

# GENESIS 32

Written and Compiled by Gary Kukis

**Genesis 32:1–32**

**Two Camps/Jacob Returns to Canaan/He Wrestles with God**

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse studies](#) of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no extensive editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Genesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies. This approach is more suited to the average believer.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even

though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

**Preface:** After sorting things out with his Uncle Laban, Jacob nears the Land of Promise, where he will see a large encampment of angels. What Jacob is anticipating is meeting up with his brother Esau, from whom he has been estranged. This chapter is all about Jacob's anticipation and worries. He gives a most marvelous prayer, and then he falls back to his customary manipulative behavior. Finally, because Jacob has spent so much of his life in conflict with Y<sup>e</sup>howah, he will find himself actually wrestling with the Lord for hours right before dawn.

Readers (and commentators) can be easily confused by Genesis 32, because this is Jacob acting positively schizophrenic. On the one hand, he prays this most marvelous prayer to God; and on the other hand, he keeps trying to solve his own problems with **human viewpoint** solutions. In a sense, he finds himself in conflict with God—does he depend upon God or does he search for a human viewpoint solution to the problems in his life? In his own soul, Jacob cannot seem to decide, *does he place his faith in God or in himself?* He is wrestling in his own soul and God brings this point home by actually wrestling with Jacob in his real life. In any given circumstance, will Jacob be guided by his sin nature or will *God prevail [= Israel]* over Jacob's sin nature?

This is one of the most misunderstood chapters in Scripture. Commentators try to present Jacob entering into spiritual maturity after seeing the angels at Mahanaim and then even more so after wrestling with the Lord. The key to understanding this chapter is actually just the opposite. Even though God allows Jacob to see the encampment of angels, that only takes Jacob so far in his confidence level (when he hears that Esau is traveling with 400 men, he becomes panicked). Jacob prays a wonderful prayer to God, but then, returns to his own way of doing things right afterwards. For this reason, God will meet with Jacob and face him off in a fight; and that experience will give Jacob the strength to meet face to face with his brother—but it won't be long before he fails again. Experiences in life can only take a man so far, even if these experiences include direct contact with God.

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Genesis. This will be the most extensive examination of Genesis 32, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

#### Quotations:

English political theorist Algernon Sidney: *God helps those who help themselves.*<sup>1</sup>

Henry David Thoreau: *[Most] men lead lives of quiet desperation.*<sup>2</sup>

MacLaren: *As water assumes the shape of any vessel into which it is put, so this great blessing comes to each of us, moulded according to the pressure and taking the form of our circumstances and necessities.*<sup>3</sup>

Martin Luther: *Every man holds that this test is one of the most obscure in the Old Testament.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God\\_helps\\_those\\_who\\_help\\_themselves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_helps_those_who_help_themselves) accessed February 18, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> From [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry\\_David\\_Thoreau](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_David_Thoreau) accessed February 18, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander MacLaren, D. D., Litt. D., *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>4</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred Brauch; InterVarsity Press; ©1996; p. 131.

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *The chief sin that Jacob is committing over and over again is prideful self-reliance.*<sup>5</sup>

Arthur Pink: *The same two natures are in every child of God today, the spiritual and the carnal, the one which believes God and the other which disbelieves.*<sup>6</sup> Understanding this is key to understanding Jacob, both in this chapter and elsewhere.

Genesis 28:12 *And he [Jacob] dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!*

Psalms 34:7 *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them.*

Psalms 91:11 *For He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*

Hebrews 1:14 *Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*

Proverbs 18:16 *A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before the great.*

Proverbs 18:19 *A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle. (ESV; capitalized)*

## Outline of Chapter 32:

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Introduction	<b>Understanding Jacob</b>

<sup>5</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019 (slightly edited).

<sup>6</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

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**Doctrines Covered or Alluded To**

Additional doctrines and links are found in [Definition of Terms](#) below.

**Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter**

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Many who read and study this chapter are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

**Definition of Terms**

<b>Angel of Jehovah</b>	The Angel of the Lord [= <i>the Angel of God</i> ] is one of the preincarnate forms of Jesus Christ. The Angel of Jehovah is identified as Jehovah. Gen. 16:7-13 21:17-18 22:11-18 31:11-13 48:15,16 Exodus 3:2 cf. Acts 7:30-35 Ex. 13:21 14:19 Judg.2:1-4 5:23 6:11-23 13:3-22 2Sam. 24:16 Zechariah 1:12-13. The Angel of Jehovah is distinguished from Jehovah. Gen. 24:7 40 Ex. 23:20 32:34 Num. 20:16 1Chronicles 21:15-18 Isa. 63:9 Zech. 1:12-13. See the <b>Doctrine of the Angel of Jehovah</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Angelic Conflict</b>	The Angelic Conflict is an invisible war which is taking place which involves God, the elect angels and the fallen angels. Man was created to resolve the Angelic Conflict. See the <b>Angelic Conflict</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Chiasmus, chiasmus; chiasmi</b>	This is a format where the first passage can be matched to the final passage; the second passage can be matched to the second-to-the-last passage, etc. It is called a <i>chiasmus</i> (or, <i>chiasmus</i> ; plural is <i>chiasmi</i> ) based upon the letter chi (X). Many times, this structure can be used to find the key element of the psalm or to rearrange the psalm. ( <a href="#">Chiasmus example</a> ) ( <a href="#">Thomas B. Clarke</a> ) ( <a href="#">Brad McCoy</a> ) ( <a href="#">Biblical Chiasm Exchange</a> )
<b>Cosmic system thinking</b>	Cosmic system thinking is a person whose thinking is influenced by the cosmic system, which is the thinking of Satan. Cosmic system viewpoint is a collection of human viewpoint, lies, legalism and Satanic thinking. Cosmic system thinking opposes the gospel, Bible doctrine, and the laws of divine establishment.
<b>Faith Rest Drill</b>	There are three stages to the faith-rest drill. (1) Stage #1: Faith claims a promise. (2) Stage #2: Faith develops a rationale. (3) Stage #3: Faith draws a doctrinal conclusion. Doctrine of <b>Faith-rest</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ). Doctrine of the <b>Faith-rest Drill</b> ( <a href="#">Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries</a> ); ( <a href="#">Divine Viewpoint.com</a> ); ( <a href="#">Robert McLaughlin</a> ).
<b>Human Viewpoint</b>	Man's thinking apart from Bible doctrine. See <b>Human Viewpoint versus Divine Viewpoint</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).

