

Genesis Ch. 32

V: 1-2 As Jacob continues on his way, he is escorted by the angels of God.

- God told Jacob that He would be with him and protect him, to Jacob these angels are an assurance of that promise.
- Jacob recognizes God's blessing.

Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

- As Jacob grows in his relationship with God – he more readily recognizes the servants of God – he is growing in discernment.
- As Jacob names that place “Mahanaim” – “makh-an-ah'-yim” which literally means “two camps”, Jacob is acknowledging that there is a whole other spiritual realm working all around us that often times we are oblivious to.
- The spiritual realm is real:
- Paul in exhorting us to put on the whole armor of God acknowledges that spiritual realm, and is warning us about the spiritual hosts of wickedness that are set against us:

Ephesians 5:12 “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

1 Corinthians 10:4 “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;”

Hebrews 1:14 “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

- We see angels in the Garden of Eden, guarding the tree of life, protecting man from eternal life in a fallen state. (Genesis 3:24)
- We see angels leading Lot and his family out of Sodom, just prior to it's destruction. (Genesis 19)
- Here we see angels ministering to God's servant Jacob, guiding him as he leaves the world, represented by Laban and the land of Haran – Jacob is headed back to the promised land.

V: 3-5 Jacob sends messengers to Esau. Why didn't Jacob send word to his father?
Jacob assumed that Isaac was dead and buried.

- One of the last conversations Jacob had with Rebekah (Genesis 27:45) was when she assured Jacob that when the coast was clear, she would send word to Jacob – we don't read about that word ever coming.
- Jacob didn't know what he was returning to.
- Jacob is probing; as he sends these messengers he is testing the waters, trying to spy things out ahead of time.
- Yellow canaries / firemen.
- The message that Jacob is sending to Esau is that he has enough cattle of his own and doesn't need to lay claim to his inheritance – Esau can keep everything that he got from Isaac.

V: 4 *“... my lord Esau; thy servant Jacob...”*

- Not just old fashioned pleasantries.

Mark 10:42-45 ⁴²But Jesus called them to Him, and saith unto them, ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. ⁴³But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be our minister: ⁴⁴And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

- Jacob had gotten both the birth right and blessing by trickery, having claim to both upon Isaac's death which would place him over Esau, he would in essence be master / Lord over Esau.
- Jacob no longer claims these things, if it is God's will he is willing to allow Esau to be Lord over him, Jacob is willing to be the servant.

V: 6 Esau is coming with 400 men.

- Military force, revenge?
- Coming to help with the cattle?
- Possibly afraid of Jacob, fearful of an attack?
- Perhaps Esau intended to exact his revenge away from Isaac?
- Jacob doesn't know what to expect, assumes the worst.
- Political cartoon back in the 80's when the Russians invaded Afghanistan, 100,000 bottle of Russian Champagne – carried individually by a Russian soldier.

V: 7-8 Jacob is greatly afraid, he forgets what he knows to be true:

1. God told him to return, and that He would protect him.
2. The angels of God are encamped around him.

We are told:

2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

- At the moment, all Jacob can see is Esau.
- Jacob makes his plan, and prepares to meet Esau.

V: 9-12 Proof that Jacob hasn't completely lost it.

- Initial reaction: fear / Gumby run
- 2nd reaction: Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7 “⁶Be careful for nothing / be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

1. Jacob properly addresses his prayer.
2. Jacob reminds God, that He is the One who said to return – meaning “you got me into this”.
3. Reminding God of His promise to protect Jacob.
4. Humility, confessing his lack of worthiness of the least of God's blessings.

Psalms 34:17-18 “¹⁷The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”

5. Jacob gives credit and praise to God, acknowledging that he passed over this Jordan river with only his staff; and that he returns a nation in the birthing, wealthy, and blessed.

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

6. Petition: save me!
7. Confession: “I fear him...”

Psalms 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

8. Another reminder of God's promise, not only to Jacob, but also to Abraham and Isaac. Sandwiched in God's word.

- Praying God's Word, invoking God's word is always a wise prayer.

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Proverbs 18:10 "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous run into it, and is safe."

- This all runs very much along the lines of how Jesus instructed us to pray:

Matthew 6:9-13 ⁹"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

1. **Properly addressed:** "Our Father which art in Heaven."
2. **Praise:** "... hallowed be Thy name."
3. **Agree with God:** "Thy will be done."
4. **Petition:** "... give us this day our daily bread..."
5. **Confession:** "forgive us..."
6. **Invoking God's word to protect us:** "... lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil..."
7. **Praise / doxology:** "For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."

- Jacob communicates with God honestly, not holding back – brought to a place of truth.

V: 13-16 Jacob prepares a gift for Esau to appease him, and to show that he's not coming back for the inheritance.

- Jacob prepares 580 animals in all; in 5 separate herds – looking for grace.
- Expression of good will and reconciliation.

Proverbs 15:1 "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger."

V: 17-21 Jacob instructs his servants to present each herd separately – stating that Esau’s servant Jacob is following.

- A direct and un-abashed attempt at appeasement.

“servant Jacob / lord Esau”.

