



MESSAGE/SERIES:

Series: Biblical Beginnings

Message: “Are you Wrestling with God?”

Text: Genesis 32:1-21, 22-32

DATE: June 13, 2021

SCRIPTURE FOR THIS WEEK:

(These verses will help you understand themes within as you read our core text as scripture proves scripture)

Genesis 32:1-21, 22-32, 2 Corinthians 12:9 (His grace all we need), Hosea 12:4-5, Judges 13:18, Genesis 25:26, Genesis 17:5, 15 (God changes name), Genesis 16:13, Proverbs 8:17 (those who seek to find), Genesis 28:15 (God with us protecting us), 1 Corinthians 10:31 (whatever you do)

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

[Genesis 32:1-21, 22-32]

*“**32** Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ² And when Jacob saw them he said, “This is God’s camp!” So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

³ And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, ⁴ instructing them, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, ‘I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now. ⁵ I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.’”

⁶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him.” ⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, ⁸ thinking, “If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape.”

⁹ And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,’ ¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. ¹¹ Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. ¹² But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’ ”

¹³ So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, ¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵ thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶ These he handed over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove.” ¹⁷ He instructed the first, “When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these ahead of you?’ ¹⁸ then you shall say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present sent to my lord Esau. And moreover, he is behind us.’ ” ¹⁹ He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, “You shall say the same thing to Esau when you find him, ²⁰ and you shall say, ‘Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us.’ ” For he thought, “I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me.” ²¹ So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.

²² The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. ²⁴ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” ²⁷ And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” ²⁸ Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.” ³¹ The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. ³² Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip on the sinew of the thigh.”

“To save him from the hand of his brother, it was necessary that God should first meet him as an enemy, and show him that his real opponent was God Himself..”

- Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch

BACKGROUND & OTHER STUDY HELPS:

[DISLOCATED HIP] “The dislocation of the thigh alone remained. For this reason, the children of Israel are accustomed to avoid eating the *nervus ischiadicus*, the principal nerve in the neighbourhood of the hip, which is easily injured by any violent strain in wrestling.”

Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 197.

[PENIEL] “The face of God”, Jacob had struggled with God himself

[JACOB] Jacob’s name means “Deceiver” and Jacob was from birth

[ISRAEL] Means “one who struggles with God”

[JABBOK] “Emptying”

[SINEW] “sin’ū (טיג, *gīdh* [Job 10:11, etc]): The tendons and sinews of the body are uniformly (7 t) thus called. “Therefore the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew of the hip” (Gen 32:32). In the poetical description of Behemoth (hippopotamus), it is said: “He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his thighs are knit together” (Job 40:17). The prophet Ezekiel saw in his vision (37:6, 8) that the dry bones were gathered together, that they were covered with sinews, flesh and skin, and that they were revived by the spirit of the Lord. In figurative language, the neck of the obstinate is compared to an “iron sinew” (Isa 48:4).”

H. L. E. Luering, “Sinew,” ed. James Orr et al., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 2804.

OUTLINE:

I. (32v1-21) GOD BEFORE & BEHIND

A. (v1-2) *“Jacob went on his way, and **the angels of God met him.** ² And when Jacob saw them he said, “This is God’s camp!” So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.”*

1. **Mahanaim-** (Ma-Ha-Niam) two camps

a) *The Camp of Jacob*

b) *The Camp of God’s Angels around him behind him and before him*

(1) God has angels encamped around about us as we obey Him and walk with Him

B. (v3-5) *“³ And **Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom,** ⁴ instructing them, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, ‘I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now. ⁵ I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. **I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.’ ”***

1. Jacob sent messengers to let Esau know he comes in peace

2. Jacob sent messengers to let Esau know he desired reconciliation and restoration between the brothers

3. Jacob sent messengers to let Esau know he approaches with respect for him (humility & meekness is required)

C. (v6) *“⁶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother Esau, and **he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him.**”*

1. Esau’s approach is in numbers and reflects the force

2. Jacob must have applied recent history to the current predicament

D. (v7-8) *“⁷ Then **Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.** He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels. into two camps, ⁸ thinking, “If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape.”*

1. When approaching those who have sought to harm us we must plan for the worst

2. We must pray as we use God-given common sense and Spiritual discernment will follow
3. Jacob's plan is to minimize the damage (Jacob does not turn back)
4. Jacob was thinking of his family and at least sparing some of them if it went bad (godly leaders seek to protect the flock/family)

E. (v9-12) (The First Prayer of Jacob)

⁹ And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,' ¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. ¹¹ Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. ¹² But you said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'

1. Jacob identifies himself with God as the God of His Fathers (Elohim) and His Lord (Jehovah)
 - a) **Elohim**- God, Creator God, God the Son (God of Abraham and Isaac)
 - b) **Jehovah**- covenant God, my God, Lord
2. Jacob recites the directions/commands of the Lord to return to your country
3. Jacob humbles Himself and acknowledges his undeservedness
 - a) *Of God's love towards him*
 - b) *Of God's faithfulness to him*
4. Jacob asks for God protection from Esau
5. Jacob recites the covenant God made with him
 - a) *The Lord will always be faithful to His covenants*
 - b) *and His covenant people*