Definition of Terms	
<b>Documentary Hypothesis (also known as JEPD Theory)</b>	Documentary Hypothesis simply asserts that the Pentateuch was not authored by Moses but written 1000 years (give or take) after Moses by several authors who wrote portions here and there and then other men have performed extensive revisions and editing after them. See the <b>Doctrine of Documentary Hypothesis</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ). Josh McDowell did an outstanding treatise of this in <a href="#">The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict</a> (or <a href="#">Evidence that Demands a Verdict Vol. 2</a> ).
<b>Laws of Divine Establishment</b>	Since the world appears to be made up of mostly unbelievers, God must have some kind of plan for the unbelievers while they are alive. These are called the laws of divine establishment, and they are applicable to both believers and unbelievers. These are the laws which protect the freedom of a nation, and allow for evangelism and for the teaching of the Word of God. See the <b>Laws of Divine Establishment</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Rebound</b>	The act of naming one's sins to God. You get out of fellowship by sinning; you get back into fellowship by naming those sins (privately) to God. See the <b>Doctrine of Rebound</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<b>Preincarnate Christ</b>	Christ reveals Himself to man prior to His incarnation (His earthly ministry). He revealed Himself as an Angel to Abraham; and burning bush to Moses; and a wrestling Angel to Jacob.
<b>The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)</b>	We all come to a time of God-consciousness where we understand the concept and possibility of the existence of God. At that point, we face 2 great questions: (1) do we want to know this God and (2) are will willing to believe in God as He has revealed Himself or do we make a god in our own image and worship that? In both the Old and New Testaments, God will make Himself known (He reveals Himself) to those who will believe in Him and to others as well. We know Him firmly and concretely as Jesus Christ; and in the Old Testament, He is known as the God of the Jews, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Moses (or of Abraham), etc.
<b>Sin nature</b>	The sin nature is that part of man, passed down from father to his children, which is in rebellion to God. In the Church Age, we are either controlled by the sin nature or by the Holy Spirit. The sin nature has an area of weakness and an area of strength, as well as a lust pattern. ( <a href="#">Old Sin Nature</a> —James Allen) ( <a href="#">Doctrine of the Sin Nature</a> — <a href="#">Michael Lemmon</a> <sup>7</sup> ) ( <a href="#">L. G. Merritt</a> ) ( <a href="#">The origin of the old sin nature</a> — <a href="#">McLaughlin</a> ) ( <a href="#">Doctrine of the Old Sin Nature</a> — <a href="#">Makarios</a> —Word document) ( <a href="#">Sin Nature</a> )
Some of the references above are to active ministries (that is, local brick and mortar churches). If you do not have a church which teaches Bible doctrine or you do not attend church, these external links may help direct you to a proper ministry in which you may grow spiritually. Quite frankly, I cannot imagine where I would be apart from the faithful ministry of Berachah Church.	
Some of these definitions are taken from <a href="http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml">http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml</a> <a href="http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf">http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d">http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d</a> <a href="http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm">http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm</a> <a href="http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html">http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html</a> <a href="http://www.theopedia.com/">http://www.theopedia.com/</a>	
<a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>	<a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>

<sup>7</sup> You will have to do a search on this page.

## An Introduction to Genesis 32

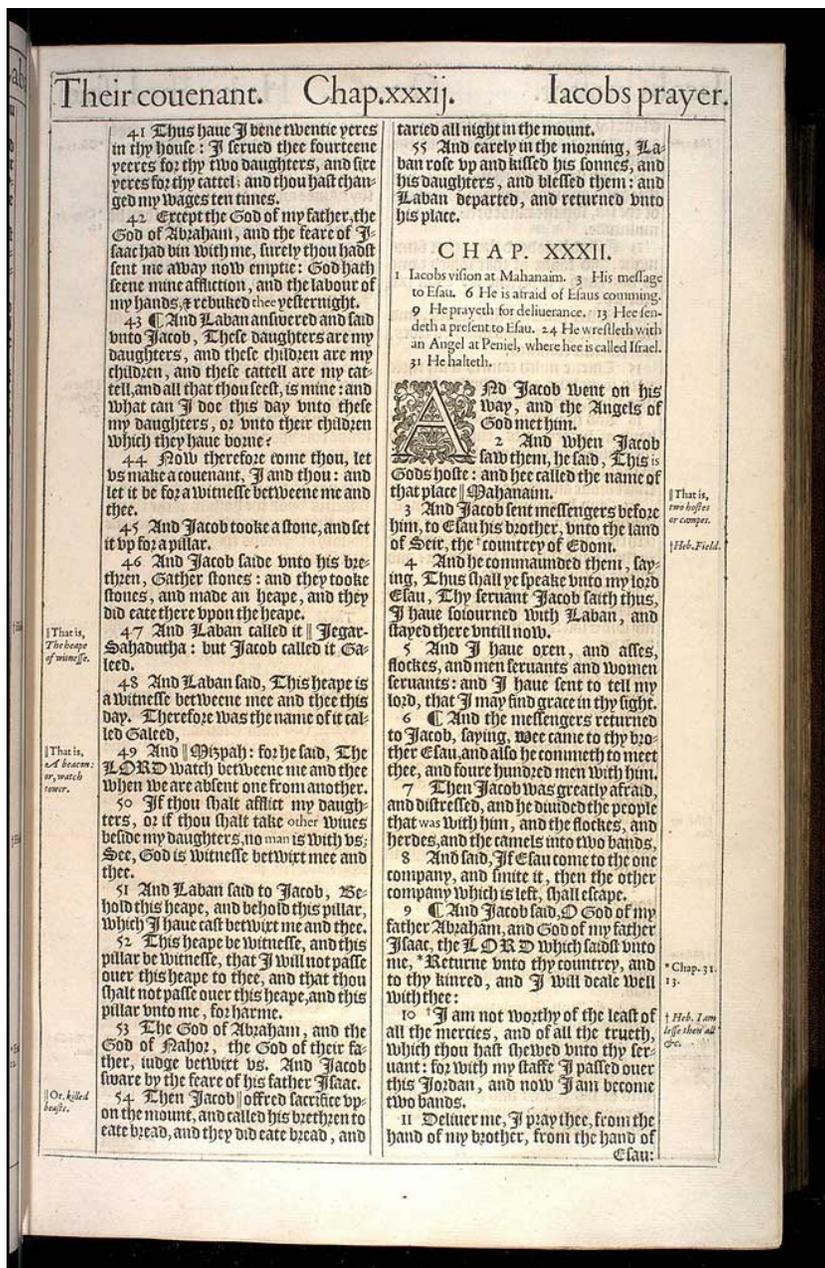
**Introduction:** In the previous chapter, Jacob surreptitiously left Laban, taking his wives and children and his part of the flock with him. Laban realized that Jacob made an escape 3 days after the fact and chased Jacob down, catching up to him in Gilead, east of the Jordan. They met, more or less resolved their differences, agreed to a non-aggression pact, set up a pillar in recognition of their agreement, and then offered up an animal sacrifice to God.

