

(Genesis) Genesis 32-34

by Joe Focht

The sermon explores Jacob's return to his homeland, his fear of Esau, and his transformative encounter with God through wrestling, emphasizing faith over self-reliance.

Duration: 56:47

Scripture: Genesis 32:9-12, Genesis 32:28, Genesis 35:1, Genesis 35:9-12, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Genesis"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Jacob wrestling with God in the dark. Jacob, who is alone and afraid, is suddenly attacked by someone in the darkness. They wrestle throughout the night, and eventually, Jacob realizes that he is wrestling with God. Despite Jacob's fear and uncertainty, God is faithful and desires to bless him. The preacher emphasizes the importance of letting go of our own efforts and trusting in God's provision.

Transcript

Genesis chapter 32. This evening. It's funny to hear somebody sneeze like that because you're in church and you really just don't want to sneeze.

You know, when I sneeze, I like to feel good about it. I like to just let it out and scream. But when you're in church, you have to be careful.

But I don't want your head to explode either. So don't try to stop it. If you have to sneeze, you can sneeze.

Genesis chapter 32. Jacob returning from Padnerim. He has settled issues with Laban, his uncle.

Set up their pillar, Mizba. Made the rose before God. Parted peaceably as possible.

And now he is coming into the area of Jabbok. He is still east of the Jordan River. Coming back in the area of Gilead.

And as he comes, he's met by the angels of God. A very strange verse. And I can't wait to see Jacob face to face and ask him exactly what this was like.

It says, Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, this is God's host. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

This is remarkable. I mean, it doesn't give us the information I would like to have. It just says Jacob now coming, as he's coming, the angels of God met him.

Hey, Jacob! You know, how many of them were there? What did they say? Were they just standing there waiting for them? Did they just appear? Did they come back down the ladder? What does it mean they met him? Unbelievable. And he sees them and says, This is the host of God. And calls the place Mahanaim.

Two hosts or two encampments. Now, we don't know whether he's speaking about his own encampment and the encampment of angels, or whether he sees a host in front of him and a host behind him. One covering his well-being in regards to Laban and the other covering his well-being in regards to Esau and what's ahead.

We're not exactly sure of that. But the angels of God meet him and he sees them and says, Oh, this is the host of God. Maybe he recognizes some of the angels.

Maybe they're some of the ones that were ascending and descending upon the ladder when he left the land. We don't know. It seems pretty matter-of-fact the way it's written here.

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother, unto the land of Seir in the country of Edom, down south, still east of the Jordan River in the area of Jordan today. And he commanded them saying, Thus shall ye speak unto..." Now Jacob's scared. Listen to the language.

"...unto my lord Esau." Now he's his lord. "...thy servant Jacob..." Now you have to look out when Jacob wants to be your servant. "...thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now.

And I have oxen and asses and flocks and men's servants and women's servants. And I have sent to tell my lord that I might find grace in thy sight." I guess he wants Esau to know he's not returning trying to claim the birthright or the blessing. He's basically saying I'm blessed.

I have herds. I have cattle. He's coming back in the land.

There I'm sure is tremendous anxiety in his heart because the last word from Rebekah was you've got to get out of here because the servants heard Esau say that when your father Isaac dies, he's going to kill you. And once he kills you, then his heart will be comforted. So now he's facing.

God has commanded him to come back to the land. He is facing now Esau. Just being freed from Laban and that worry, now he's facing Esau.

So he sends ahead his servants to see if they can encounter him and say, well, your servant Jacob is here and he's saying to his lord, God has blessed him. He has all the cattle and oxen and so forth like that. Verse 6, Now the messengers returned to Jacob.

Here come the servants that he just sent saying, we came to your brother Esau. And funniest thing, he's coming to see you too with 400 men. Uncle Harry's coming with 400 men.

Now there's a monkey wrench here in the works. And Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. You could just say stressed if you want to.

And he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two bands. Now, evidently, he's forgotten about me and I am already there were there were a company of angels there. Now, all of a sudden, he's forgotten about heaven's protection.

This man is on his own again. So he divides everybody in the two companies. And he said, if Esau comes to the one company and starts to kill everybody there, then the other company which is left shall escape.

Now he prays. Now, this is Jacob. You can't relate to this, I'm sure.

Jacob's theology is devise a plan then ask God to bless it. So he's got the plan in motion. Now he's going to say, oh God, bless this.

Most of us will at least devise two plans and give God multiple choice instead of seeking God for the plan. And there's interesting aspects to this prayer now. Jacob said, oh God, God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me, he's reminding God, return unto thy country and to thy kindred and I will deal well with you.

Remember how he's saying to God, okay, you're the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac. You're the God who told me to come back to my country. And you're the God who said you would deal well with me.