F. (v13-16) ***¹³ So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, ¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵ thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶ These he handed over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove."***

1. Jacob sent gifts with each drove or grouping of family servants and animal stock
2. This was done in order to slow Esau down if he was angry
3. This was done to overwhelm Esau with kindness
4. This was done to display God's blessings on them both

G. (v17-21) *"He instructed the first, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these ahead of you?' ¹⁸ then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present sent to my lord Esau. And moreover, he is behind us.' " ¹⁹ He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you find him, ²⁰ and you shall say, 'Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me." ²¹ So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp."*

1. Jacob did everything he could to pave the way for success
2. Jacob sent a clear message to Esau (clear communication and intentions must be conveyed in these times)

II. (v22-32) GOD ALONE

A. (v22-23) *"The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³ He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had."*

1. Jacob sent all he had in front of him and was left isolated
2. Jacob was left to deal with the matter in his heart
3. Many times when we find ourselves all alone that is when the Lord will deal with us

B. (v24) *"And Jacob was left alone. **And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.**"*

1. God wants our full attention to deal with us so when all else was removed God made His move
2. This Wrestling was both of mind and spirit
 - a) *Spiritual warfare affects the physical body*
3. This word interpreted wrestled gives the idea of grappling and trying to gain leverage over a man
4. The mysterious man is the Angel of God wrestled with Jacob and not the other way around (God found Jacob to wrestle with Him)

- a) *The angel of the covenant = Jesus Christ Himself*
- b) *This is a Christophany as Jesus takes on the form of a man or an Angel*

C. (v25) *“When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he **touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.**”*

1. The reason the Angel of the Lord comes against for the purpose of gaining humility from Jacob (reveal Jacob’s impotency)
 - a) *This struggle was enough to prove to Jacob that he needed God’s help (His grace to overcome)*
 - (1) The Angel could have easily overcome Jacob but that was not the purpose... only to break his pride
 - b) When we wrestle with the Lord He reveals our weaknesses
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - c) Jesus is long suffering as revealed here as he wrestles with Jacob all through the night to bring him to the point of brokenness
 - d) In our brokenness, we realize we must hang on to Jesus as He is all we have

D. (v26) *“Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, **“I will not let you go unless you bless me.”**”*

1. In our brokenness, we realize we must hang on to Jesus as He is all we have
 - a) *Jacob had nowhere else to turn*
 - b) *Jacob was out of wrestling moves trying to get his own way but now he does all he can do, cling to Jesus*
 - c) *It is not until we are brought to the nothingness that we seek Jesus and His blessings (His desires)*
 - d) *God knows how to get our attention as displayed here in Jacob’s hip being put out of socket (Divine hand to humble)*
 - (1) Paul’s thorn in **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** would be another example of God working to bring an end to selfish pride

E. (v27-28) *“²⁷ And he said to him, **“What is your name?”** And he said, “Jacob.” ²⁸ Then he said, **“Your name shall no longer be called Jacob,***

but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

1. Jacob was born a deceiver and a strong-willed man
 - a) *He struggled with Esau in the womb*
 - b) *He struggled with Esau through deception for the birthright and then the blessing*

2. Now Jacob was brought to a place to realize who he was
 - a) *Deceiver*
 - b) *Sinner*
 - c) *Helpless in his own strength*

3. When we struggle with God He reveals our true need and gives us a new identity
 - a) *This comes as we struggle with Scripture allowing the word to pierce our hearts and our minds (Hebrews 4:12-13)*
 - (1) *The word reveals where we are falling short*
 - (2) *The word reveals the intentions of the heart*
 - (3) *The Lord lays us bare as we truly search for His will in the pages of scripture*
 - (a) *At the end of our searching, we prevail as Jacob did in becoming new creatures with God's power on our side (the blessing)*

F. (v29-30) *“²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, “**Please tell me your name.**” But he said, “**Why is it that you ask my name?**” And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place **Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.**”*

1. Jacob knew he had been in the presence of God
2. God had revealed Himself to Jacob
3. God chose to preserve his life rather than Jacob die as His holiness was revealed (no man can stand in the presence of God and live lest God show Him grace)
 - a) *Picture of the Holy of Holies*

G. (v31-32) *“The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, **limping because of his hip.** ³² Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, **because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.**”*

1. The Lord had left a constant reminder with Jacob of His struggle with the Lord so that he would never forget
 - a) *The Lord allows and uses the tragedies of life to make a marker in our lives so that we may celebrate His goodness*
2. This reminder was carried forward in the people as they honored what the Lord did that day and taught their children about the God that touched Jacob

“This wrestling was a “real conflict of both mind and body, a work of the spirit with intense effort of the body”

-Delitzsch

Meditation Moment:

- In times of great crisis, we should pray and plan with a humble heart seeking to honor God and be a minister to our families?
- When God wrestles with us are we determined to receive what God would have for us or do we give up? Do we continue to fight with him for our ways?
- There is evidence here that when God wrestles with us He will always change us and will leave a lasting impression on our families