Laban returned to his home; and Jacob continued traveling west toward Canaan. He was east of the Jordan River when Laban caught up to him. Crossing the Jordan would have put him into the Land of Promise.

**Genesis CHAP. XXXII** (a graphic); from **King James Bible**; accessed March 7, 2019.

Genesis 32 is all about the return of Jacob to the Land of Promise; and the first thing that he must deal with, after parting company with Laban (and coming to an agreeable settlement of their differences), Jacob would meet up with his twin brother, Esau. You may recall that Jacob left Canaan under some fairly bad circumstances. That is, Jacob conned his father Isaac so that Jacob took Esau's blessing from him (what Esau *thought* was his blessing), and it had come to a point where Esau was ready to kill Jacob. So Jacob had to leave.

Jacob, for the most part, does not come out looking too good throughout his bio in the Word of God. And yet, it is his 12 sons and their descendants who make up the people of Israel. First of all, that is clearly God's gracious benevolence; and, secondly, Jacob did, from time to time, reveal some great spiritual understanding. We will study such an instance of that in this chapter.



Hard Sayings: *Some have attempted to solve the interpretive problem by making the whole sequence a dream narrative. Josephus understood it as a dream... (Antiquities 1.20.2) Others have been content to allegorize the story, viewing it as the fight of the soul against the passions and vices hidden within oneself... Clement of Alexandria did equate the wrestler to the Logos of John's Gospel, but he*

*argues that the Logos remained unknown by name to Jacob because Jesus had not yet appeared in the flesh.*<sup>8</sup>

Comments and quotations like these would suggest that we could be in for some rough sledding in this chapter of Genesis. However—and I write this as I near the completion of this work—that pretty much everything in this chapter will be reasonably and thoroughly explained. The only problems or questions which I have come across are some minor logistical ones, which have little or no bearing on the spiritual information found in this chapter.

I think part of the problem for many commentators is, they come to a few conclusions, but then these conclusions do not square with what we find here in Genesis 32 or in subsequent chapters of Genesis (for instance, many commentators seem to think that Jacob has gone from a mediocre spiritual life at the beginning of this chapter to spiritual maturity by the end of the chapter—a proposition that is just wrong). When you come to a premature wrong conclusion, it is then very difficult to go back and make the Biblical text match your conclusions.

Chapter 32 is an incredible chapter. We will see Jacob reveal some limited spiritual growth. He will fear Esau greatly and when he hears Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men, Jacob at first panics, but then he goes to God with the promises which were delivered to him. This glorifies God when we take what He has told us and demand that God keep His Word to us. We reveal faith in Him and in His Word. For those few minutes of prayer, we see Jacob at his best. Then we find him falling back into **human viewpoint** and trying to appease Esau—to buy Esau off. God gave Jacob this prosperity and Jacob wants to give all of it to Esau because he is afraid. His spiritual side and his carnal side are at odds with one another in this chapter. We ourselves fight with our own **sin nature** and switches between spiritual and carnal sides. To others, we appear hypocritical (which we are—every Christian is) and schizophrenic (which we are—every Christian who is periodically filled with the Spirit is). This wrestling match which is occurring within Jacob's soul, although Jacob does not fully recognize it as such, will be illustrated in the last half of chapter 32. Jesus Christ Himself will wrestle with Jacob and cause him to limp for the rest of his life.

Elijah said to the people observing him at the altar: "How long will you limp between two opinions? If Yahweh is God, then follow Him; but if Baal is God, then follow him."

**The Key to Genesis 32:** Many chapters and many psalms in Scripture have keys, and once you understand the keys, you understand the chapter itself. At first, this chapter seems very disjointed and confused—Jacob is about to meet up with Esau, his estranged brother, and make things right. And so, he prays this *great* prayer (one of the greatest prayers in Scripture); but then he begins trying to solve his problems with Esau using human viewpoint solutions. What is happening is, Jacob is wrestling in his soul with God. God, in an attempt to reach Jacob, actually wrestles with him. In the end, Jacob will have two names which are often used to illustrate the condition is his soul—will Jacob be *the chiseler*, *the heel-catcher*; or will *God prevail*? If you understand this conflict in Jacob's soul, then you will understand this chapter in the Word of God.

**Too many commentators miss the point of Genesis 32:** There is a very important topic here, which most commentators miss, and because they miss it, they often are mistaken in the core of their message about this chapter. In fact, most commentators teach exactly the opposite of what is to be found in this chapter. Although salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is a one-time, end-in-itself decision; the spiritual life which follows cannot be based upon one experience or one moment of sincere, emotional devotion or repentance. Salvation is a singular decision; spiritual growth is a plethora of decisions. No one every goes from zero to 100 in the spiritual life after an experience, no matter how marvelous that experience.

So many commentators mistakenly say, *This chapter is the point at which Jacob turned everything around*. But, it isn't. Jacob does not emerge from this chapter as a spiritually mature believer. He may have said a great prayer and he may have had two great experiences in this chapter, but that is not enough to push Jacob into spiritual

<sup>8</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred Brauch; InterVarsity Press; ©1996; pp. 131–132.

maturity. For all intents and purposes, the 3 spiritual high points in this chapter get Jacob through another 12 hours after his wrestling match with the **Preincarnate Christ**.

Is there some improvement in Jacob's spiritual life? Certainly. At the beginning of this chapter, he encounters angels; at the end of this chapter, he wrestles with God; in the middle, he gives a great prayer. But here is what happens as a result. He sees the camp of angels, he experiences some confidence; but then, the moment he hears his brother Esau is coming his way with 400 men, he panics. The knowledge of the angelic camp gives him enough confidence to send a message to Esau, but Jacob did not like hearing about Esau's posse.

Then Jacob offers up a prayer, and it is an excellent prayer and he even quotes from the covenant of God (originally given to his family)—but, right after the prayer, Jacob is back into human viewpoint, and he wants to solve his problems with Esau with a bribe. He offers more than a present; he will offer Esau one of the largest presents ever offered another man to that point in time in human history.

So God stops Jacob, right after he performs some more human viewpoint acts, and challenges Jacob to a fight and they fight and they fight all night long. Finally, by the end of the night, after wrestling no doubt for hours, Jacob has heard enough and learned enough to get him through the next half a day. We know from the prayer that Jacob has the doctrine; he just has not believed it fully. On a good day he believes it; and on a bad day—which is most of the other days—he does not.

When we get to Genesis 33, Jacob will face off Esau and his family will be right there with Jacob. He will trust God long enough to meet Esau. But that does not mean that, from that point on, Jacob is spiritually mature. No, he has enough Bible doctrine to get him midway through Genesis 33, basically.

Struggle with God; Genesis 32; from Kary Hollway (Bible Journaling); from Draw Close Blog; accessed March



7, 2019.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Another key to this chapter and to Jacob is, Jacob is all about effort; he is all about scheming and manipulating and working hard to get what he thinks should be his. He needs to learn from God that it is all about God's grace.

