

# Genesis #20 Ch. 31-34 Wrestling to the End of Self

by Chuck Missler

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*Jacob receives a call from God to return to the land of his fathers and to his kindred, and he leaves Laban's household, taking his wives and children with him.*

**Duration:** 1:24:30

**Scripture:** Genesis 31:13, Genesis 33:4-7, Genesis 33:9, Acts 17:11, Romans 8:32

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, Chuck Missler discusses Genesis chapters 31 through 34. He begins by emphasizing the importance of relying on God's word, particularly Romans 8, during times of stress. Jacob prepares a generous gift for his brother Esau, consisting of various animals. When they finally meet, Jacob bows before Esau and they reconcile. Laban and his sons, however, become jealous of Jacob's blessings from God. Jacob recognizes the changing circumstances and begins to seek God's guidance.

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## Transcript

Welcome to the 20th study in the book of Genesis conducted by Chuck Missler. The subject of this tape, Genesis chapters 31 through 34. Let's open with a word of prayer.

Father, we just praise you and thank you for this evening, for the privilege of gathering together in the name of Jesus Christ. We thank you that you are the God of Jacob as well as the God of Israel. We thank you, Father, that you have given us these treasures.

And we would just ask you this night to the power of your Holy Spirit to open understandings in our hearts to your word that we might behold those things which you have here for our learning this evening to the glory of Jesus. Amen. You know, as we go through the book of Genesis, it's been my desire to highlight not just background content of the book itself, which might make it useful to you.

But also as we go, you've probably caught me at trying to emphasize what I might call methodology. Emphasizing not just a prophecy, but the way it's couched to hopefully what you'll gain from this experience isn't just a familiarity with the book of Genesis and perhaps and far more important familiarity with its author. But also get some feeling for how he communicates.

And from time to time, we throw out a trick or two. And one of the secrets I think I've shared with you in the past is if you have a passage that you do not understand, it's complicated, just doesn't seem to make sense. I have suggested that you can put Jesus Christ right in the middle of it and may unravel.

And some of how many of you have ever tried that with a difficult passage? How many have found that it works? Same number? Okay, that's good. You know, that is something that works. And often as we see a life in the book of Genesis, we're amazed to discover how that life may typify, that is be a type of or a model of or foreshadowing of some major issue.

We had a lot of fun with Abraham as a type of the father offering his only son, Isaac, as a model in which apparently Abraham was knowingly acting out the crucifixion from 2,000 years later at the same location. And how Eliezer, the servant, going to gather a bride for Isaac was a type of the Holy Spirit. We found these stories very interesting because while they were very clearly historical, at the same time, they also are mystical, if you will, or they are foreshadowing a modeling of other things, father, son, and Holy Ghost in the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Eliezer.

And there are other cases we're going to see when we take up in a few chapters, we're going to take up the story of Joseph. And we will probably be flabbergasted to realize the way Joseph is a type. Now, we are right in the middle of studying another character, a guy by the name of Jacob.

And we're going to be flabbergasted with this obstinate, cantankerous, fleshly, carnal character called Jacob. And this is one of those exceptions in the scripture where I suggest if you really want to understand the story of Jacob, recognize who he is a type of. And it's the person you shave each morning.

We're going to be absolutely fascinated with this character for whom God did so much. And yet, how oblivious he was to the promises and the resources he could have at his disposal. And even when they were revealed to him, he didn't understand.

And he gave away that which he didn't need to. And he didn't appropriate to himself those things which God had provided, even though they were confirmed. And as we read Jacob, my suggestion is, let's try to be patient with him because he's there for a purpose.

Romans 15.4 tells us, all things are written aforetime for what purpose? For our learning. And this is one situation in which God has given us a mirror and brought to mind an occasion some years ago where a dear old friend of mine by the name of Dr. Walter Martin was, he and I, well, he was speaking at a very, very, I won't mention the particular location, but here in Newport Beach, very conservative, traditional denominational setting. And Walter was in one of his mischievous moods when he's a very impish character.

And he was pointing out this question of law and grace. And he also was pointing out how the law, you know, what was the purpose of the law? It too, like Jacob has brought to mind, is like a mirror. And it's just like a mirror.

The mirror isn't to shave us. The mirror is to show us our need. Okay? The law shows us our need.

It doesn't save us. It shows us our need. Just as a mirror shows us our need.

Because we're not shaved by the mirror, we're shaved by grace, you see. Well, right. But in any case, though, Jacob is, in my opinion, at least let me just suggest the possibility that Jacob is here for several

reasons, obviously.

But one of those, in a spiritual sense or in a homiletical sense, that is a practical, how do I apply it to my life sense, is here to be a mirror. In some respects, Abraham is, except I'm not sure I can aspire to see much in his life. I can appropriate myself because in many respects, he, you know, I have a tough time relating to Abraham.

He's a pretty neat guy. Isaac, we don't see a lot of in that sense. You know, we see him more mystically.

At least I do. I see him more mystically than I think. And of course, Joseph is way out there.

He's another kind of guy. But now Jacob, I can relate to. And let me tell you something about Chuck Missler.

But I think all of us who understand the predicament of man have an ability to relate to Jacob, although not maybe in a very savory sense. In any case, let's pick up where we were last time. And if my memory serves me correctly, we completed chapter 30.

And we are in chapter 31. And we're going to find, now we're going to enter, you know, Jacob has, you know, he cheated Esau, as it were, Rebekah advised him to go off to the relatives. So he did, goes with Laban and has been there some 20 years.

Gets involved with these two sequences of seven years each to work off his payment for his two wives. And then stays on and raises 11, brings 11 of his sons up to the threshold of manhood, say. And, but his sojourn, his exile, if you will, is about over.

And chapter 31 is going to usher in God's call to get Jacob back to where he belongs, which is where? Bethel. Bethel. We're going to discover he doesn't really quite make it to Bethel.

He stops off for a while at great harm to himself. And we'll see. It's very interesting as you study the Bible, particularly the book of Genesis, and you watch these travels, you'll discover that even though they're places, they take spiritual coloration as to what God's intention is.