God must be going, this guy, you know, he's already wrestling with me. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies. Now he's got that right.

And of all the truth which thou has showed unto thy servant. For with my staff, I passed over this Jordan and now am become two bands. I think he's reminiscing and sincere.

God, you have blessed me. As you said that you would go with me. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, and now here's honesty, because I fear him.

God, I am afraid. Lest he will come and smite me and the mother upon the children, the mother falling on the children to protect them being killed is what he envisions. You, verse 12, he says to God, you're the one who said, I will surely do thee good and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Now what he's saying is, okay God, now there's honesty in this prayer, I'm afraid, you know, you're the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But he's reminding God, now you promised you would bless me, you promised you were going to keep me, and remember the stuff you said about my seed. You said, you know, we would be like the sand of the seashore.

Now God, that can't happen. If Esau comes and kills the moms and kills the kids and kills me, the sand will be gone. Now remember that, God.

So there is both here a reminding God, kind of coercing God, you know, not trusting God's Word, and that's hard to do when Uncle Harry's coming, for any of us. And yet there is a sincerity to it. God, I'm afraid.

That's why I'm seeking you. And you are the one who made me these promises. So he devises a plan.

He asks God to bless it, puts it in God's hands. Verse 13, he takes it back in his hands again. You can't relate to any of this, I'm sure.

And he lodged there the same night, and he took of that which came into his hand, now a present. You could write bribe for Esau, his brother. 200 she goats, 20 he goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 milking camels.

I'm not much interested in that. I don't know what that would do to your coffee in the morning. 30 milk camels with their colts, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 she-esses and 10 foals.

580 animals. That's a little present. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves, and said unto his servants, now you pass over before me, and put a space between each drove.

And he commanded the foremost, saying, when Esau, my brother, meets you, and he asked thee, saying, whose art thou? Whither goest thou? And whose are these before thee? Then thou shalt say, they be thy servant Jacob's. Jacob's his servant now. It is a present sent to my lord Esau.

Behold, also he's behind us. He's coming. And so commandeth he the second and the third, and all that followed the drove, saying, on this manner shall you speak unto Esau when you find him.

And say, moreover, behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face, and perhaps he will be accepted of me. So this is what Jacob does.

He comes in the land. God gives him a supernatural demonstration. He sees the angels.

You know, Elisha at Dothan would say to God in regards to his servant, you know, the servant wakes up and wakes up Elisha, and he's freaked out. He sees the Syrians, and he says to Elisha, oh, we're in deep trouble. Wake up.

Look at the armors around us. And Elisha hasn't had his first cup of coffee yet. And he says, God, please open this guy's eyes.

Would you please? And he says to his servant, there's more of us than there is of them. And the servant looks out again, and there's only two of them, and there's a lot of those. So God opens his eyes, and he sees the chariots and the horsemen of fire, the angels of God surrounding the sinner, and gives him peace.

In this situation, Jacob is allowed to see the angels of God. A host of them meet him, and still he doesn't have peace. Now, you would think, wouldn't you? I mean, have you ever said that to God? God, if you'd just let me see an angel, then I'll really know.

I'll keep my eyes shut. Just let me see the light shining in my bedroom through my eyelids, and I'll know you really love me. Just let me see an angel feather fall down from the ceiling, God.

I mean, we'll settle for a feather. But human nature is not satisfied that way. We'd start with a feather, then we'd want a light, then we'd want one angel, then we'd want two angels.

Lord, if it's really you, let me see 50 angels. Lord, if it's really you, let me see five on their heads and five on their feet. And then we'd be reversing the fleece.

Look, here's Jacob. He sees a host of angels. And he goes into this thing.

Oh, what are we going to do? Esau's coming with 400 men. Then he devises a plan. Then he reminds God.

God, you're going to bless me. You're going to keep me. I'm the guy.

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And this plan has to move onward from here. It reminds God.

Then he goes to his own devices. Okay, get the animals. Send them across in droves.

Now, one layer of goodness another. We're going to schmooze Esau now. So one layer upon another.

And each time he says, What in the world is this? You say, Your servant Jacob is coming. He's sending these things to his Lord Esau. And he's coming behind us.

And after everything is in place and functioning, then he says, Maybe. Maybe this will work. Perhaps.

Preadventure will accept me. So went the present over before him, and himself lodged that night in the company. And he rose up that night, and he took his two wives and his two women servants and his eleven sons and passed over the ford of Jabbok.

That's a river that's in that area, a tributary that comes into the Jordan. It's interesting. Jabbok means emptying, and certainly that was happening in Jacob's life.

He's 90 years old at this time too, by the way. And that's only middle age. I think he lives to 180.

It's not as bad as it sounds. And he took them, his wives and his sons, and sent them over the brook and sent over everything that he had. He sends them over now.