A discussion of who Jacob is (various commentators)

It should be no surprise that some commentators admit to being confused by Jacob. A. G. Mercer, D. D., for instance, writes: *Jacob is to me the most difficult character in the Bible history. He looks so worldly, shrewd, and even unscrupulous, that it is hard to reconcile ourselves to him. I feel the justice of the sneers about him, and sometimes it seems humbling that this should be one of the patriarchs, even in that rude time. But if all were on one side, it would be easy, however painful, to judge of him. It is his singular contradictions, with his visions of angels, &c., that make it hard. He cheats his brother; and behold him just afterward with his consecration, his awful sense of God's presence, and hear his simple vow! Behold Jacob so shrewd to Laban, so calculating and successful! Behold him returning; see the shrinking of his guilty and timid heart; and then at night see this scene of wrestling! We are all of us mixtures of earth and heaven, but I know of none like this.*

## A discussion of who Jacob is (various commentators)

Mercer continues: *On the one hand I see Jacob sometimes so merely a Jew that he seems the father of Jewish guile, fear, unscrupulousness, and thrift. On the other I see him sometimes not only as the deeply faithful lover in his youth, the most tender father, but as an elevated, majestic man of faith, who believed in high things, who valued them, and who left on record such words of lowliness and penitence for his faults, in such genuine tones, that the purest and most repentant hearts take them up from age to age and repeat them as their own: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which You have showed unto Your servant"*<sup>9</sup>

Robert Dean: *[An incomplete trust in God] what we see going on with Jacob and God is finally going to bring this whole issue to a head. He knows exactly what the trends of Jacob's sin nature are. Today we would call him a control freak and a master manipulator, and he is always trying to work the deal to make sure he comes out ahead, and God is going to finally going to deal with that in this section.*<sup>10</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

**Understanding Jacob:** I must admit that, early on, I did not *get* Jacob. Of the patriarchs, he just never seemed to have it all together. Furthermore, his experiences were so much different from Abraham and Isaac's (his grandfather and father). Jacob's problem is, it took him a long time before he understood his place in God's plan; and it took him a long time before he forsook his own ways. What some of you may find confusing is, Jacob believed in the Revealed God very early on in his life (as did Esau). But Jacob's line is the line of promise and there are times when he appeared to have little or not promise whatsoever.

God has patiently worked with Jacob for all of his life, and Jacob, for the most part, pushes God away and says, "Listen, I've got this." And then he goes and he does his own thing. God's wrestling match with Jacob, found in this chapter, describes very much Jacob's life and his continual struggles against God (which struggles will not end with this chapter). Yet, interestingly enough, despite his bad attitude and despite his rebellion against God, Jacob is the father of the Hebrew people.

Every person born into the Hebrew family can trace his lineage back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And, here is a key difference: Jacob, unlike his father and grandfather, has only sired Hebrews. Where did all of the Arabs come from? Abraham and Isaac; but only Hebrews come from Jacob.

For many of us, it is Jacob and his sorry life that gives us hope. So many of us have lives filled with mistakes and rebellion; and yet, we are still alive. That means only one thing—God is not finished with us and we still have a place in His plan. Thus far, Jacob continues to buck God's authority. He is a slow learner; and he often learns the hard way. This is so pronounced that this chapter will culminate with Jacob wrestling against God (obviously, a manifestation of God); an incident which is emblematic of Jacob's life.

One of the remarkable aspects of the record of Genesis is, the patriarchs are all presented as real people, with all of their flaws on display. We are told by critics that the Bible is a collection of myths and exaggerations; but none of the chief characters appear to be very mythical (apart from Jesus). They make bad decisions, they rebel against God, they reveal their human weaknesses. And, apart from a few incidents, none of them seem larger than life. Our movies are filled with characters who seem larger than life: Harry Callahan (Dirty Harry series); James Bond; Rocky Balboa; John McClane (*Die Hard* series) (I reveal my age by these choices). Jacob, on the other hand, seems so imperfect that it is surprising to us that he occupies such a large portion of the book of Genesis or that God appears to him so many times. For many of these people found in Scripture, they have some remarkable things occur in their lives, but how many of them do we see as mythical or superhuman. Abraham,

<sup>9</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:31–32 (slightly edited).

<sup>10</sup> From [Dean Ministries](#), accessed March 6, 2019.

Isaac, and Jacob are common shepherds. And, the most remarkable thing about their lives is, we (referring to mankind in general) know more about them than about any of the great kings or military leaders of the same era.

As an odd application of this, do you know in eternity future, you and I (potentially) will be better known than President Trump (I write this in 2019)—if we produce divine good. Our production will be more important than anything that an American president does (unless, of course, he is also saved<sup>11</sup> and producing divine good).

Robert Dean discusses the application of doctrine in the life of Jacob: *James tells us that it is through the testing of our faith, i.e. the testing of doctrine in our souls, that God gives us those opportunities to apply the Word that we have learned in various situations, and as we apply the Word the Holy Spirit uses the doctrine that is in our souls to strengthen us and to produce spiritual growth and maturity. In the Old Testament, even though they did not have the Holy Spirit as the primary dynamic and power source for the spiritual life, nevertheless the dynamic of testing was still there and the opportunities to trust God. And as the Old Testament believer exercised the faith-rest drill and trusted God spiritual growth took place. So one of these areas with Jacob was clearly in this arena of people testing. But Jacob is like most of us. He doesn't learn the lesson the first time, the second time, or maybe the third or fourth time. He has to go through those tests over and over again and to learn that God really is the one who protects and provides for us, He is the source of our security and sustenance, and like Jacob, we have to learn to just relax and trust Him.*<sup>12</sup>

Genesis 32:1–32: Two Camps/Jacob Returns to Canaan/Wrestles with God

### **Titles and/or Brief Descriptions of Genesis 32 (by Various Commentators)**

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob at Mahanaim and Penuel.*<sup>13</sup>

Arno Gaebelein: *CHAPTER 32 Jacob's Fear of Esau and Prayer at Peniel.*<sup>14</sup>

Whedon: *Jacob now approaches the great crisis in his spiritual life. After twenty years' absence from the land of promise, he again comes upon its eastern border; and as the angels of God appeared to him at Beth-el on his departure, so now, on his return, they appear again, as if to welcome him back to the Lord's land.*<sup>15</sup>

Barnes: *Jacob Wrestles in Prayer.*<sup>16</sup>

Fleming's Title: *Preparing to meet Esau (32:1-32).*<sup>17</sup>

929 Chapters: *Jacob Prepares for Esau; Jacob Fights with a Divine Man and Becomes Israel.*<sup>18</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *In this chapter, we see Jacob leaving behind forever his problems with Laban but now he has to confront his past and Esau who he cheated out of the blessing of the birthright.*

Wenstrom also offers this brief description: *God Prepares Jacob to Meet Esau.*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Most, if not all of American presidents have believed in Jesus Christ.