- Jacob is not just appeasing Esau, he is allowing God to be the one who promotes him from servant to Lord over his brother.

Psalm 75:6-7 “⁶For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and sitteth up another.”

V: 21 Jacob stayed, he wasn’t moved, he didn’t run – he stayed to see the Lord’s salvation.

V: 22-23 Jacob sends his family and all his possessions over the River Jabbok, towards Canaan and his brother Esau.

Separating himself from his family and his stuff.

V: 24-25 Jacob ends up struggling, wrestling with God through the night.

- Jacob was alone, no one else saw his struggle.
- “man” could not prevail against Jacob so he crippled him.
- In a fight with God there is no advantage in deceit, and there are consequences.

“And when he saw that He prevailed not against him,...”

- God is all powerful and could easily have “beaten” Jacob, “prevailed” over him, pinned him to the ground, or smashed him to smithereens!

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- The goal isn’t to just gain victory over Jacob – to win, but for Jacob to surrender, to yield to God’s will.
- God touches the hollow of his thigh, his hip socket and cripples Jacob.

V: 26 As God disables Jacob, very painfully to Jacob – God wins the match – and Jacob clings to him and begs a blessing.

Hosea 12:3-4 “³He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: ⁴Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us;”

- The victory for Jacob wasn't in winning the struggle, but in the surrender.

Psalm 23:4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

- God as the Good Shepherd did what had to be done in breaking the precious little lamb's leg, then bound him up, and carried him on His shoulder.

Isaiah 40:11 “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

- God didn't break Jacob's arms, or disable him in a way that would keep Jacob from clinging to him

“I used only that level of force which was reasonable and necessary to effect the arrest of the suspect.”

- God is as gentle and as restrained as He can possibly be in dealing with His sheep – because he is the Good Shepherd.
- Jacob cries out, he begs for the blessing
 1. God does bless Jacob, not because he “won”, or because Jacob deserved or earned it.
 2. God blesses Jacob because God loves Jacob.
 3. Jacob is the recipient of God's un-merited favor.
 4. Jacob like us is the recipient of God's grace.

V: 27 What is your name? – like God doesn't already know.

- God is drawing something out of Jacob.
- My name is “Jacob” – heel catcher, supplanter, deceiver...

Psalm 51:6 “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”

- God made Jacob admit who he was, and what he was.

Psalm 33:4 “For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.”

V: 28 “... *thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel...*”

- Jacob goes from being “heel catcher”; “supplanter”; “deceiver” to “Israel” – “governed by God”.
- This is a total turning point for Israel.
- Jacob surrenders to God, Jacob yields to God – and he becomes Israel – governed by God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

- The new man gets a new name!

There is both a precedent and a pattern discernable here.

Genesis 17:5 - Abram had his name changed to Abraham.

- **Abram** / exalted father to **Abraham** / father of a multitude / father of many nations.
- The added letter is the “H” in Hebrew, the “ruach”, or the “breath of God”, the Spirit of God.
- Why the change? – Abram believed

Genesis 15:6 “And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.”

- In Matthew 16 – Simon Bar Jonah – Simon son of Jonah has his name changed to Peter, Cephas, little rock.

Matthew 16:13-18 ¹³“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am? ¹⁴And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed are thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. ¹⁸And I say also unto thee, that thou are Peter ^(Cephas), and upon this rock ^(petra) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

- The rock / petra – is the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
- This is the foundation upon which Christianity is built.

Matthew 10:32-33 ³²“Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. ³³But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before My father which is in heaven.”

Paul taught us:

Romans 10:9 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that god hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Again:

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

- Peter is a new man, and he gets a new name.

The precedent, and now the pattern:

1. Abram believes God - and he becomes Abraham.
2. Jacob surrenders to God - and becomes Israel.
3. Simon confesses Christ - and becomes Peter.

Believe – surrender – confess – new life.

V: 28b “... for as a prince hast thou power with God...”

The Hittites said of Abraham:

Genesis 23:6 “... thou art a mighty prince among us...”

- Literally a mighty prince of God – a good witness.
- Here God affirms the same thing about Israel.

“... and hast prevailed.”

- Jacob’s victory was through his surrender to Jesus.
- **How do we win our battles against God?** Surrender!

V: 29 Jacob asks Him – who are you?

- So often just like Jacob we don’t realize that we are struggling with God.
- Saul was persecuting the church, persecuting Jesus when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

Acts 9:4-5 “⁴And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? ⁵And he said, who are thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”

- As we know, Saul’s name later became Paul – another name change.
- Saul had been at war with God, when he made peace, he became Paul.

V: 30 Jacob names the place at the River Jabbok, Peniel – “The Face of God.”

V: 31-32 Jacob had a limp.

- After his encounter with God, after receiving his new name – he never walked the same – his life was forever changed.

Micah 6:8 “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

Revelation 2:17 “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written...”

[In Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in John Ch. 3](#)

John 3:3-7 “³...most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.”

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

Like:

Abraham – believe God’s word.
Jacob – surrender to Jesus.
Peter – confess Jesus as Lord.
Paul – make peace with God.

Ref.Genesis.32