And Jacob is left there alone. So now he even sends over his wife and his kids, and he's there alone. And then it says, There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

Now, again, you've got to get the picture. Here's Jacob. I'm sure he didn't start a fire because he doesn't want to give his location away.

Harry's coming. He may be creeping around in the dark. So he's out there.

You guys ever been camping? He's in the woods. It's dark. It's night.

He sent everybody away. He's there alone. Ninety years old, and somebody jumps on him out of the dark and starts wrestling with him in the dirt.

Now, that will give you a cardiac arrest if that happens. Because you know how spooky it is to be in the dark. I remember being in the Boy Scouts years ago, and there was a time we did some kind of initiation, and guys dressed up like Indians came out, and they would be able to pull you out of the line and just throw you down in the weeds wherever they wanted to, and you had to lay there all night.

Everybody else left. I don't know whether you're an Indian in the morning or what. I forget.

And you tell those stories about the guy who comes, and you hear the scratching on the side of the car and all, and you zoom away, and there's a hook hanging on the car door handle. I mean, this is out in the woods in the dark. No campfire.

And every time you hear a noise, you think, is that this big hairy guy running around the rocks getting position on me? I mean, what is this like? I would not like to do this. And it says that the man wrestled with him. Now, you have to understand that because people make a big point about wrestling with God.

You know, we're wrestling with God in prayer. We're wrestling with Him in prayer. You know, to prevail with God.

I mean, that is a bunch of nonsense. First of all, you can't wrestle with God. I mean, that's not how you get stuff from God.

He's our Dad. And the price that was paid for that relationship was a price that Heaven had to pay. It cost us nothing on this end.

It was Heaven's expense. It was the blood of Jesus. There's no wrestling.

There's simply entering into His presence as children in faith. As a simple child. It's God wrestling with Him.

The one who's faithful and is seen as God. God is the one who starts to wrestle. Jacob is nine years old.

He's not looking to wrestle with somebody in the dark. God leaps on him. Now, as we read through the passage.

Let's do that. Let's look at it. Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

And when he saw the Lord, that he prevailed not against Him, against Jacob. Jacob wasn't saying uncle. Then he touched the hollow of his thigh.

Just touched him. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, the Lord said, let me go for the day is breaking.

And he, Jacob said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. Now, I don't want you to get the idea that Jacob's got God in a full Nelson. And God's saying, let me go, Jacob.

Let me go, you know. And Jacob's saying, no, I'm not going to let you go. Jacob is clinging now.

He's crippled. He's not wrestling. He's clinging.

That is the position that God has been trying to get him in for over 20 years. He's a heel catcher, but he's on the right heel finally. He's holding on to God.

And he's begging for a blessing because he realized this one could have put my hip out of joint 20 years ago. Could have done it in the beginning of the night. Didn't have to wrestle all night.

But he's like that with us. You know, God could break us. Boom! Just like that.

But he's gracious. And he wrestles with us. And you and I are the ones who wrestle back and God gets us in a full Nelson.

And he's saying, okay, I love you. Let me love you. And you're saying, no, I'm not going to give.

I'm not worthy. You can love me. And God's saying, I love you.

My word says, I love you. The Spirit says, I love you. I love you.

No, you don't love me. Or God's saying, let me carry the burden. You're saying, no, I want to carry the burden.

And you're wrestling. You won't give in to God. You're laughing because we're like that.

We're like that. And he is the one who is faithful for our benefit, not for God's benefit, for our benefit to be faithful to wrestle with us. Hosea gives us the commentary that's necessary.

Hosea 12 says this of Jacob. He took his brother by the heel in the womb. By his strength he had power with God.

Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed. Here it tells us how. He wept and he made supplication unto him.

And then it says, He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us, even the Lord of hosts. So it tells us who he was wrestling with. And it tells us there in Hosea 12 that he prevailed through weeping and supplication.

And Kyle and Delitzsch tell us that the tenses indicate that it was during the wrestling that the weeping and supplication had already begun. He realized along the way who it was he was wrestling with. And you see it was necessary because with Jacob, with all of his scheming, and with all of his best plans, and with everything he was doing with Esau, and all of his plans, and everything he could do in the natural, the best thing he was left with is peradventure.

That's all he was left with. He was a man that spent 20 years building a kingdom in the wrong world. 20 years conniving back and forth.

First, he connived with... He had prevailed with many. He had connived with Esau. He connived with Jacob.

He connived with Rebekah. He connived with Laban. 20 years doing it on his own.

Conniving. You know, trying to get the best for himself. And yet, he would be the one who would pass along the promise to his 12 sons who would become the 12 tribes of Israel.

