esau's favour.

Jacob Prepares To Meet Esau. 32:3;

Jacob seems to have a keen sensitivity here toward the feelings of his brother.

Perhaps he had **gained an appreciation of Esau's feelings by being the victim himself of one more cunning and deceitful than he.**

Undoubtedly **Jacob's very recent brush with danger** was still fresh in his mind.

Jacob is on his way to becoming a **different kind** of person, and **this message is the first indication of it.**

An Alarming Report. 32:3-12;

The messengers' report of Esau's response to Jacob's message was frightening:- **Esau was on his way to meet Jacob, accompanied by 400 men.**

Who could have imagined any intent other than one that was hostile? **Esau's men, like Laban's relatives, (31:24;), were not just coming along for the ride**

Jacob had little reason for optimism, and any of us would have responded similarly to such a report.

An Alarming Report. 32:3-12;

32:7-12; record for us Jacob's two fold response to the word he had received that Esau and company were rapidly approaching.

7 "Jacob was frantic with fear. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups; for he said, **If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape."**

9 "Then Jacob prayed, O God of Abraham my grandfather, and of my father Isaac, **O Jehovah who told me to return to the land of my relatives, and said that you would do me good."**

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

The **prayer of Jacob** is the **first** recorded in Genesis (28:20-22;) seems to be only a shadow of a prayer.

This was a **desperate moment**, and **Jacob prayed fearing** that Esau was to be upon him at any moment.

Needless to say, the prayer was uttered with the tone of urgency.

Jacob's plight was a desperate one.

This was a foxhole variety prayer. Beyond this, the prayer evidences a new humility in Jacob.

"I am not worthy," (v10) is now Jacob's confession.

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

The smug self confidence is gone, and so is the bargaining mentality. Jacob has no way to manipulate God as he has done others.

God's promises are the only basis upon which he can make his petition, and so he concluded his prayer, "For You did say ..." (32:12;)

So we see having made his plans and having taken all possible precautions, Jacob then turns to the Lord in prayer.

It might be nit picking to suggest that he should have prayed first, for aren't most of us just as prone to act first and pray later?

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

And yet, we find **something in Jacob's prayer that is appealing.**

It does not come across as pseudo-spiritual.

It is instead honest and forthright in expressing the doubts and fears of the one who offers it.

Notice several things about Jacob's prayer.

Jacob points out that **he got into this situation by obeying the direction of the Lord:**

And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, **O LORD, who did say to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you'**" (32:9;)

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

There are times when you can do everything right and still have wrong things happen to you.

On the other hand, we must admit that, in the bigger picture, Jacob got into this situation because he had cheated and tricked and lied to get that which originally belonged to his brother.

There is a lesson here.

It is that just because God forgives sin does not mean you will not sometimes reap the natural consequences of your actions.

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

Jacob recognizes his own unworthiness:-

**I am not worthy of the least of all
your loving kindnesses shown me again and again
just as you promised me. For when I left home
I owned nothing except a walking stick!
And now I am two armies! (32:10;)**

Jacob had no illusions about himself.

He was a heel-grabber and he knew it.

**He had prospered while in Haran, but that prosperity
was not a sign of his goodness or his faithfulness.**

**It was a sign of God's goodness
God's faithfulness and God's grace.**

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

Jacob prays for deliverance:

O Lord, please deliver me from destruction at the hand of my brother Esau, for I am frightened, terribly afraid that he is coming to kill me and these mothers and my children. (32:11;)

Jacob prays according to the promise of God:-

“But YOU promised to do me good, and to multiply my descendants until they become as the sands along the shores, too many to count.”

Jacob is saying in effect, “You promised that my descendants would be a great multitude and they cannot be a great multitude if Esau kills me, so therefore You must deliver me if You are going to keep Your word.”

Jacob's prayer for deliverance. 32:9-12;

Assuming the very worst, Jacob divided his company into two divisions.

His thought was that while one group might be attacked, the other had a chance to escape. (32:8;)

Since the group was divided into two camps and the word for camp is the same as that of verse 2.

