

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Ten – Genesis 32:1-32

This is probably the most significant study of the series, because if there’s any story of Jacob that we’ve heard, it’s this one.

Let’s pray together.

Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the fact that it’s an opportunity for us to study and to understand what’s going on. And thank You that the more we study, the more we see a likeness to ourselves. And Lord we pray as we continue to pursue Jacob’s life and all of the inconsistencies, we would not be judgmental but be very, very introspective personally to ask ourselves the question, are we like this in our relationship with You? And that we would be those who would have the courage to make the changes in our lives to be in a position of blessing and joy. And we just ask You now to guide and direct this study. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

In the study of the life of Jacob, we’ve tracked him through the

taking of the birthright and stealing the blessing, and then having to flee to Paddan Aram. We've been there with him for twenty years—fourteen years to gain the hand of Leah and Rachel, and then six years to accumulate quite a livestock holding.

Jacob talks to his wives because he could tell there was a difference in the attitude of Laban and also the boys. Plus the Lord said, "It's time for you to go back home to Bethel."

And after consulting with his wives, they agreed to leave and they didn't tell Laban. He was down south for three days sheep shearing, and didn't know or get word of the fact that Jacob had fled.

The journey was very quickly made and then we had a very, very ominous encounter between Laban and his family and Jacob and his family.

And the issue was basically over the stealing of the gods. Rachel did steal them and Jacob didn't know anything about it. But then there was a real pouring out of bitterness and resentment on the part of Jacob for all that Laban had done to him over the last twenty years.

That ended in a COVENANT and with a SEPARATION. Jacob was so happy he was probably dancing, because he saw the dot on the horizon as Laban was going back to Paddan Aram and he was getting ready to go in the other direction.

Now as the scene of our study opens, here is some information on the kids:

Reuben is probably the oldest at 12,

Simeon is 11,

Levi would be 10,

Judah would be 9,

Dan would be 8, and

Naphtali would be 7.

Gad would be 8 and

Asher would be 7.

Dinah the only daughter in the bunch is 6, and then

Joseph is probably 6.

Benjamin's the only one left and we'll see him born in our next episode.

We ended our last study with:

Genesis 31:55

Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

Now we would think maybe there's going to be a little peace, but behind him is Laban, in front of him is Esau, and above him is God. And so our guy is between a rock and a hard place.

The significance of what's getting ready to happen is as he turns toward Esau, remembering the last words that were said by him, "When dad dies, I'm going to kill my brother Jacob."

Question—Has twenty years changed his attitude at all? Has he mellowed any? Or is he even more bitter and resentful? And having found out that Jacob is on his way back, is he going to do all that he had said?

We don't know.

Phillips Brooks says this:

(Addresses by Phillips Brooks)

There is no single act of your life, my friend, there is no single dilemma in which you find yourself placed, in which the answer is not in Jesus Christ.

p. 127

Rick Warren said:

(The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren)

The answer is not in a place, a program, or a pill. The answer is a person. [It's in Jesus Christ.]

p. 78

And this is going to be an interesting study because here he has experienced a deliverance by the fact that God has intervened. Remember, He went to Laban the night before and said, “Don’t you do any harm to him.”

Now if God can do that to Laban, couldn’t the guy at least believe enough that God could do the same for Esau, in keeping him from doing harm and damage? Because he’s in God’s will. God said, “Go back to the land.”

God said originally in Genesis 28:15, “I will be with you. Wherever you go I’ll protect you and I’ll bring you back to this land.” So God is obligated to protect Jacob in these situations.

But just like us, we read the scripture, we pray about it, and then we jump right up and try to get in there and help Him and we make a big mess out of it.

We’re going to see the same thing—and some of these things still have to be learned. And the significance of these will become very clear as we get in the verses.

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Ready?

v. 1 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

“Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him.”

Isn't it interesting that the angels met him going up and now twenty years later the angels meet him coming back?

Remember that first night out from home on his way to Paddan Aram, there were stairs that were reaching to heaven and the angels were ascending and descending on it? And that's when God said, “I'm going to protect you. I'm going to take care of you.”

