

JACOB WRESTLES WITH A "MAN"

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 32:1-32; 35:9-15.

LESSON 25 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 32:1-32.

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

² And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

³ And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

⁴ 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:

⁵ And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

⁶ ¶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

⁸ And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

⁹ ¶ And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Jacob's Homeward Journey

1. Met by the angels of God, Genesis 32:1, 2;

Hebrews 1:14;

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

Psalms 91:11;

¹¹ For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Psalms 34:7.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

2. A message sent to Esau, Genesis 32:3-5.

3. The messengers' return, and the results, Genesis 32:6-8;

Deuteronomy 1:17;

¹⁷ Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment *is* God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it.

Proverbs 29:25;

²⁵ The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Isaiah 51:12;

¹² I, *even* I, *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass;

Luke 12:4, 5.

⁴ And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵ But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

II Jacob's Effective Prayer

1. God's promises claimed, Genesis 32:9-12;

Genesis 22:17;

¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

Genesis 31:3;

³ And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

Job 5:19;

¹⁹ He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

Psalms 91:4, 15.

⁴ He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.

¹⁵ He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

2. Preparation to appease Esau -- Restitution, Genesis 32:13-15;

Leviticus 6:4;

⁴ Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found,

Luke 19:8, 9;

⁸ And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken

truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 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.

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.

13 ¶ And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;

14 Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams,

15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.

16 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 betwixt drove and drove.

17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose *art* thou? and whither goest thou? and whose *are* these before thee?

18 Then thou shalt say, *They be* thy servant Jacob's; it *is* a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he *is* behind us.

19 And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him.

20 And say ye 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; peradventure he will accept of me.

any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Acts 24:16.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

3. Instructions to his servants, Genesis 32:16-20;

Proverbs 6:3;

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

Proverbs 22:4.

4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches, and honour, and life.

III Jacob's Consecration

1. His possessions sent over the brook, Genesis 32:21-23.

2. Alone with God, Genesis 32:24;

Daniel 10:8;

8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

Matthew 6:6.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

3. Wrestling with a man until the break of day, Genesis 32:24-26;

Hosea 12:4;

4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* Beth-el, and there he spake with us;

Matthew 7:7;

7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

James 5:16.

16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

4. The blessing gained -- Sanctification, Genesis 32:27-32;

Genesis 17:1-10;

1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

10 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Genesis 35:9-15;

21 So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24 ¶ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

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.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, 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.

29 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.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31 And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Leviticus 20:8;

8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you.

John 17:15-17;

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Ephesians 5:25-27;

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

I Thessalonians 4:3;

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

Hebrews 13:12;

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

I John 4:18.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love

NOTES:

In the 91st Psalm, verse 11, we read that God shall give His angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways. This appearance mentioned in the first verse of our lesson was no doubt of great encouragement to Jacob, and that was the divine purpose of the visitation.

Following the manifestation of the host of Heaven, Jacob sent his servants to his brother Esau with a message of importance. It contained a tone of humility, "Thy servant Jacob saith thus," and also words, which should have served to allay any fears that Esau might have had regarding the further loss of his possessions. Especially are those thoughts apparent when he said: "And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight" (Genesis 32:5).

However, the returning messengers brought a message that caused Jacob to be greatly disturbed and afraid. This fear caused Jacob again to manifest a spirit of humility in his prayer unto God, in which he reminds God of the promises: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant" (Genesis 32:9, 10).

True conversion is always followed by a desire to make restitution -- to restore that which is unlawfully gained. Zacchæus was quick to reveal this spirit when he found the Lord and experienced a miraculous change of heart (**Luke 19:8**; 8 And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold). And Jacob may have had a desire at this time to send his brother princely gifts to compensate for the temporal loss Esau might have sustained in being deprived of his birthright and blessing (**Ezekiel 33: 15**; 15 *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die). It was the custom to appease those who were offended by sending them gifts: "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me" (Genesis 32:20).

Genesis 35:9-15.

⁹ ¶ And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him.

¹⁰ And God said unto him, Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

¹¹ And God said unto him, I *am* God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

¹² And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

¹³ And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

¹⁵ And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.

QUESTIONS

1. With what encouragement does Jacob meet on his journey?
2. What disturbing news is brought by the returning messengers?
3. What steps does Jacob take upon receiving his messengers?
4. Had God given Jacob reason to believe the Lord would be with him in returning?
5. What is always necessary for receiving a blessing from the Lord?
6. Did Jacob fulfil this requirement? How?
7. What is signified by Jacob's wrestling with a man?
8. Was the result that which Jacob desired?
9. What blessing did he receive?
10. What other patriarch had received this same blessing and had his name changed?

Full realisation that divine help was available and that he stood in desperate need of something from God, spurred Jacob on to a deep consecration; and we find him sending all his possessions over the brook, and he remained alone with God.

Consecration is the foundation of everything we receive from God. And when we have laid everything on the altar God expects us to pray until we hear from Heaven. He admonishes us not to cease praying: for we have His promise of an answer (**Psalm 86:7**; ⁷ In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me). Jacob refused to be denied, and wrestled with the "man" until the blessing came: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26).

This was definitely the time of Jacob's sanctification. And just as Abraham was sanctified when God gave him the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17) and his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, so Jacob was now sanctified, and Jacob ("supplanter") became Israel ("a prince of God").

Perhaps Jacob's request that the man with whom he wrestled should tell his name was merely for the confirmation of what Jacob already realised -- that he had wrestled with someone greater than a man: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Genesis 32:30). It is certain that after wrestling with this mysterious personage through the night Jacob knew that he was not contending with an ordinary man, for Jacob's thigh was thrown out of joint as a result of the "man's" touch.

Jacob also prayed for a blessing from his opponent, showing by this request that he knew this person was capable of giving him a blessing, saying that he would not let the "man" go until the blessing was received.

It may be that the long wrestling was due to the fact that God was requiring consecrations from Jacob that he was reluctant to make. But because of the consecrations finally made, his perseverance, and his faith, the experience of sanctification was given to him and his name was changed to Israel: "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" (Genesis 32: 28).

Old Testament sanctification is exactly the same as the New Testament experience. The Adamic nature is alive even after salvation and must necessarily be exterminated. Jacob, like all mankind, had inherited the nature of sin, and he sought victory over it. He could not commit sin and remain right with God, for "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." He did need to have the inbred sin removed, and found this experience. Consecration was necessary (**Romans 12:1**; ¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*), and the results were achieved (**Leviticus 20:8**; ⁸ And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you.), as was manifested in the life of the patriarch henceforth.