We'll be very sensitive to that in the case of Joseph, excuse me, of Jacob. And we're going to now begin another pilgrimage. He's out in exile, Padon Haran, and chapter 31 opens with this move to get him to, you know, where he ought to be.

Chapter 31, verse 1. And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's, and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this wealth. Now recognize this is following on from chapter 30, where we saw him prosper. We made this deal with Laban and his cattle, setting aside for the moment this peculiar issue of the stripes and all that.

Basically, Jacob's flocks multiplied, and he prospered. And of course, Laban's sons are resentful. They're very upset by that.

Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's, and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this wealth. Verse 2. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it was not toward him as before. Now that's no surprise.

If your memory serves you well, Jacob has, you know, the conniver has out connived the conniver, if you will. These two guys have what some people might consider a very ethnically characteristic fashion, got into some pretty tight dealing, and while Jacob has gotten the bargain he went for, at the same time, he's noticing that his welcome is wearing thin. And I came across in some of the background material here an interesting definition or an attitude.

Jealousy is what we're seeing here, right? Among Laban's sons and certainly Laban himself. Jealousy is the failure to concede the right of God to bestow favors according to his sovereign will. Isn't that interesting? It's interesting for us to sort of snicker at Laban and Laban's sons that they're kind of upset.

But why are they upset? You see, it's interesting that someone walking in the will of God or walking by faith, that's really mutually exclusive with the idea of jealousy. When we feel jealousy or envy, we know we're not in the will of God with that attitude because of that very, it's a challenge, the very, that feeling of jealousy or envy is a challenge to the sovereignty of God. And when you put it that way, it puts it in its right complexion.

But in any case, Jacob sensed that he was wearing it pretty thin. And that's, we're going to discover several steps here, but Jacob is going to be sensitive to the leading of the Lord and it comes in three distinct steps. This is the first step, and I'll call this step, for lack of a better label, circumstance.

Jacob is sensitive to the fact that circumstances are starting to turn against him. There's a resentment among the sons and a resentment against Laban. So Jacob is feeling an unsettling movement coming here.

Now the next step is verse three. And the Lord said unto Jacob, return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred and I will be with thee. Return to the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred and I will be with thee.

What a commitment. You and I would think that with that kind of a commitment, we could lick anybody, right? If we had this, if we, if the Lord had said to us, you know, do such and so and I will be with thee, you and I would assume that armed with that commitment, nothing would cause us to be nervous. In fact, we would go out in the boldness of that conviction, right? Globally quoting from Romans 8 and what have you.

Well, you need to recognize when you see Jacob, just write in there your name, because there but for the grace of God go all of us. And we're going to see how Jacob deals with that. Moving on.

Verse four. Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock and said unto him, I see your father's countenance that is not toward me as before, but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power, I have served your father and your father hath deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God allowed him not to hurt me.

And if he said thus, the speckle shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bore speckled. And if he said thus, the stripe shall be the higher, then bore all the cattle striped. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father and given them to me.

It came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived that I lifted up mine eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were striped and speckled and spotted. The angel of God spoke unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob, and he said, Here am I. He said, Lift up now thine eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle are striped, speckled and spotted, for I have seen all that Laban

doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointest the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me.

Now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred. Now, well, I guess that's basically it. He's presenting to the daughters of Laban, his wives, the program that they're about to emigrate, about to leave.

It's very interesting because we can be very critical of Jacob, and yet it's interesting that he bases his proposition to his wives on the basis of his fairness with Laban. And it's very interesting to temper our judgment of Jacob because he couldn't very well make that case, if you will. They were pretty close.

You can't count on them. They were right in the middle of the whole thing. So despite the connivery, Jacob apparently could make that boast and make it stick.

In any case, verse 14, Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him as strangers? For he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money, for all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours and our children's. Now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do. There's much that we could extract from here.

The thrust of it basically is that the daughters feel no allegiance, no inheritance, no commitment left to Laban. So they're in effect endorsing their commitment to Jacob. Wherever you go, we'll go with you.

Now, we're going to discover that Rachel keeps her hooks in one particular item that leads to a little incident here, but basically they commit to go with Jacob. Then Jacob rose up and set his sons and his wives upon camels, and he carried away all his cattle and all his goods, which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Paderon, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. And Laban went to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.

Now, these images are the terephim is the actual word. The word terephim occurs several times in the scripture. The word, we know from the passages in the scripture that terephim were things that were used to inquire of, like an oracle.

They're used that way in Judges 17 verses 5, 6, and 12. The tribe of Dan in Judges 18.6 asks counsel of the terephim. In 1 Samuel 19.13, Saul's daughter is a necromancer, actually, using terephim.

In Ezekiel 21 and also in Zechariah 10.2, we have allusions to Israel's apostasy as typified by the terephim. Now, what is not obvious, perhaps, is that the terephim, from the text, but something we've inferred by archaeological discoveries, is that the terephim were not only a form of idolatry, but the household terephim was a symbol of possession of the inheritance. And so Rachel's thieving these household gods, and they apparently were pretty small in form here, they were life-size later with Saul's daughter, but here in this case, they're very, apparently from what happens here, we can infer they're very small objects, little, you sort of get the impression it's a shelf knick-knack kind of thing.

But in addition to the idolatry link that we have here, we know that we now have reason to believe, at least, there was a link to a claim on the inheritance involved in them. And so, in any case, Rachel steals the images. Now, here's a key thing, verse 20.

Jacob stole away, unawares, to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. So Jacob packs up and sneaks out of there. Now, he's later going to be terrified when we get to Esau, for a reason that is not obvious from the text, and I'll come back to that, but just recognize here, he is slipping away secretly.

His intention is just to split, you know, in overnight, as it were, be gone. Verse 21, so that he fled with all that he had, and he rose up and passed over the river, and set his face toward Mount Gilead. Now, it's from this phrase, over the river, passed over the river, that in Joshua chapter 24, we have, in verses 2, 3, and 14, 15, the phrase Hebrew.

The word Hebrew means those that passed over the river. Do you know that? Yeah, and he'll come across you on the, we'll come across a verse, I think, a couple of later, about on the other side of the flood, on the other side of the river. The word Hebrew means those that have crossed over.