Do you believe that angels are there to protect and to provide? It's going to be one of the most interesting things in heaven to see how many times we had such a close call that there were angelic, unseen forces that were protecting us.

Angels are very real. Obviously, Jacob needed to be reminded of that.

Psalm 34:7

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and he rescues them.

So many times we're not aware of that.

Remember Elisha is aware of the fact that the king has sent all of His armies? Elisha said, “Lord God, open the eyes of my servant.” When he does there are angels, a whole host of angels, all around Elisha and the army is not going to be able to do anything to Elisha because God has sent His angels. (see 2 Kings 6:15-17)

God anticipates and He provides for situations. So he’s met them going up, met them coming back. But what do we do?

“Lord, I’ll trust You with my eternal destiny but I’m afraid You’ll blow the next 24 hours.”

It’s kind of like a joint venture type of thing where we feel like God is needing our help, and so we’re going to do that.

Here are three statements:

“Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.”

(source unknown)

“The person you are now, the person you have been, and the person you will be—this person God has chosen as His beloved.” – William Countryman

(source unknown)

“I pray God may open your eyes and let you see what hidden treasures He bestows on us in the trials from which the world

thinks we can only flee.” – John of Avila
(source unknown)

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 26, when Peter tried to hack off the ear of the servant of the high priest, “Put up your sword. The Lord Father has twelve legions of angels”—that’s 72,000 angels—“that are alert status if I need to call on them in trouble.” (see Matthew 26:53)

God is protecting His own so rest in that.

v. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.

“When Jacob saw them, he said, ‘This is the camp of God!’ So he named that place Mahanaim.”

Now, remember going out he named it “Bethel”—“the house of God,”—because of the angels being there.

Now coming back he calls this place “Mahanaim.” That means “campground.” And we could say it’s the angelic campground because of all of the angels that are there to greet him now that he’s on his way back.

Why did the Lord do that? If He put this into laymen’s terminology He’d say, “Look, I can handle it. Just trust Me. Have I done well for twenty years while you’ve been over in Paddan Aram? Did I do really well with Laban just a while ago?”

Reflect on what He has done and it will help in our orientation to Him in what comes up in the future. Because He's the Lord God. He's the same yesterday, today and forever. And He doesn't change His plan just because our circumstances are more dramatic and more difficult. He's still God. He's the Lord God and He changes not, and therefore we can call it that.

Now he calls the place "Mahanaim."

Now remember Mahanaim from the life of David. When Absalom came to steal the kingdom from his dad, David took the men that he had and went north and across the Jordan River about 75 miles to a place called Mahanaim. And that's where they staged the resistance against Absalom and his ultimate demise.

It's interesting in the life of David, when he gets to Mahanaim, he writes Psalm 3. Let's look at a few of those verses so we can get a feeling of how David felt:

Psalm 3:1-7

O Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."
But you are a shield around me, O Lord;
you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.
To the Lord I cry aloud,

and he answers me from his holy hill.
I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.
I will not fear the tens of thousands
drawn up against me on every side.
Arise, O Lord!
Deliver me, O my God!...

So it's like there's huge numbers of people coming with Absalom and the forces to confront him and to take his life. He's the target, and yet he can lie down and sleep because he knows that God is there to protect and provide.

The thing we're going to watch, there are eight things he does even after he sees the angels, knows the message, and knows that God's taken care of Laban. He still does these eight things and every one of them would make us think that he's never seen an angel and he's never been delivered and he doesn't know if God really exists.

Talk about inconsistency.

v. 3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

“Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.”

Now on the map that's going to be straight south about 150 miles from right where they are. So these guys have a long

trip to make.

Now it could be that Esau already knows and he's heading north. So they meet him somewhere on the way. It seems that way in the text, that he has already found out and he's coming up there. And so he's going to send them down there—that's the first thing.

Why does he need to send messengers if he knows that God is going to take care of the situation? The same reason that when Peter saw the winds and the waves, he started to sink in the water.

When we get our eyes off the Lord and on our own circumstances and our own resources then we're going to make a wrong decision. And it will be some act of the flesh to try to bring peace when our peace should be in the Lord and Him alone.

Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man brings a snare, but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

What's he forgetting? The battle is the Lord's! The Lord will protect and provide for His own.

Isaiah 59:19

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the

Lord will lift up a standard against him.

Now notice what he said. This is very instructive here because this does not sound like Jacob. And we have to understand why.

v. 4 He instructed them: “This is what you are to say to my master Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now.’

“He instructed them: “This is what you are to say to my *master* Esau: “Your *servant* Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now.”

What he’s saying in the address is that, “I’m sorry I stole the blessing and you can have it back because I’ve got all I need.”

The first thing he wants to let Esau know, he is not coming home to steal the inheritance, which he owns by right because of his birthright. He doesn’t need anything and if anything, it shows Esau that he’s no threat to him or to what’s going to be his.

So he wants to find out, but he uses the word “master” and the word “servant” over and over again.

The other neat thing about this is maybe he’s come far enough after twenty years in Paddan Aram being a servant with a master like Laban, that he really knows how to talk that kind

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of language.

One of the biggest lessons we can learn in life is not to wake up to be the master, but wake up to be a servant.

It's "well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy that I've prepared for you." (ref. Matthew 25:23)

So on the one hand we can say he's learned some big lessons. And that being master and having the blessing isn't all that big a deal if it's going to ruin the relationship with his brother for twenty years.

Some of us have made those same stupid mistakes. We just hang onto our rights and we destroy relationships right and left in order to get what we want. And we've got to allow the Spirit of God to convict us in that and to get our hearts right.

And at least, he does that. He says, "And then to bring you up to speed. For twenty years I've been with Laban." Well he knows Uncle Laban as well as anybody, because that's his mom's brother in Paddan Aram. So he now brings him up to speed with that just one statement.

Anyway, let's move on. His whole approach is to be HUMBLE and it's to throw up the white flag and hope, as he plays the servant bit, that it's going to work with Esau.

Now he says what else?

v. 5 I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.”

“I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.””

There’s the REASON for the mission, right there in the last phrase.

“I want you to know I’ve got all I need. I have an abundance of livestock. You don’t have to worry about that. I’m fine, but:”

“I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.”

“The whole PURPOSE of our getting together is I want to find favor that was lost before.”

It’s pretty tough to get mad at a guy that’s washing your feet, isn’t it? In essence he’s coming with a servant attitude. This humble, broken spirit:

“And I’m sending my message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.”

v. 6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is

coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”

“When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, ‘We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.’”

We don’t know anything about their attitude, do we? And he doesn’t say anything. When they saw four hundred guys, they just turned tail and came back and reported to Jacob.

Even to get Jacob to the point where he’d realize this is going to be tough.

So are they on a military mission? Interesting thing about this is that if God uses the same thing with Esau that He did with Laban—because Laban left ticked off and God stopped him the night before he got there—it could be very well that Esau has 400 guys to make Jacob pay the piper for what he did to him. He still could be very upset.

But God can take care of that. And in brokenness, bring Esau to a place where he realizes that Jacob has really changed.

Again those last words of Esau were, “I will wait until Isaac my father dies and then I will kill my brother Jacob.” (ref. Genesis 27:41)

Well, the first thing he hears is “400,” then what does he start doing?

“There’s 40 of us and over half of them are women and kids. The odds are not all that great.” This is Custer’s last stand, which is kind of the feeling that’s going on inside. “There is no way that we can do this!”

Now what’s wrong with that? He forgot Bethel, he forgot the stairs, he forgot the angels, he forgot the promises. All he could think about is his own inadequacy and the focus is on him.

And because of that, he’s pushing the panic button. He should be singing, “just praise the Lord.”

“Circle the wagons! We’re getting ready for an attack!” is all the Modis Operandi now that’s going on since he’s gotten this message that 400 guys are on their way.

v. 7 In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well.

“In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well.”

STRATEGY:

Get two groups and he can kill the first one, but maybe the second one will escape.

It's a military operation basically.

Okay, what was his first response?

He sent messengers.

What is his second response?

In great distress and fear he divides them into two companies, sure that something is going to happen.

The *NET Bible* translates verse 2:

Jacob was very afraid and upset...

