

Genesis Chapter 32 Commentary

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

This is not the first time that Jacob has seen angels. Remember when Jacob was fleeing from his brother and he dreamed of the ladder and the angels (plural), seen in: ***Ge 28:11-12; 11 "And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."***

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

Mahanaim is from the Hebrew word Machanayim (pronounced makh-an-ah'-yim) and means; *a double camp, an encampment of travelers or troops*. We are brought to remembrance here of some other shepherds that saw a host of angels of God, seen in: ***Lu 2:13 "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*** These angels were bringing the announcement of the birth of Christ. The Holy Spirit of God and God's angels are the means and methods that God uses to bring us to the knowledge of Christ, who and what he is to us.

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.

We notice; Jacob calls his brother Esau his lord. Remember the blessing that Isaac bestowed upon Esau in: ***Ge 27:40 "And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."***

Remember, the last time Jacob saw Esau, Jacob fled because Esau wanted to kill him for what Esau deemed stealing of his blessing of firstborn, by devious means. While Jacob was gone away, Esau has become a great man, has increased greatly, and is serving in the place of the first born son under their father Isaac. Jacob is saying to Esau, I have not come to usurp your position, I am just coming home. Jacob is sending a message to his brother Esau to alert him that his younger brother is coming home. Here, Jacob is trying to appease his brother, by acknowledging that his brother is oldest, and by nature is over him.

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;

Jacob's distress is here pointed out and we understand; Jacob is afraid, that Esau is coming to follow through his death threat to Jacob. This is exactly what a guilty conscience does in our lives

today, and satan uses that as a tool to distract us from the truth of Salvation by Grace. Jacob fears that Esau will follow through with the threat of killing him, and he seeks to provide a way of escape, for a part of his family and wealth, by dividing into two separate groups.

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 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.

Notice that Jacob's prayer is based upon the promises of God to him. Notice that it is in the time of great danger and distress that Jacob prays. We don't see in scripture if Jacob was given to pray often or not, but he is praying now.

This is a great example to us. If we pray leaning upon the promises of God to usward, we will not be sending out empty prayers that will not be heard. We will not be so ready to hang out our want list instead of our needs. You see, Jacob has a great need and knows that only God can supply it.

We notice the lack of faith of Jacob in the promise of God. If Jacob had come to fully trust God he would not have been afraid of Esau, or anyone else. He would have believed God would only do to him good and continue to bless him in posterity. Remember God's promise to Jacob seen in: ***Ge 28:13-15; 13 "And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."*** You understand; Jacob has a "***God shall***" covenant, which is not dependent upon Jacob for any works. Jacob is not given an "***if you***" covenant, dependent upon something that Jacob does to fulfill his part of the covenant. Praise the Lord for his "***shall***" covenants!

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. 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.**

Jabbok is from the Hebrew word; Yabboq (pronounced; yab-boke') and means; *pouring forth; Jabbok, a river east of the Jordan, to pour out or to empty*. Now we see Jacob is ready to receive salvation. How? He is poured out, he has done all he can do, and now he is trusting in the Lord fully.

We point out; Jacob passed over during the night. We shall come back to this later.

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.

Jacob has sent all his earthly possessions away over the brook. He is alone with God's promises in his heart. God furnished Jacob with these promises, and gave him the ability to believe in them. This is all that Jacob has to hold onto.

God allowed Jacob to hold onto the man through the power he had infused him with. God also demonstrated to Jacob that I could easily destroy you, see all I have to do is touch your thigh and your hip is out of joint. Not beat or hit or kick, just touch.

As the day dawns; Jacob is holding on still and seeks a blessing which he gets. God often tries us, through tribulations, to see if we truly believe what he has promised in his word. We see a picture of this in: ***Mt 15:21-28; 21 "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."*** This text, and the wrestling of Jacob, is to be an encouragement to us today, teaching us to trust fully in, and hold onto Jesus, Christ and the promise of God which he has imparted to us.

Jacob's name is now changed from Jacob to Israel. Israel is from the Hebrew word Yisra'el (pronounced ; yis-raw-ale') and means; *he will rule as God; Jisrael, a symbolical name of Jacob; also (typically) of his posterity*.

I believe this is where Jacob is truly converted to complete faith in God, and I believe; the man wrestling with Jacob is the pre-incarnate Christ, revealed in the following explanations. Remember,

Jacob crossed over in the night. However, the man wrestled with him through the night until the morning began to dawn. This is the picture of the new birth of a sinner, who is delivered, out of the darkness of death to the awakening of a new day in Christ.

- Jacob is now struggling for his very life and existence, and he has nothing to cling to but the promise of God. We see that he has already sent all his possessions away, even his family, and he is entirely alone. This is a picture of a child of God being born again. We must be removed from all things in our earthly house, that we might be filled with only the promises of God and his Holy Spirit. Then we must hold onto those promises of his word. Remember, that in John chapter 1, we find that the Jesus is the Word.
- We see that Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. This tells me; when we are born again, we lose the ability to walk on our own, and now must lean upon Christ to be our strength.
- Christ is the only one who is able to change our very nature, and make us new creatures. When we are born again; we are given a new nature, and a new name. A name that is not telling of our fleshly nature, but of the new nature we have as a child of God.

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.

Why did Jacob ask the angel's name? He wanted to know who he was wrestling with; who had power to change his physical body and change his name. Why do you and I doubt when God speaks to us? Man is always seeking a sign or something which he may hold onto. We see the angel refused to give a name, therefore, Jacob would not have wherewith to fall into idolatry. Now Jacob must exercise his faith in God.

"for I have seen God face to face" This is another reason, that we believe that the man wrestling with Jacob is the pre-incarnate Christ. Even Jacob believed he had seen God face to face. As I am sure he did; and this explains why he wouldn't tell Jacob his name. How, you ask? It is not yet time for the revealing of Jesus, the Christ. The Old Testament saints must wait for the incarnation of Jesus before he can be revealed to them as Saviour and Lord.

31 And as he passed over Penuel 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.

In Summary: We see a picture of a child of Grace coming home to join the church. Before they join the church there are some things that need to happen as we see in this chapter. They must be loosed from all they possess; they must see Jesus, and see him as Lord and Saviour.

We see that Jacob, before he would face his brother and be received in peace, sent before him all that he had. Jesus is a personal Saviour, to each of those that God gave him to save. Salvation by grace brings us face to face with Jesus, all alone, without anything to present to him except our prayers for forgiveness. When this happens, we will be received in peace by our Saviour, who has a heart filled with forgiveness and love for all those the Father gave unto him to save.

We must give up all hope that we can do anything for ourselves pertaining to eternal salvation. We see that Jacob gave up all he had and then he wrestled with the man. When a child of God has turned loose of any thought that he can save himself, he can then come face to face with God, and hold on to Christ with all his might. Not only will this repentant sinner be received, but they will also be given a new name. They will no longer be identified as a lost sinner in a state of depravity; they shall now be known as a child of God, which is a sinner saved by the grace of God. Praise God for salvation by grace! Praise and glory to our Saviour and Lord, Jesus, the Christ! Hallelujah!