It would be necessary for him to be broken and contrite in spirit ultimately so he could pass the grace of God along to them. So he could pass along a proper concept of who this God was and that all that would happen from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob down through the history of the nation would happen by God's faithfulness and God's goodness and God's willingness to bless and by God's covenant. And here he is now wrestling.

And maybe you are doing that. Maybe you're a person who is of the nature of being self-dependent. I mean, with Jacob, it wasn't adultery and it wasn't idolatry.

It was self-dependent. It was an independent man. He was dependent upon his own knack for business.

He was dependent on his own street smarts. He was dependent on his own ability to survive in a dog-eat-dog world. He just was not dependent upon God.

And even though he interacted with God, he would give God part of the picture, and then he would set out in his own wisdom to make things work out the way he thought they needed to work out. And after all of these years and all of his conniving, and now everything he has, his sons and his daughters and his wealth and his flocks and his herds, are all at this point as good as gone because his own life is passing away before him. Everything that he had worked for and everything that he thought was his and everything he thought that he had accumulated by his own means was in jeopardy.

And yet God was desiring to give him so much more if Jacob would just finally let go and realize that at his best, all he could provide is a perhaps. Maybe I'll find grace in Esau's sight. Maybe.

So God in his faithfulness now jumps on him. And this is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. Said as the Lord of hosts there in Hosea.

I mean, this is just hard for me. And by the way, the Hebrew language indicates there was actually a wrestling. It wasn't just in the mind that God would condescend.

He had laid out the heavens with the span of his hand. I heard Chuck Missler last week say that if the earth was the size of a pinhead, you take a straight pin, the size of a pinhead, that's the earth, that our sun would be 80 foot away and would be the size of a grapefruit if the earth was the size of a pinhead. If you can find yourself on that pinhead in Philadelphia.

And that the closest star, Betelgeuse, would be 8,000 miles away from the pinhead. That's the closest star. And yet, the heavens are spread out beyond our comprehension, beyond that.

Just the span of his hand. And yet, that he would condescend to come and to be amongst us and to wrestle physically with Jacob in the dirt by Jabbok is incredible. Now, he's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And I want to tell you this. If you're in a wrestling match with him right now, again, all challengers will lose. In his graciousness, he may go on with you for a while before he puts something out of joint, but he's able and could have.

And his wrestling is for your blessing, to bring you to the place where you're clinging to him, where you're dependent upon him instead of your own devices and your own wisdom. And it says that here, when the Lord saw he was not prevailing against them, Jacob was stubborn. He touched the hollow of his thigh.

The hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. Now, there's no more running from Esau. You know, the plan is out the window at this point.

And he said, Let me go, for the day is breaking. And Jacob says, I will not let you go unless you bless me. He's clinging to him.

It isn't as though God couldn't get away. Again, my kids at home, Hannah still dives on me. She's only seven years old.

She does to me every day. If I bend down by the fireplace or something, boom, she jumps on me. Favorite thing.

And then she's hanging on my neck, and I'm going, Okay, okay, okay. Come on. Okay, let go.

Okay, get down. Okay. And if I wanted to, I could just go, boom, boom, boom, boom.

You know, it isn't a problem. You know, God could have smoked Jacob if he wanted to. It isn't, Jacob, let me go.

No. You know, it isn't. He's saying, Jacob, let me go.

No, but this is the position he wanted Jacob in. Jacob is clinging now. He's saying, No, Lord.

Not unless you bless me. And God likes that about Jacob. You would think this guy's got chutzpah.

You know, now he's saying, I'm not going to let go unless you bless me. No. No, this is the point, because God wants to bless us.

He wrestles us to the place where he can finally bless us. You know, if you're in sin and you're in compromise, you know, God is still your father. Judicially, in heaven, the price has been paid, but your fellowship is broken.

You know, if one of my kids starts to sell drugs, then I want to put them out of the house. It isn't that I'm not their father. It isn't that I don't love them.

It's that I can't bless their disobedience and their rebellion. And if you're in compromise today, if you're in sin of some sort, and you know God is wrestling with you, He is wrestling with you to bless you. He is wrestling with you to break you.

He is wrestling you to the point where you will cling to Him and be dependent upon Him again. And if you will bring your life back under His care and His direction, He is wrestling so that He can bless once again. Not for Himself.

Jacob says, I will not let go unless you bless me. And God says to him, What is thy name? Now I wonder, I wonder when God said that, if Jacob remembers his old father Isaac feeling the goatskin on his neck and his hands and smelling him smelling like the field and saying to him, What is your name? The voice is Jacob's. The smell is Esau's.

Now he hears God saying it. What is your name? You know, he doesn't have to steal the blessing or the birthright. He's not going to say Esau to God.

What is thy name? He said, Swindler. Jacob, heel catcher, supplanter. That's my name.

