

Genesis 32-33

Bible Study

Review (30-31)

Jacob advises Laban that he wants to return home

He makes a deal with Laban to keep all speckled, spotted and colored animals to be born in the future as his, trusting God to intervene for him

He flees from Laban with all his family, flocks and herds only to be pursued by Laban and his forces...who catches up with Jacob at Gilead on the border of the land of Canaan

God tells Laban in a dream not to harm Jacob....and they eventually form a mutual non-aggression pact

Chapter 32

Jacob, now in Gilead on the border of Canaan is most likely wondering about meeting up with Esau and how he would treat him? (Gen. 27:41)—he would kill Jacob

▪ This chapter--God is with Jacob

Phrase found only here and 28: 12 --(his vision of the ladder at Bethel)

Genesis 32:1-2

¹So Jacob went on his way, and the **angels of God** met him.

Psalm 34:7

⁷ The [£]angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

²When Jacob saw them, he said, “This *is* God’s camp.” And he called the name of that place [£]Mahanaim.

Mahanaim= two camps
Double encampment—Jacob’s.... and
God’s camp of angels

(JFB) “here it must have been a reference to the two hosts, God’s host of angels, and his own camp”

³Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of **Seir**, the country of **Edom**.



v. 3 “land of Seir, the country of **Edom**”—to the east and South of the Dead Sea

Appears that Esau has left home and establishes his own territory...

Perhaps heading **East** of Canaan because of his marriage with a daughter of Ishmael

⁴And he commanded them, saying, “Speak thus to my lord Esau, ‘Thus your servant Jacob says:
“I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now.

⁵I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord,
that I may find favor in your sight.’””

Jacob attempts to smooth his relationship with Esau...
He tells him of his wealth—that he does not expect anything from his brother

“my lord”—a title of honor and rank...trying to gain favor with Esau

⁶Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he also is
coming to meet you, and **four hundred men** *are* with him.”

“four hundred men”—a huge force for ancient times

Esau was a powerful chief living by the sword.... **as prophesied** (Ch. 27: 40) ‘by the sword
you shall live’

⁷So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies.

⁸And he said, “If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape.”

v. 7 “**greatly afraid and distressed**”—Hebrew phrase used when people are in dire straits and facing defeat

v. 8 Jacob acts decisively to salvage part of his family if Esau attacks

v. 9-12 Jacob’s **prayer to God** for deliverance (his character development)



⁹Then Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you’:

¹⁰I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies.

¹¹Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children.

¹²For You said, ‘I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude ’”

13 So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother:

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

15 thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.

➤ A valuable present of 550 animals as a present to Esau

(Word) “To send a present to a great man before meeting him was a conventional courtesy in the ancient Orient”

16 Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, **every drove by itself**, and said to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves.”

“every drove by itself” —with space between them so that Esau could appreciate and value the enormous gift


¹⁶Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves.”

¹⁷And he commanded the first one, saying, “When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose *are* these in front of you?’

¹⁸then you shall say, ‘They *are* your servant Jacob’s. **It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.’”**



Each group of servants with a herd of animals was to give Esau the same message:
“behold he is behind us”



¹⁹So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, “In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him;

²⁰and also say, ‘**Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.**’” For he said, “I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; **perhaps he will accept me.**”

Appease his brother

²¹So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

v. 21 He sent the gifts/present on, but Jacob stayed in the camp which was protection for him (v. 1)...(angels had been met him in the camp)

v. 22-23 then during the night he sent his family and entourage over the Jabbok



²²And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of **Jabbok**.

²³He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

Jabbok: (Heb.)= 'river of wrestling'

▪flows into the Jordan River

(v. 24-32)—This event will mark a turning point in the life of the patriarch Jacob

Jacob alone in the camp mostly likely **praying** for divine protection

²⁴Then Jacob was left alone; and a **Man** wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

“a **Man**”—in the form of a man...called **God** in verses 28, 30

(v. 24) “**wrestled**”—only occurs here (v. 24-26)

(NSB) “Jacob had been struggling all his life; even at the moment of his birth he was struggling with Esau. Later he struggled with Laban. Yet right before meeting Esau, Jacob had the struggle of his life! He who had once grasped his brother’s heel now clung to the bodily form of the living God”

²⁵Now when He saw that He **did not prevail against him**, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

Dislocated—most likely was very painful

Jacob realized the identity of his opponent and the significance

²⁶And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go **unless You bless me!**”

Reminding him the significance: supplanter –self-seeking

²⁷So He said to him, “What *is* your name?” He said, “**Jacob.**”

²⁸And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but [£]**Israel**; for **you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.**”

There is no clear consensus on the name **Israel**

Israel= prevailer with God.... or ‘prince with God’ (NSB)

▪The name “Israel” **used here** is a word play
(Word) Israel= ‘El [God] fights—used in the context

(Companion) “Israel”= God commands or rules

(JFB) “In scripture the name indicates the nature of the office; here the change of a name denoted the exaltation of a person and of dignity. Jacob was raised to be a prince, and a prince with God!”