Now, he goes, he set his face toward Mount Gilead. Gilead, by the way, means perpetual fountain. Interesting.

Perpetual fountain. And it was the rivers there in Gilead that attracted both Reuben and Gad, because they were very cattle oriented. We're going to deal with this, when we're going to do a whole summary of the 12 tribes, when we get to Genesis 49.

We'll look back and tie this whole thing together. But Reuben, particularly, both Reuben and Gad, were very oriented to cattle. Before they crossed the Jordan, they decided that land looked pretty good, so they made their deal with Moses, and then subsequently honored by Joshua, that they would stay on that side of the Jordan.

Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, do so. But in any case, there's a lot of thoughts here that we're going over lightly, but maybe I should just mention. Back in verse 15, where Jacob is, this whole proposition of leaving, are we not counted among him as strangers? Their concept of being strangers in the world, if you will, being called out to Bethel, is part of the imagery here you might think about and see if you can relate to.

I won't develop that excessively, because we could spend a lot of time on the whole concept of being strangers in the land. But there's that tone of it here. Let's just continue.

We'll come back and tie a deal. Let's just continue with the narrative, and then get the sense of what's happening. Verse 22, and it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

In other words, several days went by before Laban, wherever he was actually physically dwelling, was aware of the fact that Jacob had split. Verse 23, and he took his brethren with him and pursued after him seven days journey, and they overtook him in the mountain in Mount Gilead. Okay, so there's 10 days that have slipped by.

Three days, and then seven days to catch up with him. Okay. Verse 24, and God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night.

Interesting, isn't it? God himself came to Laban in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either good or bad. Now, isn't that a strange admonition? God intervenes with Laban. Now, was Laban in was he a believer? No.

A lot of evidence of that. And yet, God appears to Laban, and gives him instruction. Interesting.

Furthermore, what you expect God to say, assuming you've read that before, you sort of expect him to say, Take heed that you do not harm my servant Jacob. Laban was very likely pretty upset, because on the one hand, Jacob left with only that which was his, because he obviously didn't know that Rachel had stolen this little household idol. But Jacob's intentions, you know, the cloudy part of it is really just that he didn't make open arrangements, and say goodbye, and all that sort of thing.

But what he split and steal, what he split with was his own. And yet, and so God is instructing, but Laban's pretty upset, and God doesn't tell him just speak, see that you don't speak any harm. He says, see that you speak not to Jacob, either good nor bad.

What a strange idea that is. And I'll leave it to yourself to come back to this verse on your own after this evening, and see what you make of it then. Let's go on and see what else happens here.

Verse 25. Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount, that is not Gilead, and Laban with his brethren encamped in the mount of Gilead.

And Laban said to Jacob, what has thou done that thou had stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword? In other words, he's making, he feels as if it was handled as if they were kidnapped, forced away, didn't give a chance to do a proper separation. Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with timbrel, and with harp? Okay. Now I don't pretend to know what Laban was really like.

I have a hard time visualizing him throwing a going away party. I can visualize him trying to negotiate an extension of the contract or something. But with mirth, and with songs, and with timbrel, and with harp.

And hast not permitted me to kiss my sons and my daughters, thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. Now, it is in the power of my hand to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke unto me last night, saying, Take heed that thou speakest not to Jacob, either good nor bad.

And now, though thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou greatly long'st after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods, my teraphim. Plural, teraphim is plural. Okay, and it's referring to these teraphim.

And Jacob answered and said unto Laban, Because I was afraid, for I said perhaps thou wouldest take me, take by force thy daughters from me, with whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live. Before our brethren, discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For, you see, Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Okay. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into two maidservant's tent, but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. Thank goodness.

Because Jacob did a very, very foolish thing. He made a very foolish promise, you know. But in any case, they were not found.

And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord, that I cannot rise up before thee, for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but he found not the images. Verse 36.

And Jacob was angry and contended with Laban. And Jacob answered and said unto Laban, What is my trespass? What is my sin that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my furniture, what hast thou found of all thy household furniture? Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge between us both. Jacob is really, you know, very righteously indignant here, because from his point of view, he's been put upon.

This accusation that something's been stolen. Verse 38. This twenty years have I been with thee, thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the lambs of thy flock have I not eaten.

That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee, I bore the loss of it. Of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was in the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

Thus have I been twenty years in thy house, and I have served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle, and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen my affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee last night.

Interesting. Now, it's interesting how Jacob here has no trouble relying on this message that God, in effect, delivers through his adversary. Verse 43, And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine.

And what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children whom they have born? Now therefore, come thou, let us cut a covenant, let us cut a covenant. I am thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee. Now, this is a very interesting passage because it gets totally misunderstood.

What we're going to lead up to here is a passage that is, in verse 49, is totally misunderstood by the general public, if you will. The way it's used is an utter horror and a surprise, if you will, in contrast to its original meaning. Now, these two guys, Laban and Jacob, are pretty hostile to one another.

Laban, but for the Lord's injunction the night before, would have probably been pretty aggressive, pretty hostile. These two guys are in a very, very strained situation, but for the Lord's intervention, they would be at each other's throats. But they're going to cut a covenant, a blood covenant, okay? And in that time, in that part of the country, violating a blood covenant was just unthinkable.

In fact, you might want to remind yourself of God's own blood covenant. You might remember when we turn back to 1510. There, you may recall, in Genesis 15, we have a covenant with Abraham, and God says, he took all of these, and he divided them in the midst, and laid each piece against, and the birds was over, he divided not.

And then Abraham, you know, Abraham cut them up, and then a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and God then, you know, the fire passes between the pieces, and we have this prophecy of how Israel was to go into captivity and so forth in Egypt. And the fourth generation, they would return. We covered all that then, but just again, the structure of the covenant was a blood covenant.

And at that time, I think we looked at, did we look at Jeremiah 34, 18? We might do that now, just to... Jeremiah 34, 18. The Lord says, and I will give the men who have transgressed my covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before me, when they cut the calf in two, and passed between these parts. It's another reference to the structure of a covenant, cutting it in half and passing between them as a form of blood covenant.

