

Genesis 32 Jacob Returns Home

Genesis 32:1-21

God's angels appear to Jacob to give him confidence that God was with him.

Jacob's message to Esau, his "master" is that Jacob, Esau's "servant" returns. Those labels are normal for the younger son speaking to the older. But the birthright was Jacob's, by God's decree and by the men's agreement. What do you think of Jacob's subservience?

If Jacob was God's servant, did he need to be a "servant" to Esau? Was that an improper attempt to return the birthright?

Jacob hears of Esau's approach and fear grips him. Out of his fear comes the prayer recorded in verses 9-12, which is one of the great models of prayer.

Opening address. Jacob acknowledges who God is to him. Read Matt 6:9

Reminder of God's will/promise Jacob reflects back to God the promise of Gen. 31:3.

Expression of humility Read Luke 7:6-7

Thankfulness for God's past faithfulness Psalm 50:23, Jonah 2:9

Plea for help, expression of fear Read Jonah 2:2, Matthew 14:28

Peace in the knowledge that God will deliver Jacob again reminds God of His promise, this time in Gen. 28:14.

What promises of God can you use in your prayers to God? For examples, read Psalm 23:4, John 14:1-3

Immediately after the prayer, Jacob attempts to pacify Esau with gifts. On the one hand, God answers prayers by teaching us to order our affairs aright. On the other hand, the people of God may rest assured that God will protect them. We need not attempt to appease our enemies by giving away God's blessing to them.

Jacob's offer of gifts was an offer to return to Esau the blessing he had stolen from Esau through tricking Isaac. It was also an attempt to transfer to Esau the blessing the Lord had given him during his years with Laban.

Genesis 32:22-31 The Struggle at Peniel

Jacob realized he was in the hands of a being against whom it was useless to struggle. With the crippling touch, Jacob's struggle took a new direction. Now crippled in his physical strength, he became bold in faith.

After already having his hip "wrenched" in v.25, Jacob displays great persistence by holding firm until he received his blessing. Strong character develops when we struggle through tough conditions.

Look up: James 1:2-3; Romans 5:3,4

The outcome of the struggle is a paradox. The victor wept and pleaded for a blessing. Once blessed, he emerged, limping on a dislocated hip. How may this outcome be a defeat and a victory?

Despite his disabling experience, Jacob considered this incident a blessing (v.30).

Psalm 119:71 reads: "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."

Why is this true? 2 Corinthians 12:9,10, Hebrews 12:11

Jacob asks for the name of his opponent. He gets no answer, but he knows the truth. Read Hosea 12:4-5

Jacob means "he grasps the heel," an expression for deceitfulness

Israel means either "God rules" or "he struggles with God"

Peniel means "the face of God"

Having struggled with God face to face and been delivered, he did not need to fear meeting Esau face to face.