²⁹Then Jacob asked, saying, “Tell *me* Your name, I pray.” And He said, “Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?” And He blessed him there.

Why did he not tell his name to Jacob? [Possibilities]....

(Word) “The man now identified with God refuses to give his name lest it be abused (Ex. 20:7; Judges 13: 17-18)

(JFB) “The request was denied, that he might not be too elated with his conquest...”

(NSB) “God would one day reveal His name more fully to Moses (Ex. 3: 14-15)

³⁰So Jacob called the name of the place ^εPeniel: “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

Peniel= ‘**face** of God’—he named the place as a memorial of the event

(JFB) “...not the full splendor of His transcendent glory, but such a display of it as the human faculties in their present state can bear”

Penuel= Peniel

³¹Just as he crossed over [£]Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.

(NSB) “Jacob’s experience with God physically changed him—he limped. The experience also had a spiritual impact on his life”

³²Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which *is* on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob’s hip in the muscle that shrank.

“**the muscle that shrank**” (JFB) “nervus ischiaticus, the nerve or tendon that extends from the top of the thigh down the whole leg to the ankles (sciatic nerve)”

(Word) “Nowhere else in the OT is this **custom** of not eating the sciatic nerve mentioned. Nor does it feature in later Jewish law.....by refraining from eating this sinew , the Israelites were constantly reminded of Jacob’s meeting with God...”

Chapter 33

¹Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants.

²And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.

With such a powerful force coming at him, Jacob feared Esau would destroy his family...he aligned his family so that his favorite wife was in the rear

³Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground **seven times**, until he came near to his brother.

(Word) “Sevenfold bowing was the proper act of respect of a vassal to his overlord...(bowing)...the proper respect toward high officials.

In bowing before his brother...he is trying to undo the great act of deception whereby he cheated Esau of his blessing”

⁴But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

The hate that Esau had previously has gone away, he treats him like a long-lost brother

⁵And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, “Who *are* these with you?”
So he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.”

⁶Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down.

⁷And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.

Jacob through words and gestures (bowing) is working on reconciling with his brother

The presents/gifts Jacob sent Esau

⁸Then Esau said, “What *do you mean by* all this company which I met?” And he said, “*These are* to find favor in the sight of my lord.”

⁹But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.”

¹⁰And Jacob said, “No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my **present** from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen **your face as** though I had seen the **face of God**, and you were pleased with me.

v. 10 (Word) “Jacob’s argument is that since you have received me with forgiveness as God has, so you must accept my ‘**present**’—a term also used for sacrifice”

“your face as...**face of God**” (NSB) “Jacob presented his gifts to his brother as if they were gifts to God”

¹¹Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” So he urged him, and he took *it*.

¹²Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.”

¹³But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children *are* weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing *are* with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die.

¹⁴Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.”

Esau offers an escort (v. 12) but Jacob politely turns him down on the grounds that his family and livestock could not keep pace with Esau’s men

¹⁵And Esau said, “Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me.” But he said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.”

Esau offers to give him a bodyguard...Jacob responds: ‘there is no need’

Last part v. 15 (TEV) “I only want to gain your favor”

¹⁶So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. (Edom)

¹⁷And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called [£]**Succoth**.

v. 17 **Succoth**= *booths* [located in the eastern Jordan valley]

(Keil and Delitzsch) “Succoth therefore, did not belong to the land of Canaan but must have been on the eastern side of the Jordan.

Jacob built a house and made covered stalls for his livestock and stayed here for a while

¹⁸Then Jacob came **safely** to the city of **Shechem**, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city.

The place of Abram’s first altar (12: 6-7)

(NSB) “Jacob retraced his grandparents route into Canaan through Shechem(12:6). Jacob did not live in the city because it was devoted to pagan gods. Instead he lived outside the city in a tent”

Jacob had asked in his vow at Bethel (28: 20-21) to return to the land in peace had now been fulfilled

¹⁹And **he bought the parcel of land**, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money.

“one hundred pieces of money” (Keil and Delitzch) “a quantity of silver weighed out”....

“This purchase showed that Jacob, in reliance upon the promise of God, regarded Canaan as his own home and the home of his seed.

This piece of ‘land’ which fell to the lot of the sons of Joseph, and where Joseph's bones were buried (Joshua 34: 32).....where Jacob's well is still pointed out (John 4: 6)”

²⁰Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.[£]

Jacob erected an altar to worship God as Abraham had done upon his entrance into Canaan

El Elohe Israel= God, the God of Israel

By naming this altar he is reaffirming his allegiance to God and that he had brought him back safely to the land

He is now worshipping God as his God, not just the God of his fathers...and has developed a personal relationship with Him

Lessons

Jacob did not give up as he wrestled with God—as a result he received a new name and was blessed

(Mat. 24: 13) “he who endures to the end shall be saved”

Jacob and Esau reconcile despite previous animosity over the blessings—God was with Jacob

Jacob’s conversion

He does not look upon God as only the God of his fathers—God is his God, and he has developed a personal relation with Him