That's an effect, that kind of a covenant, is what is being proposed between Laban and Jacob, and that's what they enter into here. Back to Genesis 31, verse 44. Now, therefore, come thou, let us make a covenant in the King James, or I technically cut a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar, and Jacob said unto his brethren, gather stones, and they took stones and made a heap, and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jigar Sarhadutha, I guess, but Jacob called it Galid, the heap of witness. One is in Aramaic, and one's in Hebrew, basically.

And Laban said, this heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galid, and Mitzpah. Now, technically, Mitzpah is simply a monument or watchtower, milestone kind of thing.

And he said, the Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us. See, God is witness between me and thee.

Now, what this is really saying, the tone of this relationship is hostile. In other words, he's not saying the Lord keep watch over you while we're separated. It's an emotional thing.

He's saying, you know, the Lord help you if you violate this covenant. As it might be paraphrased, if you cross over on my side, I'll shoot to kill. That's basically the mood of what's happening.

They agree, but they agree as a, you know, don't make one false move. The Lord's going to watch you. You with me? It's a hostile type thing.

Now, what's interesting is people have taken verse 49, and as you well know, have made jewelry out of it. It's become a motto for certain organizations. The whole concept of, gee, the Lord watch over you and I while we're apart, is parting such a sweet sorrow kind of thing.

Well, it's taken totally out of context. There are rings and mottos and benedictions of all kinds that are sold as Christian jewelry by a misunderstanding of what verse 49 really is, what the context of that separation was. I hope none of you here tonight have a separation that has the emotional connotation this one does.

Now, if some of you happen to have shared a coin mitzvah or something on a key chain, fine, I don't mean to spoil it for you, but I think you need to understand the real background, and I do trust that you aren't having separations that are marked with the kind of sanction this one was. This is a sanction in the sense of the Eiger sanction, I think, more than anything else. Okay, verse 50, verse 51, And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast between me and thee.

This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm. In other words, they're really saying, Lord, keep watch over you, but there's a line. I agree not to cross it, you agree not to cross it.

We agree this day to put a boundary and we won't harm one another, but it's in the form of an armistice, an armed armistice, not in the form of some parting between lovers. It's interesting how we can take those things out of context that way and so on, but anyway. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judged between us.

Now, you know, bear in mind, this is Laban talking. And Jacob swore by the fear of his father, Isaac. Strange, isn't it? Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mountain, called his brethren to eat bread, and they did eat bread, and they tarried all night in the mountain.

Early in the morning, Laban rose up and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them, and Laban departed. And returned unto his place. Now, we're going to enter now into a very, very interesting reunion.

We have here a separation of Laban and Jacob. Now we're going to move into a reunion, a reunion between two brothers, Esau and Jacob. This would make a great scene in a movie, I think.

Let's just jump in, and then we'll look back reflexively here. Chapter 32, verse 1, And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. This implies that he's on the path that God would have him be.

What are angels for? Ministering spirits. Hebrews 1.4 is something you might make reference to, and you can launch off onto a study of angels in terms of their guardianship and their ministry on your behalf. Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

Very interesting thought here. Did Jacob know they were angels of God? Did he understand their purpose? Verse 2, And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is what? God's host. And he called the name of that place, Mehennaim, which means two bands, or two groups, two companies.

Now, this fascinates me, because you and I, if we had seen elsewhere in the Old Testament, where the servants' eyes are open and they behold the hosts of God camped around them, remember? If we're granted the spiritual insight to see God's hosts on behalf of his own, you would think that that vision, that insight, that understanding would be sustaining, would be encouraging, would be strengthening. I think if you and I were facing a battle tomorrow, and we somehow got a glimpse that God's hosts were encamped around us or somehow positioned to our benefit, you would think that that would invoke in us boldness, confidence, and so forth, right? Well, let's look what happens to Jacob. First of all, Jacob recognizes that there's no ambiguity.

There's nothing, something hidden. Jacob understands who they are and names the place, Mehennaim. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen and asses and flocks and men servants and women servants, and I have sent to tell my lord that I may find grace in thy sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee.

Oh, he's on the way here. What's he traveling with? Four hundred men. Now, it says, Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

Now, what isn't obvious here is put this whole thing in context. Jacob has left secretly Laban. He split, in effect, under cover of darkness two weeks ago.

Didn't tell anybody. Even Laban didn't find out for three days and then spent seven days catching up with them. And they had this scene here.

What some scholars suspect, or let's put it this way, infer, they infer that Jacob was probably terrified because this almost implies a spy in Esau's employ in the ranks of Laban, for him to be tipped off that Jacob was coming. Because he's now, Esau is being, is on his way to meet Jacob, and not casually, like, you know, mount up a few buddies and on camels and get going. There are four hundred men, and the implication is an armed army.

Now, Shakespeare has a marvelous phrase, Conscience doth make cowards of us all. Now, if we were facing any kind of an army with the commitment the Lord's going to be with us, and we've actually been met with his hosts that are on our behalf, you could go into an army situation with very adverse odds and go at it confidently, couldn't you? You would think. Except for one small problem.

Jacob knew he was guilty as could be. He understood that Esau had every right to be out for his skin. This was the brother that he had defrauded of his birth right.

This was the brother that he had connived and deceived and disenfranchised of his blessing. He's been away for 20 years. His brother obviously has prospered.

He's got an army of 400 men ready to greet him. So Jacob is terrified. Now, it's interesting that the word men, the two hosts, the name, the place name, most scholars believe that the reason he calls it two hosts, because he has his own host, that his own entourage, and he sees the angelic host that's with him.

That's why he names it two hosts. Some scholars suspect there's even the indication that there may have been two hosts of angels in front and behind. Behind to protect him from Laban and in front to protect him from Esau.

But we'll see what happens as we go here. Jacob, verse 7, Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed and he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into what? Two bands. The Hebrew word's the same as the other one.

Mahanaim. Two bands. Okay, and it's mentioned twice again in verse 8. And he said, if Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

So instead of taking advantage of the forces that were with him, namely the angelic host, he does just the opposite. He divides his own forces in the hope that they won't all get decimated. He's sort of convinced that half of them will lose or at least half of them will be sacrificed to determine the intention.