It is possible that Jacob somehow concluded that his encounter with the angels was intended to provide him with a pattern for this decision to divide into two companies.

While it was an act stemming from fear and not faith, there was nothing particularly wrong with the division in and of itself.

Jacob Prepares To Meet Esau. 32:13;

**Jacob prepared gifts and sent them
ahead in droves to Esau. (32:13;)**

It was no small gift!

200 female goats and 20 male goats.

200 ewes and 20 rams.

30 milk camels and their colts.

40 cows and 10 bulls.

20 female donkeys and 10 foals.

An Appeasing Response. 32:13-21;

“So he spent the night there. He selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau:”

“two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.”

“He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass on before me, and put a space between droves.”

“He commanded the one in front, saying, “When my brother Esau meets you and asks you saying, To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?”

An Appeasing Response. 32:13-21;

**“then you shall say, These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau.
And behold, he also is behind us.”**

**“Then he commanded also the second and the third,
and all those who followed the droves, saying:-”**

**“After this manner you shall speak to Esau
when you find him; and you shall say:-
Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.”**

An Appeasing Response. 32:13-21;

Vital faith should not be idle faith. Faith without works, James reminds us, (James 2:14ff;) is dead.

Thus we ought not be too quick to condemn the actions of Jacob described in these verses.

There is certainly a clever strategy behind Jacob's efforts, but there is nothing intrinsically wrong in what he does.

Remember that for many years Esau had observed the cunning character of his brother Jacob.

The reception of one large gift would not necessarily be convincing enough to Esau that **Jacob had changed his ways.**

An Appeasing Response. 32:13-21;

Instead, Jacob sends wave upon wave of gifts to Esau, stressing the new nature he has which **makes him want to give rather than to receive and to serve rather than to supplant.**

Consequently, Jacob divided the gift of livestock into separate droves, each tended by servants who followed their flocks.

First there were goats, next sheep, then camels, cows, and finally, donkeys. Usually the females were accompanied by a smaller number of males, **which would serve as breeding stock to make the herds of Esau larger and larger.**

It was a gift which would make Esau prosperous.

Jacob's Return (Mahanaim to the Jabbok)

CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

Wadi Farah

Jordan R.

Jabbok R.

Arnon R.

Zered R.

River of Egypt

Way of Shur

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to be located beneath the shallow waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. This area was called the Vale of Siddim.

Map by permission of S. Scott Richardson • Russellville, AL

Sidon •

Tyre •

• Laish (Dan)

Hobah?

Damascus •

Dothan •

Shechem •

• Bethel (Luz)

• Ai

• Jericho

Mt. Moriah

• Salem (Jerusalem)

• Bethlehem (Ephrath)

• Mamre

• Hebron (Kirjath-arba)

Dead Sea

• Zoar

Ammonites

Moabites

• Gerar

• Beersheba

• Rehoboth

• Beer-lahai-roi?

Wilderness of Paran ↓

Edomites

Mt. Seir



An Appeasing Response. 32:13-21;

As Esau approached nearer to Jacob he must pass by each drove of live stock.

Those who tended these animals were **carefully instructed how to answer Esau's inquiry** as to whose livestock these were and where they were heading.

Each was to inform Esau that these were Jacob's livestock, a gift to Esau, and that Jacob would be found further back.

The cumulative effect was hoped to appease Esau's wrath and soften his anger (32:20;)

Again, Jacob and his family spent the night in the camp.

An Appeasing Response. 32:13-21;

What Jacob tries to do for himself,
Jesus did on our behalf. He appeased
the **righteous anger of God** against us. **He did not**
do it by sending wave after wave of gifts.

He did it by sending Himself.
Jesus was the answer to God's anger against sin.

The righteous wrath of God was appeased;
the righteous judgment of God against sin
was satisfied upon the cross.

Jacob Wrestles An Angel. 31:22-32;

**Jacob took his family and
his possessions and sent them
over the Jabbok River.**

He remained alone, north of the river.