<sup>12</sup> From [Dean Ministries](#), accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, chapter introduction.

<sup>14</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>15</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32 chapter introduction.

<sup>16</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>17</sup> Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Commentary*; ©1988, 1994, 2005; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>18</sup> From [929 Chapters](#); accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

## Titles and/or Brief Descriptions of Genesis 32 (by Various Commentators)

J. Vernon McGee: *THEME: Crisis in the life of Jacob; wrestling at Peniel; Jacob's name changed to Israel.*<sup>20</sup>

These describe Genesis 32 in a title or a sentence.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Sometimes, a commentator will begin with a good observation of this chapter of the Bible.

### Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 32

Robert Dean: *This chapter...revolves around two elements that are going on that provide the center for doctrinal teaching that is in this section. The first has to do with Jacob's prayer which is covered in vv. 9-12. It is in this prayer that he recognizes in a perhaps more profound way than he has before the fact that God is the one who is the protector and provider for him. The second area of this chapter is the wrestling match that Jacob has with God in vv. 24-32.*<sup>21</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *Chapter 32 is the high point in the life of Jacob and can be called the turning point in his life. However, this is not Jacob's conversion, by any means. In spite of the fact that he was living in the flesh, this man was still God's man. This is the reason that we are told to be very careful about judging folk as to whether they are Christians or not. There are a lot of people who do not look like they are Christians, but I am almost sure that they are. Whether they are or not is in the hands of the Lord. They just don't act like Christians — that's all; they give no evidence that they are. And this man Jacob gave no such evidence, except in very faint instances when God appeared to him and he did respond in a way.*

McGee continues: *Jacob, who is God's representative and witness in the world, has been a bad witness, but he cannot continue that way, and so God is going to deal with him. To tell the truth, God will cripple him in order to get him. The Lord also disciplines us: "For whom the Lord loves he chastens ..." (Heb. 12:6 Prov. 3:11-12). That is His method. He disciplines in that way.*<sup>22</sup>

Morgan G. Campbell: *This is unquestionably one of the great chapters of the Bible, and it is significant how constant and powerful is its appeal to all who live on the principle of faith. It gives the account of the third direct communication of God to Jacob.*<sup>23</sup>

Baumgarten: *God Himself had appeared to Jacob as his combatant instead of Esau.*<sup>24</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *And when Jacob tries to go his own way, through deception or trickery or scheming, then he is "ghting against God rather than working with God."*<sup>25</sup>

Whedon: *The narrative of Jacob's experiences in this chapter is wonderfully suggestive. We trace the struggles of a man of great natural endowments from the period of a mighty awakening to a mighty triumph.*

Whedon continues: *Released from Laban, he turns his face towards the Land of Promise, but before he enters it, he must be made to know more of himself and more of God. His acquaintance with God, thus far, has been only general, formal, and not sufficient to work any deep spiritual change in his inner life. He has stood altogether in his own strength. He obtained Esau's birthright by taking advantage of him at an hour of want. He obtained Isaac's blessing by guile. He had practiced many an artifice against Laban, and in their recent interview he had said much more about his own works than about the blessing of God.*

<sup>20</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>21</sup> From [Dean Ministries](#), accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32) (slightly edited).

<sup>23</sup> Morgan G Campbell, *Exposition on Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1-32.

<sup>24</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:10.

<sup>25</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

## Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 32

Whedon concludes: *[By chapter's end, Jacob will learn] that victory with God is had, not by a wrestling against him, but a confident clinging to him.*<sup>26</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *So we see that Jacob had two great enemies, one that resided outside the Promised Land in Laban and the other in the Promised Land, that being Esau. Esau typifies the believer's enemy within, that being the old Adamic sin nature and Laban typifies the believer's enemy from without, that being the cosmic system of Satan.*

Wenstrom continues: *[There is, in Genesis 32,] a potentially dangerous conflict taking place between the two brothers but the anticipation of this encounter creates an opportunity to drive Jacob to prayer to solve the potential problem. But before Jacob meets Esau, he has two unexpected meetings, one with the elect angels of God who have been protecting him while in exile, which is recorded in Genesis 31:1-2 and the other with the preincarnate Christ, which is recorded in Genesis 32:22-32.*

Wenstrom concludes: *These two meetings, one with the angels and the other with the preincarnate Christ were designed to reassure Jacob of God's protection and presence when he encounters Esau. These two encounters with the angels and the Lord mark the second and third turning points in the life of Jacob, with the first being of course, his encounter with the Lord at Bethel.*<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable suggests that Genesis 32 and 33 may be taken together as a singular lesson.<sup>28</sup> Chapter 32 anticipates meeting Esau; and Jacob meets Esau in chapter 33.

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As I study a chapter, questions will occur to me—some of them important and many of them minor. Not all of these questions will be satisfactorily answered.

## Fundamental Questions About Genesis 32

1. Why does Jacob see all of these angels? Why are they there? What is their meaning?
2. Jacob delivers this incredible prayer, yet he admits to being afraid of Esau. How do we, in general, square Jacob's behavior throughout this chapter?
3. Why is Esau traveling with 400 men, heading out to meet Jacob?
4. In v. 22, it sounds as if Jacob crosses over the Jabbok with his family; but in v. 23, he seems to send them along without joining them.
5. At least twice, there are references to Jacob setting up a special camp for his wives and children. Where are the women and children placed?
6. Does Jacob separate out his wife and family to a second camp in this chapter; but they are right with him in Genesis 33—isn't this a contradiction?
7. The primary question, which bothered me for years is, *what is this wrestling match all about?*
8. Who is the wrestler/Wrestler?
9. Why does he/He not give his/His name to Jacob.
10. Why does he/He ask to be let go by Jacob?
11. If the wrestler is God, then how is Jacob able to have contact with Him? Don't we read elsewhere in Scripture that *if any man sees God, he will die?*

Although this chapter has confused many commentators over the centuries, we will understand it thoroughly by the time that we come to its end.

<sup>26</sup> Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:32.

<sup>27</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

It is important to understand what has gone before.

### The Prequel of Genesis 32

Jacob, early on in his life, did wrong to Esau, his older twin brother. Jacob pretended to be him and took his father’s blessing from him. Esau was mad to the point of murder, so Jacob left Canaan, heading east to Haran to locate his mother’s family, ostensibly to find a wife, but actually, to escape Esau’s wrath.

Jacob found his mother’s family, but it turns out that his mother’s brother, Laban, was a man more given to schemes and duplicity than Jacob was—and Laban was better at it. Jacob ended up marrying two of Laban’s daughters—one that he wanted to marry and the other that he did not want to marry. Furthermore, since he had no money with him, Jacob had to pay 7 years labor for each wife. His wives also gave him many children—11 sons (while living in the east) and apparently at least 2 daughters.