Now he's finally saying, Uncle, I give. That's my name. And God says to him, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel.

For as a prince, hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. Jacob's saying, I won't let go unless you bless me. God says the blessing is simply contained in this, that no longer you be a supplanter, but you be one who is governed by God.

That is where the blessing is. Now the L, Israel there, there are over 40 times in the Old Testament where a verb form is and then always puts the L in the nominative that always puts the action on God's part. It's funny how other people translate this.

It has to be governed by God or commanded by God. God is the one who is active. And I like that, that Israel, no longer will you be supplant or left to your own schemes, but now you're going to be one who is clinging to me, one who is governed by God.

And Jacob in that is your blessing. If you'll change your name, you know. You were called heel catcher because of that tenacity, because you came out of the womb holding on to your brother's heel.

Now you're holding on to my heel. Now you're holding on somewhere else, Jacob. And we want to change your name.

And in that you'll find your blessing if you'll let your life be governed by God. And Jacob asked him and said unto him, Well, tell me, I pray thee, thy name. God must go, aye, aye, aye.

He says, Why is it that you're asking my name? And he blessed them there in spite of himself. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel. Peniel, you'll see down the next verse, Penuel, same name.

For I have seen God face to face. Now we see who he was wrestling with. And my life is preserved.

And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him and he's now limping upon his thigh. Coming. And his family sees him coming now.

Limping. Therefore, Moses writes this note for us. Therefore, the children of Israel eat not the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day.

Because he, God, the idea is, touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and the sinew of that shrank. So Moses puts a note. Even in our day, we don't eat the big sinew up the back of the thigh because we're reminded that we are the children of Israel, not the children of Jacob.

God was the one who changed his name and touched his leg. And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, Esau came. This is the showdown.

And with him, 400 men. And he divided the children. You know, here's the interesting thing.

You know, God does these things in our lives, but none of us change like this. You know, here he sees the angels. He goes through the process.

He wrestles with God. He says, Oh, I'm not going to go unless you bless me. Oh, I'm not letting you go unless you bless me.

And God finally says, Okay, we'll change your name then. If you want to be blessed, you have to be governed by God. He changes his name.

The whole night is over. Here he is limping. You think that limp would remind him, huh? He's limping.

And as soon as he sees Esau, Jacob is back. He divided the children under Leah and under Rachel and under the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children foremost.

He puts the kids in the order he cares about them the least. And Leah and her children after. And then Rachel and Joseph last.

It's easy to see as this family grows why the older brothers hate Joseph. And he passed over before them. That's noble.

And he bowed himself to the ground seven times. We know from ancient inscriptions that that's what was done before a king. Seven times.

Until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell upon his neck and kissed him and they wept together. The Bible says that even the king's heart is in the Lord's hand and like rivers of water he turns it whichever way he will.

It says when a man's ways please the Lord he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Esau, now, how many times have you been in a circumstance like this where something's troubled you and you know you're getting ready to face it and you pray and you pray and you put it before God and boom, then when it happens it works out so wonderfully you think, oh Lord, you're so amazing God. You're so faithful.

They fall on each other. They weep together. They kiss one another.

And there's lots here to catch up on. Rebecca has died while Jacob was in Padnerim. Mom is gone, whom he was close to.

He's always called the son of his mother. Isaac will live about another 23 years or so somewhere in there still evidently down at Hebron alive. They must be asking, how's dad? Mom? She passed away.

He was catching up on news. Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and the children and said, well, whose are these? And he said, well, these are the children which God has graciously given thy servant. And then the handmaids came near they and their children and they bowed themselves.

I'm sure that Jacob had them rehearsing this. Leah also with her children. She came near and bowed themselves and after came Joseph last of all near and Rachel and they bowed themselves.

Little Joseph, probably three, four years old. And he said, what meanest thou by all this drove which I met? Esau, what is all this stuff you're sending? And he said, these are to find grace in thy sight, my Lord. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother.

Keep that thou hast to thyself. And Jacob said, nay, I pray thee. If now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present in my hand.

For therefore, I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God. And he wasn't kidding. And thou wast pleased with me.

He sees in the tears and the love of Esau the wrestling of the night before. He sees the very face of God and the blessing of God. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee because God hath dealt graciously with me and because I have enough.

Now, it's interesting, in verse 9, Esau says, I have enough. The Hebrew word is much. I have much, Jacob.

I don't need your flocks and your herds. Jacob says, no, you take this. This is the blessing of God in my life.

To see you is like to see the face of God and to see you and to be patching up things that were between us is God being gracious to me. I want you to take these things because he says, I have enough. That word is all things.

It's a different Hebrew word. Esau says, I have much. Jacob said, I have all things.

And he urged him, and he took it. And he said, let us take our journey. Let us go, and I will go before thee.