**That night a “man” came and wrestled
with Jacob until daybreak. (32:24;)**

**Hosea 12:4; identifies
the “man” as an angel.**



An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

“During the night he got up and wakened his two wives and his two concubines and eleven sons, and sent them across the Jordan River at the Jabbok ford with all his possessions, then returned again to the camp and was there alone; a Man wrestled with him until dawn.”

“When the Man saw that he couldn't win the match, he struck Jacob's hip, and knocked it out of joint at the socket.”

“Then the Man said, ``Let me go, for it is dawn.“ But Jacob panted, ``I will not let you go until you bless me.”

**“What is your name?” the Man asked.
‘Jacob,’ was the reply.”**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

“It isn't anymore! the Man told him.

“It is Israel, one who has power with God. Because you have been strong with God, you shall prevail with men.”

“What is your name? Jacob asked him.

No, you mustn't ask,” the Man told him.

And he blessed him there.”

“Jacob named the place ‘Peniel’ (The Face of God), for he said, ‘I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is spared.”

“The sun rose as he started on, and he was limping because of his hip. (That is why even today the people of Israel don't eat meat from near the hip, in memory of what happened that night.)”

Jacob Wrestles An Angel. 31:22-32;

**The “man” told Jacob that
his name would now be Israel.
(one who strives with God.)**

**Jacob called the place Peniel.
(face of God.)**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

For some undisclosed reason Jacob was compelled to break camp in the middle of the night.

He first saw to it that his wives and maids crossed the Jabbok, along with their children.

Then the rest of the goods were transported to the other side as well

It would appear that while Jacob was making his last trip to the original campsite before joining his family on the other side of the Jabbok.

Jacob was confronted by a “**man**” who would oppose his crossing over to the other side and **who would threaten to keep Jacob from entering the land of Canaan.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

As biblical scholars have observed over the centuries, **there is much in this episode that is cloaked in mystery.**

However, we can make **several observations** with considerable certainty.

First, we know that this “man” (32:24;) was an angel:

“In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
And in his maturity he contended with God.
Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed;
He wept and sought His favour.
He found Him at Bethel,
And there He spoke with us.”
(Hosea 12:3-4;)

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

More than just an angel, this person was the Angel of Yahweh, some say the pre incarnate Son of God, Who appeared in human flesh.

This is in the light of Jacob's words:

"I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." (32:30;)

The struggle was not a dream or a nightmare.

Never has a man awakened from such a "dream" with a limp!

it was a struggle which God Himself initiated:

"Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak." (32:24;)

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

Jacob was mistaken if he reasoned that **Esau was the barrier** to his entrance into Canaan and the blessings of God.

In this wrestling match it was not Esau who opposed Jacob, but **it was God Himself.**

We must marvel at Moses' report that **the angel had not prevailed** against Jacob, a man now almost 100 years old. **How could it be that God did not prevail over Jacob?**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

It must be pointed out that Moses did not tell us that God **could not overcome** Jacob, only that **He DID NOT.**

At this point **the Angel disabled Jacob by dislocating his hip.** This would be devastating to a wrestler. It would be like breaking the arm of a rugby player or the leg of a runner.

Jacob was now unable to wage an offensive battle.

He was helpless. **All he could do now was to cling defensively in desperation.** And this he did.

Jacob, at the very point of being incapacitated, seemed to gain the upper hand. The Angel pleads with him to be let go, for the dawn was breaking.

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

We are not told, but we suspect that it was not for the angel's sake, but for Jacob's sake.

Jacob was in danger of seeing that which no man can see and live. Or the Angel did not wish to be seen in the daylight.

How can anyone strive with God and prevail? In the same way that a 10 year old grandson can strive with his grand father and prevail.

It is not that Jacob is on an equal footing with God. It is that God wants Jacob to want that which only God can provide. He wants that from us, too.

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

God wants us to hunger and thirst for His kingdom.