The other half will have a chance to split. And in the secular sense, that probably makes sense. On the other hand, in view of the information Jacob had, it doesn't make any sense at all.

Now, or back up, I missed a very key point. Back in verse 4. When Jacob sends these messengers to Esau's brother, notice what he commands the messengers to say. He gives them very careful instructions.

Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob. First of all, it's my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob. What happened about the purchase of the birthright? What happened to the blessing of the father? What happened about the double portion? What happened about being the head of the family? What's this my lord Esau bit? Thy servant Jacob.

It's very, very interesting that all the things that he connived to get, the great absurd lengths he went to, he's forfeited. He throws away. He doesn't appropriate them.

He yields that right up front. Okay. And it points out that his wealth, he's highlighting the fact, hey, you're the lord, I'm your servant, and by the way, I've got all these riches.

I don't need a double portion of the inheritance. It's all implied. I shouldn't say implied.

It's quite openly, explicitly stated as to Jacob's position here. Okay, anyway, and then he divide, picking it up again back in verse 8. He divides it in two bands and if Esau come to one company and smite it, then the other company, which is left, shall escape. Okay, so we see the terrified predicament of Jacob, rather than dealing by faith from strength with the lord's commitment behind him, sees himself exposed, sees himself as being the victim of his own connivory, and is operating with an attitude towards appeasement and yielding, and he's hoping just to get out with his skin.

We'll see that shortly. But here in this context now, we have a very, very interesting passage. Verse 9, and Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and onward.

This passage is the first recorded prayer in the scripture. Now we have other remarks made, where he makes a vow and certain other things, but this is the first actual prayer. It's actually a pretty good prayer.

He's got it together here in many respects, because O God of my father Abraham, the God of my father Isaac, the Lord who didst said unto me, return unto thy country, unto thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. He mentions here several important things. He speaks of the Elohim, name of God, of Abraham and Isaac.

He also speaks of Yehovah, or however you want to pronounce it, the covenant or redemption, the covenant relationship name of the Lord. And he also bases the prayer on the promise that God gave him. Right up front, he sets the ground that he is approaching the Lord on.

In fact, the Lord who saidst unto me, return unto thy country and thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. Verse 10, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies. That's an interesting verse, because the first place in the scripture where mercies is plural.

We speak of the mercies of God. It's from here on that it comes. He also mentions his unworthiness.

He says, I'm not worthy. Actually, the Hebrew is stronger. I am unworthy, and still am.

That's what it implies. Of the least of all thy mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant, for with my staff I passed over the Jordan, over this Jordan, and now am become two bands. See, he sees himself now being divided.

His forces are split. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he will come and smite me and the mother with the children. Now, I think that's an interesting touching point there.

Not only me, Lord, but the mother with the children, you know. Terrific. We're going to see he adopts a very shrewd strategy of women and children first.

That is out in front, okay? We'll see that coming. We'll see how concerned he is about the mother and the children here shortly. Verse 12, and thou saidst, I will surely do thee good and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.

See, he's reminding him properly that God has promised him a seed, and thus he can't have seed if the mother and the children get slaughtered. Yeah, we may smile at his approach. At the same time, it's basically sound to approach God on the basis of his faithfulness, not ours, his faithfulness, the faithfulness he has in the promise he's given unto us, okay? God before us, who can be against us? He that spared not his only son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Romans 8, how beautifully you can rely on the last half of Romans 8 for most situations.

You should be committed to memory. It's priceless when you're under stress, and that's in effect what he's doing here. Cannot be numbered for multitude.

Verse 13, and he lodged there the same night, and he took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother, 200 she goats, 20 he goats, 200 ewes, and 20 rams, 30 milk camels with their colts, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 she asses, and 10 foals. Some scholars believe that's in climactic order in terms of their value in those days. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves, and said unto his servants, pass over before me and put a space between drove and drove.

So he's sending out ahead a series of gifts, if you will, droves or herds, if you will, okay? And he commanded the foremost saying, when Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee saying, what art thou, and where goest thou, and what are these before thee? Then thou shall say, these are thy servant Jacob, thy servant, notice, thy servant Jacob's. It is a present sent unto my lord Esau, and behold also he is behind us. So Jacob is staging it, so these gifts are out there in front.

He'll come across this herd, and what's that for? Well, it's a gift for you, and he'll just break down the resistance, okay? Now in human terms, that's shrewd, you know, because whatever hostility there may be with Esau and his 400 men, you know, Jacob is really giving away the sleeves of his vest in a sense, because these are things that Esau has the men to steal and take, just plunder. So he's staging him out there as gifts to his long-lost brother, his dear brother, haven't seen him for 20 years. I haven't seen him since we defrauded the poor guy out of his birthright.

But now the table is turned, and Jacob is terrified. So he commanded that, so commanded he the second, verse 19, and the third, and all that followed the grove saying, on this manner shall you speak unto Esau when you find him, and say ye, moreover behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us, for he said, I will appease him. That's also an interesting first mention, that's the first word, the first time the word appease occurs in the scripture.

For he said, I will appease them with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face, perhaps he will accept of me. So went the present over before him, and he and himself lodged that night in the company, and he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women servants, and 11 sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. He took them and sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

So he was left alone. Now, interesting situation, he is separated, he's stretched out all his gifts, and he's crossed over the brook Jabbok. Jabbok, by the way, means pouring out or emptying.

Okay, crosses, he's going to cross that same brook going the other way, and he's going to call it something else. But going this way, he's emptying. Now, you and I, you know, we look at this in a humanistic sense, and you can't really fault Jacob's logic.

He's in trouble, he's got a hostile brother with an army, and he's trying to do that which is rational and logical. What makes this tragic is that he is not doing what God wants him to do, which is what? Rely on the Lord. The Lord's given him a promise, and he's making the same mistake he's made all his life.

Before he was born, Rebecca had the promise that he would, the elder would serve the younger, and so forth. Instead, they took matters in their own hand, and they messed this up so badly that it cost him 20 years in exile. That wasn't necessary.

That was a result of his sin, in fact. He's doing it all over again. The Lord has prospered him.