That pretty well expresses the Hebrew of the verse and why he divides them into two.

“You see, don't you remember what I just did with Laban? I can also do with Esau.”

“No, no. I can't go without”—WORRY is accepting responsibility that God never intended us to have. Right?

And how many times do we do that?

Discouraged and depressed, we get down, we get our eyes off the Lord. We're kind of like old Elijah, huh? Just to think that in fear he takes off without any word from the Lord.

Well here's Jacob in the same thing, just so concerned.

Now when we get to verse 8, he's going to do the third thing. And this is where we have to really be careful.

v. 8 He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape."

"He thought,"

When we're thinking about praying it's going to be STINKIN' THINKIN'. And it's usually going to be wrong.

The first thing we have to do in the morning, before we get time to even think, is to PRAY. Because then we're throwing ourselves open to the Word and to wisdom that can remake our thinking so that we will bring those thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ and we'll have a totally different orientation to the day. That's why the first thing we have to do is be in the Book. So the Word fills our mind, the wisdom that the Lord has promised to provide will fill our mind.

See he's got the cart before the horse here. He thinks and then he prays.

"He thought, 'If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape.'"

v. 9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham,

God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’

Verse 9, he prayed. There’s the fourth thing.

This is the first time we’ve seen Jacob pray, isn’t it? It’s been a long haul. Of course he did make a vow to the Lord, but that wasn’t really prayer, back there at Bethel twenty years ago. But we haven’t seen prayer since then.

He’s probably saying, “Lord, there’s a lot of things I’ve thought and a lot of things that I prayed for, but now I really mean business.”

This is panic time and so he’s going to pray. And it’s a beautiful prayer, because it’s the reminder of the Abrahamic covenant. And he’s going back to the fact that he is going to be next in line—Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob.

“Then Jacob prayed, ‘O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, [You’re the one] who said to me, “Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’”

So he’s PLEADING THE PROMISES, isn’t he?

It’s a good prayer! It’s just that he’s done a whole lot of planning before he prays, then he goes back to planning again after he gets through praying. And that doesn’t work really

well.

The fourth thing he does is HE PRAYS and it is beautiful.

“Lord, You said return. I did and it looks bad. It’s hard.”

He’s praying for DELIVERANCE and for FULFILLMENT in this situation. It’s not that he doubts that God can do it, it’s just that he feels like he still needs to have a part.

Now, it’s beautiful in verse 10. He’s HUMBLE. Look how he describes himself. This is a spirit of GRATITUDE.

v. 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups.

“I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown to your servant.”—he’s really broken—“I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups.”

An attitude of gratitude gets us a long way down the road. That’s why he’s saying, “lord” and “servant,” and some of these things that he has learned with Uncle Laban. These things are now coming out in a humble and broken spirit. If we’re not humble and broken, we’re proud and unbroken. Always getting less than what we deserve.

But he talks about His loving kindness. He talks about His faithfulness. God has been so patient and He's made careful provision.

Now the PLEA comes in verse 11.

v. 11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.

“Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau,”—**REASON**—“for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.”

He makes it as pathetic as possible. He'll come in and he'll murder the whole family. So now he has asked God to put His rubber stamp on it and to deliver him.

And then, notice verse 12 comes to the end of the PRAYER:

v. 12 But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’”

“But you have said, “I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.””

What's he saying?

He's saying, "Lord, I sure got a good start. I've got eleven of them already on the way. And Lord, it'd be embarrassing to have to lose all this work we've already done in Paddan Aram."

This is all part of it so he's kind of prophetic almost in that.

"Lord, I'm Your responsibility in light of the promises. Lord, if Esau gets his way there won't be any descendants."

So he's playing a scenario before the Lord in what he's requesting.

Brennan Manning has written some excellent books. He makes this great statement:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

RUTHLESS TRUST ULTIMATELY COMES DOWN TO THIS:
FAITH IN THE PERSON OF JESUS
AND HOPE IN HIS PROMISE.
IN SPITE OF ALL DISCONCERTING APPEARANCES,
WE STARE DOWN DEATH WITHOUT NERVOUSNESS
AND ANTICIPATE RESURRECTION
SOLELY BECAUSE JESUS HAS SAID,
"YOU HAVE MY WORD ON IT."
—BRENNAN MANNING

p. 36

That's what Jacob needs to understand. God makes a promise, He doesn't change His mind, He doesn't break the promises.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Faithful is the one who calls you, who will also do it.