**He wants us to seek Him
with all of our strength and with all of our will.**

**He calls us to come and to wrestle with Him,
not in a bad sense, but in the sense that
a little grandson comes to wrestle
and to hug and to embrace his grandfather.**

**The Angel implied to Jacob
that he now had the winning edge.
(Contrary to the reality of the dislocated hip.)**

**Jacob was tested by being encouraged
to make a request of the Angel
which He was in no position to refuse.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**For Jacob, the bargainer,
this was a tempting situation.**

**Unlike his previous actions,
Jacob asked only for a blessing (32:26;)
Finally, Jacob had come to realize that the only
important thing in life is to be blessed of God.**

**In the words of Proverbs,
“It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich,
And he adds no sorrow to it.” (Proverbs 10:22;)**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**Esau could neither provide
nor prevent the blessing of God.**

**It was not Esau that stood in the way
of Jacob's blessing in the land of Canaan.**

**On the one hand,
it was God Who opposed him.**

**On the other,
it was Jacob himself, who by means
of his trickery and treachery, his cunning
and deceit attempted to produce
spiritual blessings through carnal means.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**What Jacob did in the Old Testament,
Jesus has done by coming to earth.**

Jacob	Jesus
Wrestled with an angel.	Wrestled with sin and with Satan.
Was a victor by grace.	His victory obtained grace for us
His hip was thrown out of joint.	All His bones were out of joint.
He won by losing but refusing to let go.	He won by losing His life on the cross.
He released the angel before the sun arose.	The sun hid its face as he was on the cross.
He saw the face of God.	He died that we might see God.
As a memorial, the Israelites did not eat the sinew of the joint.	As a memorial, we are called to come and eat at the Lord's table.

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

How about you? Have you been struggling?

**Looking for success? Longing to find
that someone special in your life?**

**Searching for that elusive something
that will fill the emptiness of your soul?**

With what have you been struggling?

Who is your opponent?

**Is it a person? Or a situation?
Or something about yourself?**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**Whatever you have thought it to be,
that is not the object of your true struggle.**

Your true struggle is with Him.

**It is with the same One
with whom Jacob struggled.**

It is with the One who comes:-

- in the dead of the night.**
- in the life of loneliness.**
- in the doubt of despair.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

What kind of struggle is it?

It is a struggle for that which God has for you.

“Lord, why don’t you just hand it to me?”

He answers,

“Because you won’t hold on to it if I do.”

**What God wants for you
is to hunger and thirst
for that which He has for you.**

He wants you to want...

What?

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

What is the goal of this struggle?

**What is the prize for which
Jacob has been toiling his entire life?**

It is the realization of the PROMISE of God.

Jacob wanted what God had for him.

And God wants you to want that, too.

What is it? What does God want you to want?

What is the prize? What is the goal?

It is God Himself.

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**“Brethren, I do not regard myself
as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do:”**

**“forgetting what lies behind
and reaching forward to what lies ahead,”**

**“I press on toward the goal
for the prize of the upward call
of God in Christ Jesus.”**

(Philippians 3:13-14;)

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

The blessing of God must be obtained from God himself, and this must be done by clinging to Him in helpless dependence, not by trying to manipulate Him.

That is the picture which is conveyed by this struggle in the night hours between Jacob and his God

A realization of this fact brought about a dramatic change in the character and conduct of Jacob, and thus his name was changed to reflect this transformation.

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**The Angel of the Lord asked his name,
and he had to reply, “Jacob,”
which meant “the Supplanter / Deceiver.”**

**This must have been as uncomfortable for Jacob
as it was for childless Abraham to refer to himself
by his name, which meant “father of a multitude.”**

**No longer should Jacob be known as a Supplanter,
for now he was a man who prospered
because of his faith in the purposes and power
of his God, and so the name Israel was given him.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

Few expressions are more puzzling than that of verse 28: And he said, **“Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.”**

How could God possibly make such a statement?

Does this not indicate that somehow

God was blessing Jacob

because of his previous trickery and deception?

Is God commending Jacob

for the way he overcame men in the past?