Now, he probably figures they're going to head straight back to Hebron where Isaac is. He hasn't been there for 20 years, and Isaac is over 150 at this point in time. And he said unto him, My Lord, know that the children are tender, this is Jacob speaking, and the flocks and herds with young are with me.

And if men should overdrive them even one more day, he doesn't bother to tell him he's been running from Laban for days, all the flock will die. Let my Lord, I pray thee, pass over before His servant, and I will lead on softly or gently according as the cattle that goeth before me, as the livestock can handle it, and the children be able to endure until I come unto my Lord, unto Seir. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk, the men that are with me, his escorts.

He said, What needeth it? No, I don't have any need. Let me find grace in thy sight, my Lord. So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

Now it's interesting there in verse 14 where it says, Until I come, Jacob speaking to my Lord, unto Seir. Some of the rabbis from the first century in their writings believe that this will be fulfilled in the kingdom age. That Jacob, Israel, will come to Seir to Edom, to Esau.

Now, possibly during the Great Tribulation. There is a place that is prepared for them in Petra in that rock fortress. Isaiah speaks of it.

Revelation chapter 12 speaks of it. Last year one of my friends in Petra in the spring talking to the guide, a Jordanian guide, born again Christian. He said there are from the first of January all the way through June over 1,000 Jews a day that come to Petra from Israel to see.

Isn't that interesting? God preparing them. Esau returns that day on his way south. Now, he heads south.

He's east of the Jordan River going due south down to the area of Seir. Jacob journeyed to Sukkoth and built a house there. Now, you have to understand what happens.

I get everything backwards here. Let me think. Where's east where you sit? They're still on this side of the Jordan.

Esau heads south back to Seir and is expecting Jacob to follow him. As soon as he goes over the hill and gets out of sight, Jacob kind of makes a loop and heads northwest and goes in the other direction and comes to Sukkoth and builds a house there. He's there it seems for about 8 years.

So Esau must be wondering what in the world happened to Jacob. I don't see this guy for 20 years. He tells me he's going to be right behind me and I haven't seen him for 8 years.

He hasn't changed much. He must be thinking. So he goes to this area of Sukkoth.

Now, Sukkoth is still east of the Jordan River. It's a little more down towards the Jordan River but it's still on that side of the Jordan River. He builds a house there.

He makes booze for the cattle. Therefore, the name of the place is called Sukkoth Booze. Reuben, the oldest son, probably somewhere around 12 when they get there.

They're there for at least 8 years. And then it says, Jacob came to Shelem, a city of Shechem. Maybe referring to Jerusalem.

Jebus. We're not sure. It's in that area.

Shechem is about 30 miles north of Jerusalem. He comes now finally to the city of Shechem which is in the land of Canaan when he came from Padinarum and he pitched his tent before the city. And he purchased a parcel of a field, a piece of ground where he had spread his tent at the hand of the children of Hamor who was the king of the city.

Shechem's father. Shechem is the prince. For a hundred pieces of money.

Now, he didn't have coinage until five centuries before Christ. The Persians started with coinage. Before then, they measured their gold and silver in weight.

So, a hundred pieces of money, of silver or of gold, he measures out. And there he erected an altar and called it El Elo Israel. Now, Jacob has come now to Shechem.

Shechem is 30 miles north of Jerusalem. He's still about 15 miles north of Bethel. That's the place that God is calling about.

If he just continued about 15 miles south of there, he would have been at Bethel, the place that God is calling him to. Instead, he goes to Shechem. As he comes to Shechem, he buys a piece of ground there.

Now, Jacob's well is still there. We hear about it in John chapter 4 as Jesus meets the woman at the well at Sicar. At Jacob's well.

It's still there today. You can still draw water from it. Remarkably.

And he builds an altar there. Now, this is the first time we hear of Jacob building an altar. Jacob, unlike Abraham and Isaac, sets up pillars everywhere.

The first time we hear of a pillar, again, is Lot's wife. She turns him a pillar of salt. But all the pillars after that are pillars that Jacob sets up.

And again, a pillar is a point of memorial. It's where you swear something. You make an oath.

And Jacob's that kind of guy. You know, let me 50 bucks. I swear I'll give it back.

You know, I swear. You know, build a pillar. I swear.

Swear on my mother's grave. I swear. Let me 50 bucks.

I swear I'll give it back. Jacob's a pillar guy. It's remarkable.

The first time we have him building an altar is in Shechem. He's building an altar. He's calling it by the right name.

Now, God the God of Israel because his name has changed. But he's building it at the wrong place. He's supposed to be at Bethel.

So, it's still partial obedience. Though he's building an altar. We have to give him that.

And he's calling the place the God of Israel. Acknowledging that his name had been changed. And Dinah, the daughter of Leah.