It's going to be okay. He's going to prove Himself faithful.

Now we get to verse 13.

v. 13 He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau:

“He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau.”

Well, he had this wonderful time of prayer. We see some things. What's the fifth thing he does? He starts pleading his resources with the present to placate his brother.

So we PRAYED but now we're going back to PANIC.

We PLANNED and then we PRAYED, and now we're going to go back to PLANNING again.

5. “he selects a gift for his brother Esau.”

Look at the gift!

**v. 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats,
two hundred ewes and twenty rams,**

“two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,”

**v. 15 thirty female camels with their young, forty cows
and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten
male donkeys.**

“thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.”

How many is that? That’s 550, but don’t forget the mommas with the milking camels so it would be 580 total.

If all 30 of those camels—momma camels—had babies, then we’ve got 580.

Anyway, they’re divided into five groups. We have:

1. the “goats” in one group,
2. the sheep—the “ewes and the rams,”
3. the “camels” in group 3,
4. the “cows” in group 4, and
5. the “donkeys” in group 5.

And then what he's going to try to do is to send these in waves. One group comes with the servants—hit him with those. And just before he recovers from that, hit him with the second one. By the time he hits five, he's got to be filled with great gratitude or at least really impressed that Jacob really does have a lot of livestock.

v. 16 He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, “Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds.”

“He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, ‘Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds.’”

Now #6, “I want you to go ahead of me and I want you to keep some between the herds so that the impact and the impression increases with time as gift after gift comes.”

Now put those six together:

1. “[he] sent messengers,”
2. “in great fear and distress [he] divided the people,”
3. “He thought,”
4. “Then [he] prayed,”

5. he selected a gift for his brother,” and now

6. He has the gift prepared into five herds and he’s sending them on.

This is what he told him to do in verse 17:

v. 17 He instructed the one in the lead: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?’”

“He instructed the one in the lead: ‘When my brother Esau meets you and asks, “To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?’”’”

In other words, he has all the bases covered:

“To whom do you belong,”

“where are you going,”

“who owns all these animals in front of you?”

v. 18 then you are to say, “They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.”

“Then”—group #1—“you’re to say, “They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is

coming behind us.”””

Setting up see, with group #1.

v. 19 He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: “You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him.

“He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: ‘You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him.’”

In other words, first group say this, second group same song second verse, same song third verse, fourth, fifth.

v. 20 And be sure to say, ‘Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.’” For he thought, “I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.”

“And be sure to say, “Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.” For he thought,”

Now he’s PLANNED, he’s got a PRESENT, PRECEDE the PRESENCE, all for the purpose of PACIFYING.

Remember, he thought back in verse 8, now he’s thinking again. And this is what he’s thinking about in the present:

“I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead;

later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.”

That’s the whole mission—try to PLACATE him with the gifts. And this is the second time he uses the word “thought.”

And please understand, Satan’s main attraction to us and access to us is wrong thinking. When we’re thinking in the flesh, we’re going to be divisive and critical, we’re going to assume things that aren’t true. And that’s how Satan gets in.

That’s why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5, “Bring every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ.”

That’s why we start every morning asking Him to help us to think right.

Philippians 4:8

Finally my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

That’s the MENTAL MENU of the spirit rather than of the flesh.

And it’s so hard to admit that we’re wrong in our thoughts, isn’t it? And yet that’s part of growing in our relationship to the Lord. To allow the Spirit of God to control our mind and

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our thoughts.

This whole thing wouldn't have happened if he was thinking right about the angels back there at the beginning. This whole scenario is all meaningless. It's from the flesh and it's sound and fury, signifying nothing. It's going to accomplish nothing different than what the Lord would accomplish if he had just gone straight on.

v. 21 So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

“So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.”

v. 22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.

“That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.”