Jacob ended up remaining in Haran for 20 years. Jacob had been Laban’s #1 man, as long as he was working for free, but during those final 6 years, there were a great many disputes about salary, and a lot of anger coming from both parties.

Jacob’s only option, in his mind, was to pick up and leave. At the same time, God came to him and told him, “It is time for you to return to Canaan.” However, rather than be up-front about it, Jacob timed his exit for a period of time during which he would not be missed—not for a few days at least.

Jacob and his wives and his children all made a run for it. When Laban found out, he went charging after them. Laban caught up with them east of the Jordan, and he had Jacob had it out—verbally. They came to a point of agreement, finally, and then went their separate ways. Laban returned to his home and Jacob continued with his family on his journey back to Canaan. I don’t know that either man went on his way separated, but they each pretty much said everything that they had wanted to say to one another.

Genesis 32 will begin with the angels of God greeting Jacob back into the land.

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

### The Principals of Genesis 32

Characters	Commentary
Jacob	Jacob is the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. He is the son in the line of promise.
The angels of God	Angels from God met Jacob as he moves closer to the land (he is in Transjordan, land which would later be taken by the Hebrew people).
His messengers	Jacob sends messengers ahead to speak with Esau. Apparently, they only take note of 400 men with Esau and scamper back to Jacob.
Esau	Esau is Jacob’s older twin brother. Jacob had out-schemed Esau on several occasions, which is what caused Jacob to leave the land of Canaan in the first place.
Jacob’s servants	Jacob apparently has quite a number of servants, as they had been driving his considerable number of flocks and cattle. Jacob will have them organize many of his animals to give to Esau as a peace offering.

## The Principals of Genesis 32

Characters	Commentary
His wives and children	Jacob is traveling with his wives and children, who are mentioned in this narrative, but don't actually do anything.
A manifestation of God	This is a Man Who wrestles with Jacob at the end of Genesis 32. He injures Jacob's legs permanently and then gives Jacob a new name ( <i>Israel</i> ).

There are a number of moving parts in this event-packed chapter.

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We need to know where this chapter takes place.

### The Places of Genesis 32

Place	Description
Mahanaim	This is where Jacob will see the encampment of angels. <i>Mahanaim</i> means <i>two camps</i> : Jacob's camp and the camp of angels. This may not be the same Mahanaim spoken of later in Scripture.
Penuel	This name means <i>face to face with God; a face of God</i> . This refers to Jacob's encounter with a Wrestler, Who is apparently God.
Gilead	Jacob is in Gilead, east of the Jordan, walking toward the land of Canaan.
The Jabbok	This is a tributary, running from east to west, and emptying into the Jordan River about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.
Canaan	Canaan is the land that Jacob is traveling towards. We have his route and other cities which he will go to in future chapters.
Seir in Edom	Seir appears to be a region in Edom, which is located due south of the Dead Sea. Jacob sent messengers there to reach Esau.



Jacob Returns from Haran (map); from [Genesis Bible Study](#); accessed February 11, 2019.

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### By the Numbers

Item	Date; duration; size; number
Date of Chapter	1739 B.C. <sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32 chapter introduction.

## By the Numbers

Item	Date; duration; size; number
Barnes on Esau's marriages:	<i>Esau became connected by his marriage with a daughter of Ishmael. He was now married 56 years to his first two wives, and 20 to his last, and therefore, had a separate and extensive establishment of children and grandchildren.<sup>30</sup></i>
Distance from Jacob to the Dead Sea.	About 20 miles.
Age of Jacob and Esau.	Esau is said to be 40 years old when he first marries (Genesis 26:34). So unknown period of time passes to where Isaac believes that he will die soon (Genesis 27:2); and after this, Jacob leaves the land for 20 years (Genesis 31:41). We might guess between 80 and 100. This is because Isaac sired his two sons at age 60, and he will die at age 180 (Genesis 25:26 35:28).

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## The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 32

Legend
Birth or death
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)
God speaks with Abraham
Parentetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.
The entire <b>Abrahamic Timeline</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
The entire <b>Patriarchal Timeline</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2234 B.C.	2097 B.C.			Genesis 11:24	Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 <a href="#">Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</a>
	1978 B.C.			Genesis 11:25	Death of Nahor, Abram's uncle
	1969 B.C.		Noah is 950	Genesis 9:28–29	Death of Noah
2164 B.C.	1967 B.C.			Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 <sup>rd</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 <a href="#">Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</a>

<sup>30</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2078 B.C.	1881 B.C.	2080 B.C.	Abraham is 86	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 <a href="#">Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.</a>
2064 B.C. (2066 B.C.)		2066 B.C.	Abraham is 100	Genesis 21:1–7 1Chronicles 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 <sup>th</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 <a href="#">Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.</a>
	1841– 1816 B.C.			Genesis 25:12–16 1Chronicles 1:29–31	Ishmael's children.
	1834 B.C. 1829 B.C. (Klassen)	2054 B.C.		Genesis 22:1–19	Abraham is told by God to go to the <b>land of Moriah</b> to offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. This was a 3-day journey away. They then go to <b>Beer-sheba</b> , which could simply indicate that they are returning home to <b>Beer-sheba</b> .
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge <sup>31</sup> puts this date at 1872 B.C., based upon Antiquities by Josephus.					
(2029 B.C.)	1830 B.C.	2030 B.C.	Abraham is 137	Genesis 23:1–20	The death of Sarah. She dies in <b>Kirjatharba</b> , it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> . Gen 23:1 <a href="#">Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life.</a> She is buried in a cave of the field of Machpelah before <b>Mamre</b> ; it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> , purchased by Abraham from the sons of Heth.
(2026 B.C.)				Genesis 24:1–67 Genesis 25:20	Isaac (Abraham's son) and Rebecca. Genesis 25:20 <a href="#">Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramæan.</a> At this time, Isaac is living in the <b>Negev</b> . It is likely that Abraham lived there as well; or near to there.
		2026 B.C.	Isaac is 40	Genesis 25:20	Isaac marries Rebecca. Genesis 25:20
	1826 B.C.			Genesis 25:1	Abraham marries Keturah. Smith puts the date at 1860 B.C.; and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1853 B.C.
				Genesis 25:2–4 1Chronicles 1:32–33	Abraham's fathers children by Keturah.
	1817 B.C.		Shem is 600	Genesis 11:11	Death of Shem.

