

The Double Encampment (Gen. 32:1-2)

1 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

- *Mahanaim* means the double camp. It's not only the camp of Jacob's people, it's also the camp of God's angels. This is a kind of picture of our own lives. We are commanded to be hospitable to strangers, because in so doing some people have entertained angels unawares. (Hebrews 13:2)

Messengers to Esau (Gen. 32:3-8)

3 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 4 And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'"

6 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." 7 So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. 8 And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

- Jacob had no clear word here, and moved out in his own wisdom.
- How does he refer to Esau?
- Notice he makes a point of telling Esau how much wealth he has accumulated.

Jacob's Prayer (Gen. 32:9-12)

9 Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. 11 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 and the mother with the children. 12 For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

- This prayer is so much better than his previous praying: *"If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."* (Gen. 28:20-22)

Praying According To Your Covenant

Jacob has begun to like a real intercessor, who reminds God of what He has said.

- First, he reminds God who of He is.
- Second, he reminds the Lord of what He has told Jacob.
- Third, he positions himself in a place of humility. He recognizes that he really doesn't deserve anything.
- Only then does Jacob make an actual petition, a specific prayer.
- Finally, in verse 12, he closes out his prayer by reminding God again of the promise he made to treat Jacob well and multiply his descendants.

The Plan To Appease Esau (Gen. 32:13-21)

13 So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. 16 Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." 17 And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?' 18 then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.'"

19 So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; 20 and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." 21 So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

- Again, we don't have any record that Jacob got a clear word from the Lord, so he does something which made sense in that culture. He offers a gift (bribe?).
- Notice his tactics in sending the animals out in waves

Wrestling at Jabbok (Gen. 32:22-29)

22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. 23 He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. 24 Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."

But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

27 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob."

28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray."

And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

- Jacob sends everybody over except himself. Was this cowardice or something else? I think it's more charitable to think that this was faith.
- Moses tells us that a Man wrestled with him, but this was more than a mere man.
- The word Jabbok is closely related to the word for wrestling. And that's very appropriate. We all have a place, I think, where we have had to wrestle with God, and if we don't, we will.

The Wrestling Match

Jacob had tremendous physical strength, but despite his strength, Jacob is now fighting an opponent who cannot be beaten. The mysterious man puts his hip out of joint.

- Somehow Jacob knows this is no ordinary person, and because he wants a blessing from this man, he refuses to let go of him.
- Some of us are like Jacob. We work hard to receive the blessing of the Lord but we can go about it the wrong way.
- He asked Jacob his name. If this was the Angel of the Lord, then he already knew Jacob's name. What he was really after was a confession from Jacob as to the meaning of his name, and that Jacob was truly named very well.
- Jacob's name means a supplanter. But now he would be Israel, which means a prince with God.

- Most significantly, Jacob received the blessing from Heaven. The blessing that he got by fraud was ratified by Isaac his father, but now he has the endorsement of Heaven.

Crossing With A Blessing (Gen. 32:30-32)

30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” 31 Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob’s hip in the muscle that shrank.

- Jacob is limping across the river back into the Land of Promise, but he has what he really needs.
- The name Peniel means “the face of God.” Jacob considered that he had seen God face to face.
- Before the spread of Christianity, Jewish people had no trouble thinking there were actually two persons who could be called Yahweh. In Hosea 12:3-5, the Prophet Hosea says, *“He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us — that is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name.”*

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