Now he's not in the line-up. They're still on the eastern side, but he crosses this small ford of water, “the Jabbok,” and sends his family over on that side hoping that water between him and the coming of Esau will cause them to be protected.

So that's the seventh thing:

7. “[He] got up, took his two wives, the maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.”

v. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions.

“After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions.”

It is a major move and the 8th and final thing he does.

8. After he sends the family, he sends over all of his possessions.

That’s the kind of meaningless stuff we get involved in when we’re in the flesh rather than the spirit.

In just a minute we’ll see that it’s meaningless. It was absolutely unnecessary, if he just would have listened to what the Lord was saying, and acted upon what the Lord had promised. And yet he did all eight of these things. Brings us such comfort, doesn’t it?

Now when we get to verse 24, it got really dark okay. And if he had Uncle Laban that was heading one way and brother Esau coming the other way, and the Lord over him and somebody touches him in the night, he’s practically going to lose it, isn’t he? Obviously that’s what happens.

v. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with

him till daybreak.

“So Jacob was left alone, and the man wrestled with him till daybreak.”

It’s a STRUGGLE.

Hosea makes reference to this in his prophecy:

Hosea 12:4

He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor...

It’s like a hand reached out and said, “You’re not going into the land with that kind of an attitude. We’re not going to go into the land with this kind of an agreement. I’ve provided everything you needed and this is what you’ve done. You and I are going to have it out right here. And we’ll get this whole thing settled and then you’ll be able to go into the land without any hindrance. But right now in your life, this is what’s going to happen to you all night until you learn to do things My way and to trust Me and to know that I can handle it.”

And that’s the scenario that’s behind this whole act. Notice Jacob doesn’t wrestle with the angel, the angel wrestles with him. The angel of the Lord is always the pre-incarnate Christ, so he’s wrestling with the Lord Jesus Christ—**THE PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST**—in all of this.

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Has he fought all of his life?

He fought in the womb against Esau.

He struggled and fought with Esau through all the years he was home.

For 20 years he's fought with Uncle Laban.

And here he's still fighting to get his own way in all these things.

And now comes the time for the CONFLICT.

Jacob's got problems:

with HIMSELF,

with his SELF-WILL,

with his SELF-PURPOSE,

with his SELF-DEFENSE,

his SELF-DESIRE, and

his SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

And God must BREAK IT to MAKE HIM into the man He

wants him to become.

And so it's a fight. Now we are supposed to fight the devil and submit to the Lord, but obviously he is fighting the Lord in this situation. And it's a really long battle.

Warren Wiersbe puts it this way:

God meets us at whatever level He finds us in order to lift us to where He wants us to be.

(source unknown)

And that's where He is working on in his life. Samuel Rutherford says:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

Be content, ye are his wheat growing in our Lord's field. And if wheat, ye must go under our Lord's threshing instrument, in his barn-floor, and through his sieve, and through his mill to be bruised, as the Prince of your salvation, Jesus was (*Isa. 53:9*), that ye may be found good bread in your Lord's house.

p. 84

Then Rick Warren puts it this way:

(The Purpose of Christmas by Rick Warren)

Why...surrender to God? Well, one fact is certain: there's no way you can win a war against God. As the title of the 1980's Broadway play points out, "Your arms are too short to box with God!" As Job's friend said, "*Stop quarreling with God! If you agree with him, you will have peace at last, and things will go well for you.*"⁶²

62. See Job 22:21
p. 103

And so many of us fight, fight, fight. We look back on the history of our lives and we realize we've missed so much because of our stubbornness and our refusal to be totally and completely submissive to Him.

A. W. Tozer, when he's describing the night Abraham has to sleep before walking up the hill and offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice on the mountain, says:

(The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tozer)

The sacred writer spares us a close-up of the agony that night on the slopes near Beersheba when the aged man had it out with his God, but respectful imagination may view in awe the bent form wrestling convulsively alone under the stars. Possibly not again until One greater than Abraham wrestled in the Garden of Gethsemane did such mortal pain visit a human soul.

p. 25

That's Jacob. He's in the same situation that Abraham was in. He is in the place where God is getting ready to bless him, but this has to happen first.

v. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

“When the man saw”—verse 25—“that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.”