<sup>31</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 22:1.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2004 B.C.	1807 B.C.	2006 B.C.	Abraham is 160; Isaac is 60	Genesis 25:19, 21–26	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac. Gen 25:26 <i>After this, his brother came out grasping Esau's heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.</i> Therefore, Abraham would be 160 years old.
(1991 B.C.)				Genesis 25:5–6	Isaac is the heir of all things that Abraham has (but, most importantly, of the covenant of God with Abraham).
1989 B.C.	1792 B.C.	1991 B.C.	Abraham is 175	Genesis 25:7–10	Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 <i>This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years.</i> He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah).
				Genesis 25:11	God blesses Isaac.
(1943 B.C.)	1788 B.C.			Genesis 25:17	The death of Ishmael. Gen 25:17 <i>This is the length of Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people.</i>
			Eber is 464	Genesis 11:17	Death of Eber.
	1782 B.C.	1978 B.C.		Genesis 25:27–34	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage.
	1782 B.C. 1740 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:1–5	A famine in the land; God renews covenant with Isaac at Gerar.
				Genesis 26:6–10	Rebecca and Isaac in Gerar.
				Genesis 26:11–16	Isaac is blessed by God in Gerar.
	1782 B.C. 1735 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:17–22	Strife between Isaac and Philistines in and near Gerar.
	1767 B.C.			Genesis 26:34–35	Esau marries two Canaanite women.
	1757– 1739 B.C. 1733 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:23–25	Isaac makes an altar in Beer-sheba.
(1943 B.C.)	1744 B.C.		Ishmael is 137	Genesis 25:17–18	The death of Ishmael.
	1738 B.C. c 1732 B.C. (Klassen)	1977 B.C.		Genesis 26:26–33	Isaac's alliance with Abimelech at Beersheba.
(1929 B.C.)	1737 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1929 B.C.		Genesis 27:1–46	Jacob by deception receives a final blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Genesis 28:1–5	Jacob goes to his Uncle Laban's home in Padan-aram for a wife.
		1928 B.C.		Genesis 28:10–22	Jacob's dream; God speaks to Jacob.
				Genesis 28:6–9	Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.
		1906 B.C. (For descendants)		Genesis 36:1–42	Esau's marriages and descendants.
	1736 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1928 B.C.		Genesis 29:1–14	Jacob in Haran (Charan).
	1736– 1729 B.C. 1730– 1723 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 29:15–20	Jacob works 7 years to marry Rachel, but is deceived by Laban, and Jacob marries Leah, her older sister.
	1729 B.C. 1724 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C.		Genesis 29:21–31	Jacob marries Rachel
(1915 B.C.)	1729– 1716 B.C. 1723– 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C. 1916 B.C. (Rachel bears Joseph)		Genesis 29:32–34 Genesis 30:1–6 Genesis 29:35 Genesis 30:9, 7–8, 10–24	Jacob has 12 children by his wives, Rachel and Leah; and by their personal servants as well. Reese breaks the timeline down in smaller increments in his book.
1915 B.C.				Genesis	Joseph is born.
	1711 B.C.			Genesis 36:31–33 1Chronicles 1:43–44 Genesis 26:34–39 1Chronicles 1:45–50 Genesis 36:40–43 1Chronicles 1:51–54	The kings of Edom.
(1909 B.C.)	1716 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 30:25–43 Genesis 31:1–16	Jacob's final years with Laban.
				Genesis 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Genesis 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 32:24–32 Genesis 35:10	Jacob wrestles with the angel.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:1–16	Jacob meets Esau face to face.
	1715 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:17–20	The resumption of Jacob's journey.
	1711– 1708 B.C. 1706– 1705 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:1–5 1Chronicles 2:3	Judah fathers 3 sons.
	1700 B.C. 1687 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 34:1–31	Dinah, daughter of Judah, is defiled.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 35:1–15	Jacob returns to Bethel.
	1700 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1903 B.C.		Genesis 35:16–19 48:7 35:20–22	Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin.
(1898 B.C.)				Genesis 35:27 37:1	The return to Hebron.
	1699 B.C.		Joseph is 17	Genesis 37:2–11	Joseph—his early days and his dreams.
				Genesis 37:12–35	Joseph in Shechem and Dothan.
1897 B.C.		1898 B.C.		Genesis 37:36 39:1	Joseph is sold into slavery, to end up in Egypt.
	c1699– 1690 B.C.	1898 B.C.		Genesis 39:2–6	Joseph enjoys prosperity in Egypt.
	c1695 B.C. 1707 B.C. (Klassen)	1898 B.C.		Genesis 38:6–11	Judah and Tamar.
	1692 B.C.			Genesis 38:12–26	Judah's wife dies.
	1692 B.C. 1691 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:27–30 1Chronicles 2:4	The birth of Pharez, the 41 <sup>st</sup> generation from Adam.
	c1690 B.C. 1689 B.C. (Klassen)	1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:7–19	Joseph flees adultery.
		1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:20–23	Joseph is put into jail; yet prospers in jail.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
(1887 B.C.)	1688 B.C.	1887 B.C.		Genesis 40:1–23	Joseph gives the interpretation of the dreams of the baker and the butler.
1884 B.C.	1687 B.C.		Isaac is 180	Genesis 35:28–29	The death of Isaac. <a href="#">Now the days of Isaac were 180 years.</a> (Genesis 35:28)
(1885 B.C.)	1686 B.C.	1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:1–37	Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream.
		1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:38–44	Joseph is made governor.
				Genesis 41:45	Joseph marries Asenath.
1884 B.C.	1686– 1679 B.C.	1886 B.C. (Beginning)		Genesis 41:46–49	The 7 years of plenty.
	1685– 1683 B.C.			Genesis 41:50–53	Sons are born to Joseph.
	1685– 1681 B.C.			Exodus 6:16 Num. 3:17 1Chronicles 6:1, 16	The descendants of Levi are born.
	1679– 1672 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 41:54–57	The seven years of famine.
(1876 B.C.)	1678 B.C. 1677 B.C. (Klassen)	1875 B.C.		Genesis 42:1–44:34	Joseph provides his family with food.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:1–15	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:16–28	Jacob hears that his son, Joseph, is still alive, and he prepares to travel to Egypt himself.
	1677 B.C.			Ruth 4:18 1Chronicles 2:5	Birth of Hezron, the 40 <sup>th</sup> generation.
1873 B.C. <sup>32</sup>	1677 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:1–7, 28	Jacob goes to Egypt after God's assurance in Beersheba.
		1875 B.C.	Jacob is 130	Genesis 46:8–27 Exodus 1:1–5	Summary of the 70 who came to Egypt. Compare Genesis 47:8–9 and 46:27 for Jacob's age.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:29–34 47:1–12	The people of Joseph are established in Egypt.
	1676– 1675 B.C.			Genesis 47:13–21	Joseph continues as prime minister in Egypt, exercising wise leadership during the famine.
				Genesis 47:22–26	The land of the priests in Egypt.
	1672– 1593 B.C.			1Chronicles 2:6–8	Zerah, the brother of Pharez, and his descendants.