Now, this is one of Jacob's daughters. The one we know of. Dinah.

Which she bare unto Jacob. Went out to see the daughters of the land. Now, we're not sure what's going on with Dinah.

Evidently, she's there. She's got 11 brothers. She's not going to marry any of them.

She wants to see what the other women in this land where they've bought a piece of ground and have settled down. And they're neighbors now. This looks like it's going to be the homestead.

And she goes out to see what's going on with the neighborhood girls. And when Shechem, the son of Hamor, the prince, the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and he laid with her. He raped her and he defiled her.

Now, by the way, in that culture, girls, there were no rights. If you were a married woman, there were certain laws about adultery in most ancient cultures. There were not many laws at all about a prostitute, no prohibitions.

Many men had concubines besides their wives. And if you saw a damsel, a single woman in the field, unattended, no one was around, she was fair game. And if you forced yourself on her, even in Jewish laws, then you bore the responsibility to marry her.

So, no rights. I mean, things have changed so much, thank God, but this man forces himself on Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and defiles her. And his soul clave unto Dinah, the daughter of Jacob.

Now, he just doesn't abuse her and leave. He's drawn to her. And he loves her.

And he spoke kindly to her, kind words unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father, Hamor, saying, Get me this woman to be my wife, almost like Samson. Arrange the dowry.

Go talk to this guy, Jacob. Ah, this woman is beautiful. I want her to be my wife.

Dad, make the arrangements. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah. Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah.

Through the song. Jacob heard that someone had defiled Dinah, his daughter. Now, his sons were with the herds, the cattle in the field.

And Jacob held his peace until they were come. Now, he hears that the prince of this area rapes his daughter. And Jacob doesn't make a move until the boys, they're out in the field, until Hoss and little Joe

and Adam come back from the field.

He's not going to do anything without the boys. And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field.

They had heard it. Somehow word had reached them. And the men were grieved and they were very wroth.

They were filled with wrath because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter which thing ought not to be done. Now, Jacob had bought ground from them. They had made an arrangement.

They had decided and agreed to live as neighbors. And certainly, this was an injustice in every way. And Hamor communed with them, saying, the soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter.

I pray you, give her him to wife and make ye marriages with us and give your daughters unto us and take our daughters unto you. And you shall dwell with us and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade ye therein and get you possessions therein.

You know, there is Satan putting out the bait because this lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the lineage that the Messiah will come from. And if they intermarry and lose their separate position amongst those in the land, where will the line of the Messiah be? And the bait is put out. You settle down here.

You can live anywhere. We'll give our daughters to your sons. You give your daughters to our sons and we'll become one people.

And Shechem said unto her father, unto Jacob and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes and what ye shall say unto me, I will give it. Name your price. I love your sister.

Ask me never so much. Whatever you ask, a dowry and a gift, I will give it according as you shall say unto me. But give me the damsel to be my wife.

Anything you want. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully. Now, they are little chips off the old block, Jacob.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. They've been learning from one of the best deceivers for years now. So these poor guys from Shechem have no idea who they're dealing with.

So they say to the boys, Anything you want. So the boys say to them, because he had defiled their sister, they said unto them, Well, we can't do this. We can't give our sister to anyone who's uncircumcised.

We have this problem. It just wouldn't be right. We have this custom.

For that would be a reproach to us. But in this will we consent to you. If you will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised.

Now, Jacob's sons are having no respect of the covenant, which is a sacred thing that God made with Abraham. And it symbolizes something among them. They are using it now in a deceitful and blasphemous way.

He says, you know, we can't give our sister to you guys. You guys are not circumcised. We don't go for that.

You know, we have this custom. This is the way we are. The only way we could really do this and we know you never do is kind of ridiculous is if your whole town was circumcised.

Then we'll give our daughters to you and we will take your daughters to us and we'll dwell with you and we'll become one people. If you will not hearken to us and be circumcised, then we'll take our daughter and we'll be gone. And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son.

And the young man deferred not to do the thing. He didn't waste any time because he had delight in Jacob's daughter and he was more honorable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem, his son, came to the gate of the city and communed with the men of the city, saying, oh, they give them the good news first.

These men are peaceable with us. They're great guys. Therefore, let them dwell in the land and trade therein.

And the land, behold, is large enough for both of us. And let us take their daughters to be our wives and let us give our daughters to them and there's only a little thing that they've asked of us. Every man is circumcised.

And their cattle will be ours and their substance will be ours. I mean, you know, they lay the good news out first. Only herein will the men consent unto us to dwell with us, to be one people with us, if every male amongst us is circumcised, as they are circumcised.

Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? Only let us consent unto them and then they'll dwell with us. And Hamor and Shechem, his son, hearkened all that went out of the gate of the city. Every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of the city.