Now obviously something has to happen here though. Obviously the angel, after he wrenched it out, probably put it back in again. Because he could not even limp. There is no way when that thing is out, you cannot put any weight on it, absolutely none. There's nothing to hold up that side.

So perhaps the wrenching took place like this is very painful and caused the clinging and the begging and the tears and the blessing that comes. Probably before he goes back to his family he is limping and the hip is back in place.

Well think of all the things that have happened in his life and now God has to touch the socket of his thigh.

There's a lesson here too. When we don't respond earlier, in sensitivity to what God's trying to do, He eventually touches us physically. And this is the final card in order to get what He wants from His servant. Think about it.

The LADDER,
all the DISAPPOINTMENTS for those 20 years,
the TROUBLES,
the CONFLICT,
those 20 years of SERVICE,
LABAN.

There's nothing left but to touch him physically.

He reduces him to HELPLESSNESS—He crippled him—just a light touch. He could have blown him away much earlier.

All of these things come and he's been a man who's been able to run when things got tough, but not anymore.

**v. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."
But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you
bless me."**

"Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'"

"I'm no longer struggling. I'm just clinging. I'm resting. I'm asking you now, Lord please just bless me," as they struggle

together.

He BUFFETS and He BLESSES.

He PRUNES and PROVIDES.

He HURTS and He HELPS.

He LAMED and He BLESSED.

**v. 27 The man asked him, “What is your name?”
“Jacob,” he answered.**

“The man asked him, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Jacob,’ he answered.”

Well, he’s admitting his true identity now by giving his name.

v. 28 Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

“Then the man said, ‘Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.’”

“You’ve been fighting against God all these years, now you’re going to be fighting for God. You are God’s fighter in the new stage. But lest you think that you can make a big decision and all of a sudden, you’re going to be Israel and no longer Jacob,

I've got to give you another *think* coming."

In our next study we won't see Israel used. The reason is, he's still the old Jacob, even though he's got a new name. And that's the struggle that all of us go through. We have a new nature within us but we're so prone to live by the old.

v. 29 **Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.**

"Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there."

v. 30 **So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."**

"So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.'"

So he's FOUGHT, and then when we get to verse 31, this is where we say that the hip was put back in.

v. 31 **The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.**

"The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip."

He probably found himself a stick or wood or something that he could hang onto. But he is actually limping and that's not something he could have done.

But as “the sun rose,” what do we think of?

Today is the first day of the rest of our life.

Many of us can identify with that. There are those times of great adversity in our lives which are major turning points.

Proverbs 4:18

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

You've turned the corner. You've made a decision. You've made a commitment. And it's right and you're just so mad at yourself because you've waited so long before you made that decision to do that.

v. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

“Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.”

Now there are eight lessons. Take time to meditate on them.

Lesson #1: At the hour of Jacob's need the angels met him. "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Lesson #2: It is the Father's will that we come to Him and as a servant ask of Him in prayer, "What wilt thou have me to do? Speak Lord for thy servant heareth."

Lesson #3: It is not the Father's desire to bless our plans as we pray.

Lesson #4: It is good to remind the Lord of His promises in the time of crises.

Lesson #5: The promises and the blessings will not be acquired through human effort.

Lesson #6: God may have to touch us physically when we fail to respond to Him spiritually.

Lesson #7: God helps the helpless.

Lesson #8: Jacob is now learning to do it God's way.

If Jacob had been obedient, it would have been a whole different ballgame.

Listen to what Andrew Murray says:

A life of absolute surrender has its difficulties. I do not deny that. Yea, it has something far more than difficulties: it is a life that with men is absolutely impossible. But by the grace of God, by the power of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, it is a life to which we are destined, and a life that is possible for us, praise God! Let us believe that God will maintain it.

Some of you have read the words of that aged saint who, on his ninetieth birthday, told of all God's goodness to him—I mean George Müller. What did he say he believed to be the secret of his happiness, and of all the blessing with which God had visited him? He said he believed there were two reasons. The one was that he had been enabled by grace to maintain a good conscience before God day by day; the other was, that he was a lover of God's Word. Ah, yes, a good conscience is unfeigned obedience to God day by day, and fellowship with God every day in His Word, and prayer—that is the life of absolute surrender.