Whose herds are those? Who do they belong to? Laban? No. Jacob, in a sense, who do they really belong to? The Lord. The Lord prospered him, they belong to the Lord's.

The earth is the Lord in the fullness thereof. And what's Jacob doing? He's giving it away. He's throwing it out there.

You know, he's trying to bribe his way into peace with this wronged brother, and that isn't what God would have him to do. And what's interesting is, he finally gets to the point where, verse 23, he took them and set them over the brook, and set over what he had. Jacob has now been separated.

He surrendered everything he has, all his flocks, his sons and wives. He is alone. Now, we have here, in this context, one of the strangest passages in the scripture.

We have a very, very peculiar wrestling match. But I want you to notice, first of all, where it occurs. It occurs the night before he meets Esau.

He knows, he's gotten word that Esau is coming with 400 men. He's terrified. And he's staged, in spite of the fact that God has promised him 20 years before, then recently, he's put angels there to protect him.

He's shown him the angels that are there to protect him. Jacob doesn't understand. I want you to notice how far God goes to bless Jacob.

He literally has to bring Jacob to the end of himself before he can bless him. And that's you and me. And our prayer tonight ought to be twofold.

Number one, Lord, don't let go. Don't give up the match. Wrestle me to the ground, if that's what it takes, to bring me to the end of myself so that I can learn to rely 100% on you.

That's exactly what's going on here. Another way to pray is that the lessons the Lord gives us are not wasted. Well, we have to take that course again.

Jacob has to take it over and over again, even to this climax, in a sense. His spiritual low, in a sense, is a climax in another sense. Verse 24, and Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

Now, we'll find out from later in this passage, plus a commentary by Hosea 12, which we'll look at in a minute, as to what's going on here. Obviously, who is the man? Jesus, certainly God, and the man, and there's a whole question here of that, on the one hand, it's a classic what's called a theophany, an appearance of God in the Old Testament, in the form of an angel. Man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day, verse 25, and when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said, what is thy name? He said, Jacob.

Did he not know the guy's name? Sure, of course he knew who the guy's name was. What is thy name? Supplanter, heel catcher, deceiver, conniver, that's my name. That's what the word Jacob means.

What's thy name? My name's conniver. Verse 28, he said, thy name shall be called no more conniver, or supplanter, or heel catcher. Authorities, there's a whole list of possible meanings of the word Jacob.

But Israel, now Israel means God is the ruler, or God rules. Thy name shall be no more called conniver, but God rules. For as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him and said, tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, the face of God.

For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And he passed over Penuel, and the sun rose upon him, and he limped upon his thigh. We'll come back to the last verse in a minute.

Now, there's a couple of things here that are really worth taking a look at. Let's turn to Hosea chapter 12, where we have an interesting comment on this incident. Hosea chapter 12.

We might just start verse 2 to get the tone of the passage. Hosea chapter 12, verse 2. The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah, and he will punish Jacob according to his ways. According to his doing shall he recompense him.

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he hath power with God. Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed. He wept, and made supplication unto him, and found him in Bethel, and there he spoke with us, and so forth.

A couple of interesting points. It makes reference, of course, to this wrestling issue. Points out that he wept.

Something that isn't in the Genesis text. It also says he found him where? In Bethel. He found him originally in Bethel, and he's going to find, he's going to be on his way to Bethel.

He's got a lot of distance to go in the meantime, because he's going to mess things up here shortly, pretty badly. But it's interesting how God doesn't record the iniquities in the sense of the dalliance, if you will, the succoth, which we're going to see shortly, but he eventually gets back to Bethel. Another thing that's interesting, it says here, what is thy name? Here, it's not answered, but let's turn to Judges 13 for a very similar incident.

Judges chapter 13. Samson's parents. You remember Samson was, you know, predicted supernaturally.

He's one of the several inscriptors that are in that situation, and an angel of the Lord shows up to to Manoah, and we get to verse 16. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy food, and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Manoah knew not that it was an angel of the Lord.

Verse 17. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is thy name? That when thy sayings come to pass, we may do the honor. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is wonderful? The original King James said secret.

If you correct the Hebrew, it's actually the word wonderful. What is thy name? What is, why do you ask for my name? Seeing it is wonderful. It's interesting that the purpose of asking the name, Manoah says, is to honor the angel.

You sort of expect the angel to say, See thou do it not. Worship the Lord only. Him shalt thou serve.

Right? As per several occasions of the scripture. Here, the angel, in effect, answers and gives her one of his 390 names. How do we know that's one of his names? Turn to Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6. One of these passages in scripture we've made reference to, written by Handel many years ago.

I'm being facetious, of course. I probably shouldn't really do that. Verse, chapter 9, verse 6, For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end. How long does Jesus Christ rule upon the earth? A thousand years is just the duration between Satan's first and second resurrection and Satan's reign.

How long does he reign? Forever and ever and ever. Yeah, hallelujah, right. Upon the throne of David and upon his king.

Upon the throne of David. Well, I don't get into the whole kingdom thing. Anyway.

And most scholars believe it's the same angel that's wrestling with Jacob here, that wrestles him to the point where he actually has to injure him, cripple him for life, to bring him to an end of himself, to bring him to a point where he will lean entirely upon the Lord. Sound like a pun? No. Yes, it is and yes, it isn't.

How far does the Lord have to wrestle you to the ground? What does the Lord have to dislocate in your life? To bring you to an end of your own self. Is it literally to dislocate a leg so that for the rest of your life you'll limp on a crutch? It's a cheap price to pay if that's what it takes to get you to rely on the Lord. What is it in your life? In Jacob, he actually had to wrestle him to the game, to the end of all of this.

What's in your life? What does the Lord have to dislocate in your life? What is he wrestling you out of? And pray to God that he doesn't stop. Pray to God that morning comes and the wrestler leaves without having finished the task. That ought to be our prayer.

Lord, never let go. Wrestle me all the way. Bring me, Lord, to an end of myself that I might yield 100% on your sovereignty, not mine.

Your will, not mine. Your plans, not mine. Now with that prayer we can also, I remember with a group where word came, parents came, as I recall it was a son or a daughter that was critically ill or dying or had

died or was very critically ill.

