

Abide in Me

John 15:4

*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



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The Week of April 3, 2022

God in the Chaos
A Holy Encounter of a Different Kind
Genesis 32:1-32

SUMMARY OF THE MESSAGE

In our series on the life of Jacob, we come to Jacob's calling to return to Canaan and his journey back home. As God calls him to return to the land of his fathers and kindred, he has some God-appointed encounters along the way. Chapter 32 prepares us for one of those encounters and describes another.

READ GENESIS 32:1-32

As you read it...

- Underline each reference to *fear* in verses 1-21.
- Underline each reference to *blessing* in verses 22-32.
- Highlight or underline everything that "the man" speaks to Jacob in verses 22-32.

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.

DISCUSSING THE PASSAGE TOGETHER

1. As Jacob sets out on his journey back home, chapter 32 begins by describing an encounter with angels. Why were these angels present and what does that mean for the significance of Jacob’s trip?

2. Read Psalm 91:11 and Hebrews 13:2. What can these scriptures, along with Genesis 32:1, do to help our understanding of what’s commonly referred to as “guardian angels” or even the presence of angels around us? What are the implications of this for us?

3. Esau is clearly in Jacob’s mind as he travels back home. As Jacob sends messengers ahead to Edom, he gives instructions for what they are to say to Esau when they see him. What is the message behind the message that Jacob is communicating to Esau?

4. As Jacob prays in verses 9-12, he uses God’s own words spoken to him as a way to frame his prayer. What does that reveal about God’s word in our lives?

5. What are some of God's words spoken to you that have helped to shape your testimony?

6. Jacob overplays his hand in extending a peace offering to his brother as he approaches. Why did Jacob overextend himself this way? What role does fear play in the manner by which Jacob sends his gifts?

7. There is a man that wrestles with Jacob all night when he is alone. This man is God Himself. Why did God wrestle Jacob and what type of wrestling was this?

8. Why did God not prevail against Jacob?

9. God touched Jacob's hip and it was put out of joint. Why did this happen?

10. What parallels can be drawn between Jacob's wrestling with God and our own?

11. Jacob wouldn't let go of God until he received a blessing. Why is this significant in light of what we studied earlier in Genesis 27?

12. Jacob's name is changed to Israel as God gives Jacob the blessing he has sought. What meaning does God give for this name change? Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and describe the parallels between Jacob's change and our own in Christ.