(source unknown)

Nancy Leigh DeMoss does the best job, when it comes to the business of surrendering—like we've watched Jacob do. Consider these questions as we close:

(Surrender: The Heart God Controls by Nancy Leigh DeMoss)

MY LIFE

- Have I ever consciously acknowledged Christ's ownership of my life?

MY TIME

- Do I live with the conscious realization that all my time belongs to God, or have I merely reserved a portion of my time for the "spiritual" category of my life?
- Am I living each day in the light of eternity?

MY BODY

- Do I treat my body as if it is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)?

MY TONGUE

- Do the words that come out of my mouth reveal that my lips and tongue are fully surrendered to God?

MY POSSESSIONS

- Do I treat any of my possessions as if they were mine rather than God's?

MY MIND [Do it every morning before Satan gets a chance to sow those thoughts of discord and distraction. You've got to fight the battle here.]

- Am I “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5)?

MY WILL

- Do I consistently seek to know and to do the will of God in the practical, daily matters of life?

MY AFFECTIONS

- Am I moody? Temperamental? Hard to please?
- Am I allowing Christ to reign and rule over my affections, my emotions, and my responses?

MY RELATIONSHIPS

- Do I love God more than I love myself? Do I seek His interests, His reputation, and His pleasure above my own?

MYSELF

- Have I surrendered all that I am and all that I have to God?

[She has this beautiful prayer:]

O Lord, afresh this moment, I surrender every part of my being—all I am and all I have—to You.

As you pray these next words, visualize the place where you are kneeling as an altar of sacrifice, and picture each part of yourself being offered up to God as a living sacrifice: *I consecrate to You my life . . . my time . . . my body . . . my tongue . . . my possessions . . . my mind . . . my will . . . my affections . . . my relationships . . . myself. Take me, have me, do with me as You please. I am Yours for this moment and forever. Please work out that surrender in my life—every day, in every matter, until I bow before You in eternity. Amen.*
pp. 131-43 (selection)

Father, we want to have this breaking process take place in our own lives increasingly as we see areas of resistance to Your plan and Your purpose. Help us more and more to reflect the beauty of our Savior, because the Spirit of God has free reign to produce the life of Christ in each of us. We ask now that You will take the lessons from this passage, make this prove to be a very memorable time we've had together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Ten – Genesis 32:1-32

NOTES

v. 1 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

v. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.

v. 3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

v. 4 He instructed them: “This is what you are to say to my master Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now.

v. 5 I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, menservants and maidservants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.’”

v. 6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”

v. 7 In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well.

v. 8 He thought, “If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape.”

v. 9 Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’

v. 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups.

NOTES

v. 11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.

v. 12 But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’”

v. 13 He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau:

v. 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,

v. 15 thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

v. 16 He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, “Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds.”

v. 17 He instructed the one in the lead: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?’

v. 18 then you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.’”

v. 19 He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: “You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him.

v. 20 And be sure to say, ‘Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.’” For he thought, “I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.”

v. 21 So Jacob’s gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

v. 22 That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.

v. 23 After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions.

v. 24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.

v. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

v. 26 Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

NOTES

v. 27 The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered.

v. 28 Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

v. 29 Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.” But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

v. 30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”

v. 31 The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

v. 32 Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 32:1-32 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What happened to Jacob in verse 1?

3. What preparations does Jacob make in the meeting of Esau?

4. What report does Jacob receive from his servants, and how does he respond, according to verses 6 & 7?

5. What does Jacob do in verses 9-12?

6. What preparations does Jacob make for meeting Esau in verses 13-20?

7. Describe what happens to Jacob in verses 24-30.

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8. What mark does Jacob bear as a result of his wrestling match, according to verse 31?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: At the hour of Jacob's need the angels met him. "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

LESSON #2: It is the Father's will that we come to Him and as a servant ask of Him in prayer, "What wilt thou have me to do? Speak Lord for thy servant heareth."

LESSON #3: It is not the Father's desire to bless our plans as we pray.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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