And your immediate temptation is to pray, gee, for healing or something. And a particular person I was with who busted a great spiritual insight. At the time I thought it was a very strange prayer.

But I've never forgotten it. Lord, we just pray that these lessons won't be wasted. What an interesting prayer for a situation which was on the brink of grief.

Because the implication in the group, because they were Christians and they knew that they were in the Lord's will. So why, you know, all the usual questions, Lord, how can you let this happen? We're sort of dismissed on faith. The Lord's hand is here.

The prayer was that the lessons that are here for us not be wasted. Interesting prayer. Strange prayer.

One that we might remember. Lord, never let us go. At the same time, never let us waste a lesson.

So we don't have to have you repeat it. Very strange, verse 32. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is the hollow of the thigh, and to this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, in the sinew that shrank.

You know, what a strange, strange commentary on religious behavior. Four hundred years after this incident, Moses in writing records the tradition that ensued from this incident, which has got nothing to do with the issue. From this whole issue, there's a tradition now where they don't eat the sinew that shrank and so forth in the hollow of the thigh because it commemorates this thing that happened to Jacob, where he was literally physically injured from this wrestling thing.

Which has got nothing to do with the spiritual value, the issue that God was dealing with Jacob over. Very interesting. One of the greatest insights I think we can appropriate to our lives to recognize that Jesus Christ is perhaps the most anti-religious figure that has ever walked the face of the earth.

Our religion is exactly what he is. Most vigorously antithetical towards, opposed to, etc. You know, I don't have to dwell on that.

We covered that with the fig leaves and things in the garden, but on it goes. Whether it's the traditions of men, or whether it's the legalism of Satan, how it conspires against us. Interesting.

Well, we've seen Jacob go from Bethel, to Mahanaim, to Peniel. From the house of God, to the host of God, to the face of God. Very interesting.

The same brook, Jabbok, is now called Peniel. Going the other way. Emptying one way, the face of God the other way.

It's okay. And I think we can sneak in another chapter. Keep moving here.

In fact, we really have to because we're right in the climax of this whole thing. After this big buildup, Jacob, worrying about meeting Esau, even to the climax of this wrestling match all night long. Chapter 33, verse 1, And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men.

And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph last of all.

I told you a lot on where his priorities are.

While on the one hand he puts them ahead of himself, he does put Rachel and Joseph last. Isn't that interesting? See, the whole favoritism of Joseph came long before he gave this very peculiar coat. It really wasn't a coat of many colors.

We'll talk about that when we get in the story of Joseph. That's a misunderstanding. But in any case, he puts the women and children up front.

I think that's noble, shrewd. You know, that's marvelous. Verse 3, And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

How many times did he bow? Seven times. Is that necessary? No. Any other precedent for that? I don't think so.

Ridiculous. We could probably, by the way, I might mention Jacob's name was changed to Israel. He is unique in the scripture, to the best of my knowledge, of someone whose name is changed who doesn't stay changed.

Abraham becomes Abraham, right? And Peter becomes, Simon becomes Peter, and Saul becomes Paul, right? And each, all through the scripture, you find a list, you can make your own list, it's an interesting exercise, of the people who the Lord changes the name of as Sarah, as Sarai to Sarah, and so forth. And in each case, when that incident happens, from that point on in the text, their new name prevails. That's the way you call them.

In fact, sometimes they're probably remembering what the old name was, because that's the way you invariably call them, with one exception. From here to the end of Genesis, Jacob is used 45 times, and the word Israel is used 23 times. So not only is it used, it's used half as often as the other one is.

It's a one-third, two-thirds situation. Isn't that interesting? And you can, as you study the text, you can make a big thing out of when it's called Jacob, he's in a flash, and when it's Israel, it's for some spiritual purpose. Very interesting.

Examples of where lessons are wasted. You could also make an interesting thing, is this whole question of lack of self-respect. There's one thing to be humble and be yielding, there's quite another to have this kind of obsequious behavior.

Is it possible the lack of self-respect may be a poor witness? I think it can be a bad witness before the world. It doesn't mean we should think higher of ourselves than we ought to think, but if Jesus Christ died for us, then I don't think it's right necessarily for us to be groveling in the sand before the heathen, especially when God has given you his authority and his command to over that. Interesting situation, you can develop that and get into all kinds of heresy on your own, you don't have to have me mess you up here.

Okay. In all these things, of course, you put Acts 17, 11 on your footnote, on your notes to follow through, so you don't let me get you into more trouble than you can get into on yourself, by yourself. Okay.

So he bowed seven times to his brother in verse four, and Esau ran to meet him, and Brace Tim fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. Brace guy, Brace guy, how interesting. And he lifted up his eyes and

saw the women and the children and said, who are these, who are those with thee? And he said, the children whom God hath graciously given thy servant.

And the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah and also her children came near and bowed themselves, and after them came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. He said, what meanest thou by this grove which I met? And he said, these are to find grace in the sight of my Lord.

Speaking to his brother, Esau said, I have enough, my brother, keep what thou hast unto thyself. Interesting. Doesn't sound like a guy with a sword drawn.

Now, what we don't know is how the Lord was dealing with him in the meantime. Jacob, verse 10, Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand, for therefore I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing which is brought to thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.

And he urged him, and he took it. And he said, Let us make our journey, let us go, and I will go before thee. And he said unto him, My Lord, knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me, and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

Let my Lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant, and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my Lord, unto Mount Seir. What he's saying is, gee, this is real neat, brother, I can't travel as fast as you, because I've got these flocks, they've got to be carefully driven, I've got the women and children and so forth, so let me just hang back, I'll meet you at Mount Seir. Sounds great, doesn't it? Mount Seir is southeast of where they were.

The minute that Esau is out of sight over the horizon, Jacob heads northwest. Because he goes to Succoth. So what Jacob is doing, he's got this meeting over with, and everything seems to be going pretty smooth, because his throat isn't slit, by an enraged brother.