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

The key to understanding this statement is to recognize that it is not a historical statement but a prophetic announcement.

God did not refer to Jacob's past acts here but spoke of his future confrontations, particularly the one which he would have with Esau shortly.

Jacob did prevail with God in his wrestling match, although in many ways he did not really overcome God, for he had been immobilized by the dislocation of his hip.

His only act was to cling tenaciously to the Angel of Yahweh and, in the words of Hosea, "He wept and sought His favour." (12:4;)



Note:

**From this point forward,
the descendants
of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
are called the Israelites.**

The Israelites would be the people
through whom God would
fulfill his three-fold promise.

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**All of Jacob's life up until chapter 32
had been characterized
by carnal striving to secure divine blessing.**

**Now Jacob has learned
the folly and futility of such self effort.**

**Entrance into a life of blessing will be achieved
only on the same basis as Jacob secured
the blessing of the Angel of Yahweh,
by clinging to God to fulfill His promises
and by depending upon Him
to provide and protect when we are opposed.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**What a lesson this chapter provided the Israelites.
Here is the origin of their name as a nation.**

**Will their blessing as a nation come
from any means other than those which Jacob
has learned from his struggle with God?**

**This is what Moses sought to convey
to the Israelites as they (like Jacob) sought to enter
the land of Canaan and secure God's blessings.**

An Angelic Wrestler. 32:22-32;

**Ultimately it was not the Canaanites, the Hittites,
nor the Perizzites who would keep
the nation Israel from God's blessings;**

**It was God Himself Who would oppose them
if they failed to hope and trust in Him.**

**It was God Who would defeat the Canaanites
for them if they trusted in Him.**

One Step Forward and Three Backward. 33:1-16;

Jacob and Esau Meet.

The time to meet Esau had come.

(33:1;)

Jacob grouped his family.

1st – Bilhah & Zilpah and their children.

2nd – Leah and her children.

3rd – Rachel and Joseph.

**Jacob went before them
and bowed 7 times to Esau.**

One Step Forward and Three Backward. 33:1-16;

Nothing could be more devastating than to be making progress in a particular area and then to be swallowed up by a sense of pride and complacency.

We would then tend to rest upon our laurels and fail to press on to greater growth and maturity

That is precisely what Jacob does in these two chapters of Genesis.

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

**In the first portion of chapter 33
Jacob fearfully faces his brother,
expecting that the worst might happen.**

**But once this danger passes,
Jacob becomes forgetful of the divine command
and of his own vow to return to Bethel.**

**A false sense of security made Jacob
careless in his actions and brought him
to a point of very grave danger.**

**This danger was both physical and spiritual.
Except for the questionable actions of his sons
and the providence of God,
Jacob could have been virtually destroyed.**

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

As Genesis 32 closes, the wrestling match between Jacob and the Angel of Yahweh had just ended, and Jacob was crossing Penuel as the sun began to rise. (32:31;)

At that very moment, it would seem, Jacob looked up and saw **Esau and his 400 men appear on the horizon.**

Jacob divided his wives and children into groups, beginning with the maids and ending with Rachel and Joseph.

Jacob went to the head of the group so that any harm done would be inflicted on him first.

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

**It was he whom Esau hated;
Ultimately it was a confrontation
between these two brothers.**

**As Jacob went out to meet his brother,
he bowed repeatedly to the ground,
a token of his newly found humility.**

**Now this was a very dramatic moment.
Esau perhaps rode rapidly up to Jacob
and then leaped from his mount
and ran toward his brother.**

**Jacob must have watched this approach
with great anxiety, especially fixing his gaze
upon the weapons that Esau carried.**

One Step Forward. 33:1-6;

**Esau ran, embraced Jacob,
and wept. (33:4;)**

Jacob introduced Esau to his family.

**Esau asked Jacob about
all the gifts Jacob had sent.**

**Esau did not want to take them,
but Jacob insisted.**

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

It was not until the warm and tender embrace, underscored by tears of genuine joy, that Jacob realized, to his great relief, that **Esau came as a forgiving friend and brother rather than as a foe.**

The usual small talk began with questions about the wives and children.

