

JACOB WRESTLES WITH A "MAN"

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 32:1-32; 35:9-15.

LESSON 25 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 32:1-32;

¹ And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

² And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

³ And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

⁴ And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:

⁵ And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

⁶ ¶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;

⁸ And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

⁹ ¶ And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed

NOTES:

Ministering Angels

Angels appeared to Jacob as he started on his way again after Laban had returned home. He recognised them as coming from God, as a token of His divine Presence.

We have studied other instances where angels stood by the children of God and delivered them out of their trouble. One instance that we have not mentioned was before Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked while on his way to Rome as a prisoner. There was a terrible storm at sea, and neither the sun nor stars had shone for many days. Everyone feared they would be drowned. But Paul prayed and fasted, and God heard and answered him. One day he stood before the crew with the confident message that they would all be saved. An angel had appeared to him the night before, saying that he would yet come to Rome, and God would also spare the other people on the ship. Paul believed God, and everything came to pass as the angel had said. That was also another instance of God blessing sinners for the sake of the Christian, as we learned when God blessed Laban for Jacob's sake.

The Report of Jacob's Scouts

Jacob sent messengers ahead to see what kind of reception he would get from his brother. You remember Esau had planned to kill Jacob twenty years before, and for all Jacob knew, that old hatred might still be rankling in his breast. When the messengers came back they reported that Esau was coming with four hundred men. That looked like war! Jacob was afraid.

Restitution

With God's help, Jacob had won in his battle of wits with Laban. Then he was doing the right thing, fulfilling the agreements of his father-in-law. But now he must face his angry brother whom he had wronged, and he was much distressed.

God had forgiven Jacob for his sins the day he prayed at Bethel, but now came the time to make his restitution -- to get the forgiveness of his brother. It is not enough to get the forgiveness of God; He expects us to make things right with our fellow men.

In Jacob's mental agony he turned to God for help. When the way seems hard before us, we have the sure guiding hand of God to lead if we will lean hard on Him.

Jacob's Prayer

In humility Jacob prayed, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands." He acknowledged that God had given him his great possessions, and he did not feel worthy of them. But he wanted God to do more for him. Jacob reminded the Lord of His promises to bring him back to his father's house in peace, and to make his seed "as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

It is a good thing when we pray to remind God of His promises to us -- not because He does not know them, but to bolster our faith by recounting the precious blessings He has promised in His Word.

Jacob was now ready to begin his preparation to meet Esau. He took hundreds of animals of different kinds from his flocks and herds and sent them over in bands, a servant with each group, to tell

unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children.

12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 ¶ And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother;

14 Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams,

15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.

16 And he delivered *them* into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove.

17 And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose *art* thou? and whither goest thou? and whose *are* these before thee?

18 Then thou shalt say, *They be* thy servant Jacob's; it *is* a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he *is* behind us.

19 And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him.

20 And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob *is* behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

21 So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night

Esau that they were presents to him from his "servant Jacob." Jacob had humbled himself before God, and now he humbled himself before his brother, showing that he had had a change of heart.

But all the works of his hands still did not assure Jacob that he would find favour with his brother. He decided he must pray through and get the assurance from God that all would be well. He took his wives and children across the river and settled them for the night. Then when he was all alone he started to pray. It was more than an ordinary prayer; the Word tells us, "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." When he could not defeat Jacob by ordinary means, he put Jacob's thigh out of joints; but Jacob could still hold on. When it was near daybreak, the angel said, "Let me go," but Jacob answered "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And Jacob won. The words of the angel were, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

The Reward of Perseverance

"Hast prevailed!" What a wealth of meaning was in those words! Jacob still had not met his brother, but he had the assurance from God that he would be forgiven. By faith he called "those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). That is real faith.

This was Jacob's second great spiritual engagement. This spiritual victory, with the consecrations he made, brought to him the heart-purifying experience of sanctification.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Jacob feel worthy of all the mercies of the Lord?
2. Who was He Who wrestled with Jacob until daybreak?
3. Did Jacob receive the blessing he was after?
4. What lesson can we learn from Jacob's prayer?
5. What experience did he receive here?
6. When and where was he saved?

in the company.

²² And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

²³ And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

²⁴ ¶ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

²⁵ And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

²⁶ And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

²⁷ And he said unto him, What *is* thy name? And he said, Jacob.

²⁸ And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

²⁹ And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore *is* it *that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

³⁰ And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

³¹ And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

³² Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

Genesis 35:9-15

9 ¶ And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel.

11 And God said unto him, I *am* God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

13 And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him.

14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.