And it came to pass on the third day when they were sore. Now, you have to understand, this is not done by a mohel. This is not done with a knife.

This is done with a stone, most likely. I feel the same way. No antibiotics.

No antiseptics. There is no sterile environment for this to take place. So by the third day, the fever has set in.

There's infection. The third day they were sore, the two sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi. Now, these are two sons from Leah.

They are Dinah's blood brothers. Dinah was Leah's daughter. These are two sons of Leah.

Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and I imagine now they take servants too. It doesn't say that. They came upon the city boldly and slew all of the males.

They slew every male in the city. And they slew Hamor and Shechem, his son, with the edge of the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house. That's where she had been.

And they went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and the spoiled city because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep and their oxen, 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 to make slaves of them.

Their wives took them captive and spoiled even all that was in the house. And Jacob, when he finds out, says to Simeon and Levi, ye have troubled me to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanite 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. Now, he certainly was troubled by his sons.

They certainly had done that which is wrong. And they certainly have sinned. And it will be thrown in their face on Jacob's deathbed as he prophesies.

But Jacob is not assuming yet his own responsibility. He had troubled his own household by going to Shechem instead of going to Bethel where God had appeared to him originally and called him back to. And it's in his partial obedience.

There's no such thing as partial obedience. That is disobedience. It's like a half truth.

There's no such thing. That's a full-blown lie. It's just slicker.

And there's no such thing really as partial obedience in the eyes of God. Half disobedience is full disobedience as far as God's concerned. And Jacob was not where he should have been and he had troubled his own house by his disobedience, by his partial yielding to God.

And they said, his sons say to him now, should he deal with our sisters as with a prostitute? They challenged their father back again. Now, this will set the stage finally for Jacob to return to Bethel to come back to his first love. His life is disintegrating and falling apart.

He's finding himself running again. Running first from Esau to Padanaram. Running then from Laban.

Conniving and wrestling with God and then being afraid of Esau again. Now, running from the Canaanites and the Perizzites. It's been over 20 years.

And finally, this man will come back to Bethel beginning in chapter 35. Read ahead. And he is a man who has lived in half obedience.

Because he has lived in partial obedience, his life is disintegrating and falling apart. And he is a man who has lived in partial obedience. God calling His people constantly back to Himself.

And always doing that with us, with me. And I'm so thankful that He's as faithful as He is. Let's stand and pray together.

I encourage you to read ahead. We will continue our journey. You can read 35, 36, and 37.

And you'll see why when you get to 36. 36 is a genealogy, the whole chapter. And we'll make time passing through there.

But you should read it on your own. I mean, the remarkable thing is God knows every one of those names. You know, when you come to a genealogy, the remarkable thing is God knows our address.

He knows our phone number. He knows our dad's name, our mom's name, our sister's name. That's the amazing thing about a genealogy is it reminds me He knows all that about us.

Father, we settle our hearts before You. And, Lord, we often find ourselves wrestling, Lord, within ourselves. And, Lord, no doubt there is a wrestling that is part of our walk with You.

You say that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. Lord, there is a struggle that You encourage us to stand in. But, Father, let our wrestling be with our old nature.

Allow it to be with the enemy and with the world around us. And, Father, let us cease in our wrestling with You. You know our nature.

Father, You preserve this record for us. Father, graciously, we pray, reveal Yourself to us. Slowly, Father, put our hip out of joint.

Father, with Your mercy and with Your love, cause us to limp upon our own self-assurance. Cause our own devices, Lord, to crumble under us, no longer to hold us up. That we might cling to You.

And in supplication and brokenheartedness, Lord, that You would change our names again and again and again. Anew each morning, Lord, Your mercies are new each morning. Each morning, name us governed by God again.

Lord, this evening, tomorrow morning as we wake up and go to work, name us again governed by God, Lord. We look to You. Father, we love You.

We wonder at Your faithfulness and Your shepherding care. We wonder, Father, what it is You see in us that would cause You to hang on a cross that we might be forgiven. We wonder, Father, what finished product You see in each of us that You're not ashamed to be called our God and to have us as Your sons and daughters.

Lord, we still wrestle foolishly so often. Lord, teach us the lesson of Jabbok, Lord, of emptying ourselves, allowing Your Spirit to live through us, to direct us, to love others through us, to strengthen us. Father, we pray for any here this evening that have wrestled themselves, Lord, out of Your blessing, that, Lord, You would cause them to say, Uncle.

Lord, they would remember that the blessing they so desire is simply found in being governed by You. Father, we pray for anyone here who doesn't know You, that's unsaved, that before they leave this evening, they come to the front and pray with us. Father, we could see their eternal destiny change.

We put these things before You, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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