



Lesson 24

JACOB WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL

Story Elements

- **TEXT:** Gen. 32:1-32
- **Setting:** circa 1800 B.C. in modern-day Jordan, near Jabbok (now known as Zarqa River)
- **Main Characters:** God, Jacob, and an unnamed angel
- **Plot:** Jacob has another covenant-confirming experience on the way back to the Promised Land.
- **Key word(s):** “for as a prince hast thou _____ with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (v 28)
- **Climax:** *Genesis 32:26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Jacob’s Preparation

- 1) (vv 1-2) As Jacob and his caravan travelled back to Canaan, Jacob saw the angels of God again. This must’ve been encouraging to Jacob to see a vision of angels coming back to his homeland just as he had seen a vision when he left. He named the place *Mahanaim*, which mean “_____.”
- 2) (vv 3-7) Nervous about seeing his estranged brother, Jacob sent scouts ahead to deliver a message to Esau (and perhaps to reconnoiter the situation).
 - a) The messengers returned with news that Esau was coming with _____ men.
 - b) Understandably, Jacob was “greatly _____ and distressed.”
- 3) (vv 7-8) Preparing for the worst, Jacob divided his camp into _____ _____. He hoped if the first was attacked then the other could escape.

Jacob’s Prayer

- 4) (vv 9-12) Then Jacob prayed:
 - a) He addressed God with covenant language – “The God of my _____” and “the God which saidst unto me...I will deal well with thee.” By appealing to God’s covenant and promises, Jacob was laying the foundation of faith for his prayer to build on. Prayer must be founded on the Word of God.
 - b) He confessed his unworthiness: “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the _____, which thou has showed unto thy servant.”
 - c) He praised God for blessings received: “For with my _____ I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.”
 - d) He made his petition: “_____ me...from the hand of Esau.”

e) He ended his prayer by quoting more of the promises of God. All of God's people would do well to _____ their prayers with the promises of God.

Jacob's Plan

- 5) (vv 13-21) Having prepared for defense by dividing his group into two bands, Jacob then strategized for diplomacy. He hoped that by sending a succession of generous gifts ahead of the main group that Esau's anger would be _____.
- 6) (vv 22-23) That night, a restless Jacob mustered his wives and children and helped them cross the river.

Jacob's Perseverance

- 7) (v 24) Now, left on the other side, Jacob was alone. It is then that a mysterious man wrestled with him through the night.
- a) Jacob recognized this man to be from God, which is why he named the place "Peniel," meaning "face of God." (Gen. 32:30) Hosea also refers to this man as an _____ in Hosea 12:4.
- b) This "Angel of the LORD" that appeared unto Jacob was a pre-incarnate appearance of _____. (There are other Christophanies in the Bible, including when Joshua meets with the Captain of the Host in Joshua 5:14-15.)
- 8) (v 25) Jacob perseveres in his wrestling match, but is unable to defeat his divine opponent. The situation changes quickly when the angel dislocates Jacob's _____ with a mere touch.
- 9) (vv 26-29) Unwilling to quit, Jacob battles on against a stronger being. He will not let his heavenly visitor leave without getting a _____ from him.
- a) The blessing comes in the form of a name change. No longer will he be called Jacob, *supplanter*, but Israel, which means "_____ (or power) with God."
- b) James Murphy said of this, "This is the turning-point in this strange drama. Henceforth Jacob now feels himself strong, not in himself, but in the _____, and in the power of his might."¹

Application

- 10) God had to break Jacob of his self-reliance; He does the same to us. Paul wrote, "And he said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in _____.' Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor. 12:9)

Answer Key

Key word(s): power | 1) hosts | 2) a) 400; b) afraid | 3) two bands | 4 a) father; b) truth; c) staff; d) Deliver; e) bookend | 5) pacified | 7) a) angel; b) Christ | 8) hip | 9) blessing; a) prince; b) LORD | 10) weakness

¹ Murphy, James G. *Notes on the Old Testament: Genesis*. Boston: Estes and Lauriate, 1873. Print.