

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

32 ^[a]Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ²When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim. ^[b]**3** Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴He instructed them: "This is what you are to say to my lord Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. ⁵I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female servants.

Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.'" ⁶When 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."⁷ In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, ^[c] and the flocks and herds and camels as well. ⁸He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one group, ^[d] the group ^[e] that is left may escape."

⁹Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, LORD, you who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' ¹⁰I 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 camps. ¹¹Save 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. ¹²But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

¹³He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: ¹⁴two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶He 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."

¹⁷He instructed the one in the lead: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'Who do you belong to, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?' ¹⁸then 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.'" ¹⁹He 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. ²⁰And 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." ²¹So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

Jacob Wrestles With God

²²That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. ²⁴So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵When 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. ²⁶Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."²⁷ The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.²⁸ Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, ^[f] because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."²⁹ Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.³⁰ So Jacob called the place Peniel, ^[g] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

³¹The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, ^[h] and he was limping because of his hip. ³²Therefore 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.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- 1 What questions were provoked within you?
- 2 Did anything confuse you?
- 3 Did anything move you emotionally?
- 4 Did God instruct you to do something?
- 5 Did you gain any insight into God's character

- Jacob continues his journey home to Canaan
- Jacob has another encounter with angels
- He is 'met' by the angels of God.
- What do you think, 'he is met' by the angels of God, would be like ?
- Perhaps God wanted Jacob to know how great His care was for him and his family.
- Jacob sees the 'camp of God' What might that look like to Jacob?.
- What an amazing revelation of God's presence
- Jacob must have known he was not alone.
- In his previous dream he saw 'Jacob's ladder'.
- Mananaim means 'two camps'
- Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother:
- Jacob, seeking to reconcile with his brother humbles himself.
- Why would he call himself 'your servant'?
- Jacob's message tells Esau where he has been and what he had achieved.
- His motive was to find favour with Esau. Perhaps to show he wasn't coming to take anything from him?
- Would Esau have thought Jacob was boasting about his wealth?
- Esau replied he was coming to meet Jacob with 400 men
- Jacob was convinced Esau was coming to destroy him and his family
- Did Jacob have good reason to fear Esau?
- Jacob had just encountered the angels and the camp of God.
- Yet because of his 'fear and distress' Jacob still acted in his own human strength and divided his family.
- Why didn't Jacob trust that God would protect all that he had?
- Now Jacob turns to the Lord in prayer.
- In the prayer Jacob remembers God's promises
- Do you remember God's promises while you are praying?
- Jacob sends a large and impressive gift to Esau in order to pacify him.
- He also plans exactly how the animals should arrive, and what should be said to Esau.
- After having just prayed is he going back to his own strategies here?
- Is it a good strategy for Jacob to use in order to reconcile with Esau?
- Notice how Jacob stays behind in the camp. Is that showing faith in God?
- While Jacob was alone a man wrestled with him till daybreak.
- Who is wrestling with Jacob here.?
- Was this an appearance of Jesus in the Old Testament? A Christophany? God in human form?
- We can only imagine what this scene looked like. Perhaps sometimes it looked like a barroom fight, and perhaps at other times it looked like an intense wrestling match.
- How did Jacob manage to keep up his struggle throughout the entire night?
- Do you ever wrestle with God?
- Jacob wouldn't let go until he had been blessed.
- Why did the man ask Jacob his name?..... Surely he would have known
- The man changed Jacob's name to Israel when he finally submits to God.
- Do you believe that **you** only really win when **you** submit to God?