

Genesis Chapter Thirty Two Notes

Genesis 32:1-5

Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim. Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He also commanded them saying, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; and I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight."

- Mahanaim=means two camps; or double camp
- Jacob could interpret this as evidence of God's protection—visible protection for Jacob to see—be aware of (Zech 9:8, Ps 34:7, Is 52:12)
- Jacob is met by God's messengers before he sends messengers to Esau
- Ever since Eden—we see angelic guards stationed by God to secure that which is His
- Calls Esau lord—as point of deference/service
- On his way to Paddan-aram—God meets him—shows angelic realm—as well as on way to Canaan
- In wording of 'lord Esau'—servant Jacob—he is presenting opposite to wording of blessing Isaac spoke over him
- Wording to Esau—does not say—"I've come to claim my double portion"

Genesis 32:6-12

And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; for he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape." And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who didst say to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which Thou hast shown to Thy servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, the mothers with the children. For Thou didst say, 'I will surely prosper you, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

- Movement is toward each other
- In prayer (one of the first recorded in scripture)—reminds God of the covenant made with Abraham and Isaac—and personal promise to Jacob—includes confession of unworthiness—making known to God his circumstances and the nature of his fears
- Esau's response—approach with 400 men—doesn't sound like a welcome party. Jacob is anticipating conflict.

Genesis 32:13-16

So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between droves."

- He selects a gift based on fear rather than love (I Jn 4:16-19)
- Over 500 animals—not known what % of his flocks this represents
- Space between droves—delays a response—designed to soften a negative response. Appears to enlarge the gift

Genesis 32:17-23

And he commanded the one in front, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?' then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.'" Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, "After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; and you shall say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp. Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. And he took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had.

- Jewish proverb: when a person has a clear conscience, everyone fears him, but when he has a guilty conscience, he fears everyone else.

- Jacob's plan for encountering Esau: 1) send messengers 2) split up booty 3) pray-not about forgiveness 4) send large gift
- Worship means—righting the wrongs—then offering the sacrifice—Matt 5:23-25
- Jabbok=he will empty out
- This is an eastern tributary of the Jordan—near present day Ammon. Once brook is crossed, he enters Canaan.
- Before Jacob can enter land to face brother—faces God

Genesis 32:24-32

Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

So he said to him, "What is your name?" and he said, "Jacob." And he said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel, and he was limping on his thigh. Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.

- In Chinese—word for danger is opportunity
- When God appears as a man in the OT—He is usually called the Angel of the Lord
- When there is an encounter with God it can be for the sake of forecast (prophets) or for a test
- This is Jacob's Mt. Moriah experience
- Our new life—might also be marked with a limp
- Jacob is forever marked by his struggling/striving with both God and man
- Peniel=face of God
- God met Jacob at Bethel—immediately before going into Paddan-aram—now meets him at Peniel
- Gives Jacob a new name—symbolic of new nature being wrought in him. He has always been Jacob (a schemer, clever in striving and scheming) God means to touch this place of strength—so Jacob will learn humility and dependence.

- Jacob anticipates wrestling with Esau in order to enter the land and finds instead it is the Lord he must wrestle with
 - The divine assailant finds Jacob's strength hard to overcome
 - Jacob had to be broken –Ps 51:17
 - Before he is made rich—he has to be made poor. Before he can truly lead—he must learn to follow
 - When asked his name (which God already knows)—Jacob must voice who he is and has been—he has been a Jacob
 - As he hangs broken in the arms of God—realizes he has been touched by love and divine kindness
 - After breaking—comes blessing
 - Hosea 12:3-6 –Jacob's lesson used to teach the nation
 - For Jacob's protection (since he is face to face)—God withdraws at dawn
 - Jacob had contended for birthright and succeeded
 - Jacob had contended for blessing and succeeded
 - Jacob had contended with Laban and succeeded
 - Jacob had contended with men and succeeded
 - Jacob had contended with God and is broken—name changed to Israel=God commands or Prince of God
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- Jacob—preparing gift for Esau—walking in the flesh
 - We only discover our weakness in the Presence of God
 - God's wrestlings were to subdue Jacob's flesh
 - Blessing follows Brokenness

Genesis Chapter Thirty Two Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read about another man who has his name changed---Matthew 16:13-23

Dig:

- 1) What names are used for God in this chapter?
- 2) There are two scenarios describing the spiritual realm—one at Mahanaim and one at Peniel. How are they similar and how are they different?
- 3) List a few of the ways God has already shown His kindness and faithfulness to Jacob (Gen 32:10)
- 4) Describe the gifts being offered to Esau.
- 5) How does Jacob refer to Esau when he speaks to his servants? How does he refer to himself? Compare this to the blessing of Isaac.
- 6) How many names are given in this chapter?
- 7) Who remains nameless?

Discuss:

- 1) What does it mean to be given a new name?
- 2) Jacob saw himself as 'two companies' rather than as one family. What effects will this have on the destiny of his family? (Gen 32:10)
- 3) The Church has been given the Ministry of Reconciliation. What parts of reconciliation need to be addressed in this story?
- 4) How well does the Church function when it comes to reconciliation?

Point of Prayer:

Pray for reconciliation to take place for a family that is divided from one another

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) If you could change your name—what would it be?
- 2) If you could change someone else's name—who—and what would it be? Why?
- 3) Have you ever given a gift with a motive other than love?
- 4) Share a time when you experienced the Lord 'breaking' you.
- 5) Other than salvation—have you had a 'life-altering' encounter with God?