Then the conversation turned to the droves of livestock that met him on his approach. Jacob explained once again that they were a gift, an expression of love.

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

Esau tried politely to refuse the gifts as unnecessary and unneeded, but Jacob persisted and prevailed.

The **tenth verse is the key** to the peaceful meeting of these brothers: **“No please!”** said Jacob.

“If I have found favour in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favourably”

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

In the previous chapter **Jacob** had been taught that **to prevail with God was to prevail with men as well.**

The one was the result of the other.
God, not Esau, had been the obstacle to Jacob's entry into Canaan.

Now that he had prevailed with God by means of petition and clinging to Him by faith,
Esau was no longer a foe, but a friend.

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

**Esau is a magnificent picture
of graciousness and forgiveness.**

His words of greeting to Jacob

**are remarkably similar to those of the father of the
prodigal son at his return. (Gen 33:4; / Luke 15:20;**

**Having accepted Jacob's generosity
in the gift of the droves of livestock.**

**Esau offered to accompany his brother
as he journeyed on to Canaan and, We would
suppose, to the home of their father. (31:30;)**

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

**Esau urged Jacob
to travel home with him.**

**Jacob declined because
of his young children and flocks.**

**Esau returned to Seir
And Jacob journeyed to Succoth.
(33:16-17;)**

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

Jacob expressed his appreciation but explained that he could not travel at the same pace as his brother and those with him.

The young cattle and children would only serve to slow Esau down unnecessarily.

To hurry the children and cattle would only result in needless losses.

Jacob's reasoning made sense, but Esau seemed to feel it necessary for **Jacob and his family and flocks to have an escort.**

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

Consequently, **Esau urged Jacob** to allow him to have some of his men accompany his party into the land.

Jacob indicated that there was really no reason to take such precautions and that all he desired of his brother was his favour.

And so **Esau went on**, assuming that he would see Jacob shortly; but, **as we know, this will not happen.**

It would seem that years would pass until these men met once more.

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

While we wish not to believe it and there may be some plausible explanations for his words, we get the uneasy feeling that **Jacob has resorted to his old habit of deception.**

Quote “these words are **not** to be understood as meaning that he intended to go direct to Seir; consequently **they were not a willful deception** for the purpose of getting rid of Esau.

Jacob’s destination was Canaan, and in Canaan probably Hebron, where his father Isaac still lived.

One Step Forward. 33:1-16;

From thence he may have thought of paying a visit to Esau in Seir. Whether he carried out this intention or not, we cannot tell; for we have not a record of all that Jacob did, but only of the principal events of his life.”

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), I, p. 309.

While Jacob said he was going to meet Esau at Seir (33:14;), he may have had no intention of doing so!

Certainly that is the way things worked out, and yet without any good reason.

The disastrous results of Jacob's side trip would indicate that Jacob was wrong in going to Succoth and later to Shechem.

One Step Backward. 33:17;

**“And Jacob journeyed to Succoth;
and built for himself a house, and made booths for
his livestock, therefore the place is named Succoth.”**

**It is Derek Kidner who aptly summarizes the significance
of Jacob’s journey to Succoth: “Succoth was
a backward step, spiritually as well as geographically.”**

**God had first appeared to Jacob at Bethel,
it was there that Jacob vowed to someday return
to build an altar and give a tithe to God. (28:20 22;)**

**When God instructed Jacob to return to Canaan,
He identified Himself as the “God of Bethel.” (31:13;)**

One Step Backward. 33:17;

Jacob was instructed to return “to the land of your fathers and to your relatives.” (31:3;)

Succoth was in the opposite direction of Seir where Jacob had told Esau he was coming.

While the text does not inform us of Jacob’s reasons for such a move, several could be suggested.

First, Jacob may not have been eager to face his father, whom he had deceived and of whom he should seek forgiveness.