So he says, neat, I'll meet you at Mount Seir, you go on ahead. And as soon as the guy is out of sight, he peels off and puts as much distance as fast as he can between him and Esau. You sort of wonder why the Edomites don't really get along too well with the Israelites, the Jacobites, if you will.

It was a pretty strained beginning. And the last Edomite that we know of, that we hear of, is a guy by the name of Herod, if you may, that comes on the scene a little later. And there's a whole study we can get into with Edom and all of that, that I don't think is necessarily that germane right here.

But you can get into that yourself, use the concordance, and study the Edomites from Esau on. And they have a prominent role all the way through history, in terms of their non-help of Israel when they needed help, and enslavement for a while, as per the prophecy, and then later being freed, and later becoming the conspirators with the Romans in the sense of the Idiomaeon dynasty of Herod and the whole series of Herods. And I think that's the last time we really see them in history in a meaningful way, except, of course, prophetically, because they provide the place where Israel flees.

They're the one place that the Antichrist does not control, according to Daniel 8. And there's three places, Moab, Ammon, and Edom. And it's where the remnant petition the Lord's return, and he does, and we see him returning in Isaiah 63, blood-stained, having fought their enemies. So I shouldn't say they disappear

from history.

They obviously appear very vividly in prophecy, and you can study that on your own, separate from this little excursion. In any case, we were at verse 14, till I come unto my Lord, unto Seir. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me.

And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my Lord. So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. Jacob journeyed to Sukkoth.

Now, obviously, that's northwest rather than southeast, so it's 180 degrees away. And he built a house, and made booths for his cattle, and therefore the name of the place is called Sukkoth. Booths, in other words.

Got a little problem with that. Where did God call him to? Bethel. Sukkoth isn't where Bethel is.

And he dwelt there. Built corrals and things. And a place called Sukkoth.

Now, he's going to pay very painfully for that. Abraham didn't stay in the promised land. There was a family that went down to Egypt.

What harm can that cause? Well, he made an absolute fool of himself with the Pharaoh by calling Sarah his sister, and shamed the name of God by that maneuver. Plus, he picked up a handmaid by the name of Hagar. What harm can that cause? You know, it's interesting.

You've studied Genesis, and you can find out when guys are doing what the Lord has for them, and what happens, and when they don't do what he says, and what happens. And you'd think we'd learn, but we won't. Fortunately, our future hangs on his faithfulness, not ours.

And the story repeats itself again and again. Jacob's going to hang around Sukkoth, and he's going to end up having a real mess on his hands relative to Dinah. And we'll try to maybe jump into that, too, before we're through here.

Jacob came unto Shalom, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. And he came from Paddan Aram, and pitched his tent before the city, and he bought a portion of the field, where he had spread his tent, and all he was buying the field for, God had given him the whole land, I thought. Right? And he spread his tent at the hand of children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money.

And he erected there an altar, and called it El Elohe Israel, God the God of Israel. Very, very presumptuous, unfortunate name for an altar. And God didn't want the altar in Sukkoth.

He wants the altar in Bethel, as he'll demonstrate shortly. 34 verse 1, And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore unto Jacob, his only daughter, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

And his soul clung unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spoke kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spoke unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel for my wife. Now I'm not here to condone what he did, but it's interesting that he tries to pursue it with honorable intention.

He wants to marry her. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah, his daughter. Now his sons were with his cattle in the field, and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out to Jacob to speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it. And the men were grieved, and they were very angry, because he had wrought folly in Israel, and lying with Jacob's daughter, which thing ought not to be done.

And Hamor spoke with him, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter, as I pray you, give her him as his wife. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. This may or may not be motivated by the fact they saw large herds and many possessions, but let's go on.

And ye shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions in it. And Shechem said unto her father, and to her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, that what ye shall say unto me I will give.

Ask me ever so much the dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me, but give me the damsel as my wife. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, Because he had defiled Dinah his sister, and they said unto him, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised, for they were a reproach unto us. But in this we will consent unto you, if ye will be as we, that every male of you be circumcised, then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will give, and we will take your daughters unto us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

Are they sincere? Heavens no. This is just a ruse, a really tragic, brutal, barbaric deception. If ye will not hearken unto us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone.

And the words pleased Hamor and Shechem, and Hamor's son, and the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had not delighted, because he had, he deferred not to it, because he had delighted Jacob's daughter, and he was more honorable than all those in the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem, his son, came into the gate of their city, and spoke unto the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein for the land.

Behold, it is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us, for to dwell with us, to be our one people, every male among us, to be circumcised, as they are circumcised.

Shall not their cattle and substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. And Hamor said unto Shechem, his son, he hearkened all that went out of the gate of the city, and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of the city. And obviously being incapacitated to do that to a full-grown male, it can spoil a week or two.

And I came to pass on the third day, probably a very well calculated day from a military advantage point of view, when they were sore that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. Not just Hamor, the one that defiled the sister, all the males. They slaughtered the entire city.

An act of brutality that was to ring on for a long time, and occasioned the forfeiture, if you will, of the rights of the firstborn down the line. Reuben forfeits it for other reasons. These Simeon and Levi, you know, forfeit it for these reasons.

They slew Hamor, and Shechem his son, with the edge of the sword, took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. And the sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. And they took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field.

And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and to Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, What should he deal with our sister as with a harlot? Now, this whole thing is a tragic commentary.

First of all, on Jacob holding his peace in the early verses, not really acting as the authority of the patriarch. The obvious overreaction and exploitation by these men is a heinous crime, and it's one that is, in many respects, part... First of all, Jacob should have been there in the first place. He should have been doing what the Lord told him to do.

But secondly, it also is the mechanism by which they're... It also tells us something else about Jacob. His concern isn't for the enormity of their crime. It's the vulnerability he now enjoys as being identified with them.

Because they're few in number, and now everybody's going to be mad at us, we'd better get out of here. He becomes a wanderer. He becomes a wanderer.

And he returns, however, to Bethel, and we'll pick that up next time. And next time we will try to wrap up the story of Jacob and show you some typology and set the stage for the study of Joseph. Which we'll take on when we reconvene after next time.

I'll see you next Monday night as the last meeting before the holidays. God bless you. This is the end of the 20th study in the book of Genesis.

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