One Step Backward. 33:17;

Also, Jacob may not have been too excited about spending much time in close proximity to **Esau, who was obviously well able to protect his own interests.**

Also Finding better pasture at Succoth for his considerable flocks and herds only furthered the delay.

“The site of Bethel in the mountains does not offer anything comparable to the fields east of the Jordan near the bottom of the escarpment of the Jordan Valley where the waters of the Jabbok offered drink for his animals.” Harold Stigers, *Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 255

Jacob's Return (Succoth to Shechem)

CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

Mt. Moriah
Salem (Jerusalem)
Bethlehem (Ephrath)

Mamre
Hebron (Kirjath-arba)

Gerar

Beersheba

Rehoboth

Beer-lahai-roi?

Wilderness of Paran

Sidon

Tyre

Kishon R.

Dothan

Shechem

Bethel (Luz)
Ai

Jericho

Wadi Farah
Jordan River

Dead Sea

Edomites

Mt. Seir

Hobah?

Damascus

Laish (Dan)

Sea of Chinnereth

Yarmuk R.

Galeed?
Gilead

Mahanaim?

Succoth

Peniel

Jabbok R.

Arnon R.

Ammonites

Moabites

Zered R.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to be located beneath the shallow waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. This area was called the Vale of Siddim.

A Second Backward Step. 33:18-20;

More distressing than the direction of Jacob's travels was **the duration of his stay at Succoth.**

We know that **Dinah** could not have been older than 6 or 7 when Jacob left Paddan aram, for **she was seemingly born later to Leah. (30:21;)**

By the time Jacob is at Shechem,
Dinah is of marriageable age,
which would have been at least 12 or 13.

Several years must, therefore, have passed between the meeting of Jacob and Esau and the events of chapter 34.

Some of those years must have passed at Succoth.

A Second Backward Step. 33:18-20;

This is further confirmed by the fact that **Jacob built a house** there rather than to dwell in a tent (33:17;).

He was not a sojourner here, but a settler.

There is every indication that **Jacob intended to “settle down”** for some time.

“Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan aram and camped before the city.”

“He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent, from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected there an altar, and called it El Elohe Israel.” (33:18-20;)

A Second Backward Step. 33:18-20;

We are not given any reason for Jacob's departure from Succoth to Shechem.

That would probably make interesting reading,

but Moses does not seek to satisfy our curiosity.

All we know is that Jacob arrived

“safely” at the city of Shechem. 33:18;

His camping near the city **is reminiscent of Lot's ever closer attachment to the city of Sodom**, until he was a citizen.

Again, **Jacob did not appear to be a man passing through**, for he **purchased a piece of property** from a man whose name he would some day like to forget.

A Second Backward Step. 33:18-20;

From **outward appearance** Jacob is a religious man, much like his forefather Abraham.

He has **built an altar**, which he called **El Elohe Israel**. Initially this seems very similar to what Abraham had done in the past, but **this thought is short lived**.

This is the **first reference to God** as the **“God of Israel”**

Later in the Bible story we will see that **Joseph’s bones will be buried in this tract of land**.

A Second Backward Step. 33:18-20;

When Abraham built altars,
he did so **“to the LORD”** (12:8;)
and both Abraham and Isaac
“called upon the name of the LORD”
in worship. (12:8; 13:4; 26:25;)

With **Isaac**, the altar was
the **first thing** he built. (26:25;),
while with **Jacob** it was **the last**. (33:20;)

A Second Backward Step. 33:18-20;

**All of this, in addition to later developments,
strongly suggests that while
there was a religious formality,
there was no spiritual reality.**

**Jacob promised to build an altar at Bethel, (28:22;)
which he later did, (35:13-14;)
but there does not seem to be
any great spiritual exercise here, only ritual.**

**It is extremely difficult to worship God
in the place where we are not supposed to be.**

**Genesis
32:25; to 33:20;
Jacob Returns to Canaan.
Graeme Morrison**

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**Next in the series:-
Genesis 34:01; Revenge against Shechem.**