<sup>32</sup> Jacob moves family to the Land of Goshen in Egypt (Genesis 47:28)

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1671 B.C. 1660 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 48:1–22	Blessings to Manasseh and Ephraim.
	1660 B.C. 1665 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Berith to Ephraim.
				Genesis 47:28–31	The last days of Jacob; his charge to Joseph.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 49:1–32	Jacob speaks to his sons, giving them their final blessings and encouraging them.
1857 B.C.	1660 B.C.	1859 B.C.	Jacob is 147	Genesis 49:33	The death of Jacob.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 50:1–14	The burial of Jacob.
				Genesis 50:15–21	The fears of Joseph's brothers after the death of Jacob.
	1638 B.C. 1644 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Resheph (who is in the line between Ephraim and Joshua).
	1625 B.C. 1620 B.C. (Klassen)			Num. 26:58	Birth of Aram (Levi's grandson and Moses' father).
	1623 B.C. 1604 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Ram, the 39 <sup>th</sup> generation.
	1615 B.C. 1625 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Telah, in the line between Ephraim and Joshua.
				Genesis 50:22–23	Joseph's last days.
	1606 B.C.			Genesis 50:24–25	Joseph's last words.
1805 B.C. (1805 B.C.)		1806 B.C.	Joseph is 110	Genesis 50:26 Exodus 1:6	The death of Joseph. His brothers also die.
	1606– 1462 B.C.			Genesis 47:27 Exodus 1:7	The population explosion among the Jews living in Egypt.

### Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011 and August 12, 2014. Included in MacDonald's timeline is a timeline for Egypt interspersed.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

From: [http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible\\_study\\_guides/abram\\_to\\_the\\_exodus.pdf](http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf) (Christian shepherd). This source believes that the Jews live only a short time in Egypt (210 years).

*The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

*The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)*, Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 10–54.

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Here is what to expect from Genesis 32:

### A Synopsis of Genesis 32 (Adam Clarke)

Jacob, proceeding on his Journey, is met by the angels of God (Genesis 32:1–2). He sends out ahead of him to his brother Esau, requesting to be favourably received (Genesis 32:3–5). The messengers return without an answer, but with the intelligence that Esau, with four hundred men, was coming to meet Jacob (Genesis 32:6). He is greatly alarmed, and adopts prudent means for the safety of himself and family (Genesis 32:7–8).

Joab's great affecting prayer to God (Genesis 32:9–12).

Afterwards, Jacob prepares a present of five droves of different cattle for his brother (Genesis 32:13–15). He sends them forward before him, at a certain distance from each other, and instructs the drivers what to say when met by Esau (Genesis 32:15–20). At the same time, Jacob sends his wives, servants, children and baggage, over the brook Jabbok, by night (Genesis 32:21–23).

Jacob, however, stays behind, and wrestles with an angel until the break of day (Genesis 32:24). He prevails and gets a new name (Genesis 32:25–29). He calls the name of the place Peniel (Genesis 32:30). At the end, Jacob finds himself lame in his thigh in consequence of his wrestling with the angel (Genesis 32:31–32).

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32 chapter introduction (heavily edited).

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Fleming provides a nice synopsis.

### Summary of Genesis 32 (Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

During the twenty years that Jacob had been in Mesopotamia, Esau had established his household in territory to the south near the Dead Sea. Jacob knew that if he was to live in peace in Canaan, he would first have to put things right with Esau. With much fear and anxiety he sent news to Esau that he was coming to meet him (32:1-8).

Jacob had by now learnt a humility before God that was lacking the previous time he met Esau. He thanked God for his remarkable blessings in the past, and prayed that God's promises for the future would guarantee protection for him against his brother (9-12). At the same time he thought it wise to send Esau a series of gifts, with the aim of winning his favour (13-21).

Still moving south, Jacob sent his family across the river Jabbok, while he remained behind by himself (22-24a). That night he met God, who appeared to him in the form of a man wrestling with him. As they wrestled, Jacob realized that this 'man' had superhuman strength and the power to bless. As in previous conflicts, Jacob was determined to win, but now he had to learn that against God he could never win. His proud self-confidence was at last defeated. Yet in another sense Jacob did win, for he demanded, and received, a special blessing of

## Summary of Genesis 32 (Bridgeway Bible Commentary)

God's power that would ensure victory in the future. Though defeated and humbled, he did not lose his persistence or fighting spirit. The old determination was still there, but Jacob the cheat now became Israel, God's champion (24b-29). By giving him a permanent limp, God never allowed Jacob to forget that the only way he triumphed was through defeat (30-32).

Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Commentary*; ©1988, 1994, 2005; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

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These are 1-3 paragraph summaries of Genesis 32.

## Summaries of Genesis 32 (various commentators)

James Burton Coffman: *Here we have the preliminaries for the meeting of the long-estranged brothers Jacob and Esau, a moving, dramatic account of their moving toward a reunion after many years of separation, both having become wealthy in the meanwhile. The actual, face-to-face meeting of the brothers does not take place until the next chapter, but all of the background for it is here. Jacob's fear, with which he had lived for so many years, his prayer to God for divine help in the approaching crisis, his precautions to protect his family against the potential hostility of Esau, with special concern for Rachel and her children, the rich gifts sent to Esau, his wrestling all night with an angel of God at Peniel, and, most significant of all, the heavenly award to Jacob of a new name - these are the events of this chapter which have challenged the thoughts of men for ages.*<sup>33</sup>

Hawker: *This Chapter relates some very extraordinary events, which occurred in the Patriarch Jacob's journey towards Canaan, after his separation from Laban. He is first met by an host of angels. He then sends messengers to his brother Esau, who dwelt in Seir, to enquire after his welfare, and to inform him of his own. The messengers return with an account that Esau is coming against him, and with him an army of 400 men: Jacob is greatly distressed with the intelligence, and hath recourse to God by prayer: he sends over the brook Jabbok all his family and household, and is left alone: an angel wrestles with him, until the breaking of the day: Jacob prevails, and obtains a blessing in consequence, the Lord puts a perpetual testimony of honour upon the Patriarch, in changing his name from Jacob to Israel.*<sup>34</sup>

Matthew Poole: *The angels of God meet Jacob, Genesis 32:1. He calls them God's host, and the place Mahanaim, Genesis 32:2. Sends messengers to his brother Esau, Genesis 32:3–5. They return, and bring word that Esau comes to meet him with four hundred men, Genesis 32:6. Jacob is afraid; divides his people and cattle into two bands, Genesis 32:7. Gives orders concerning them, Genesis 32:8; prays to God in a very fervent and humble manner, Genesis 32:9–12; sends presents to his brother, with directions; gets his wives and children over the ford by night, Genesis 32:13–23. Jacob wrestles with God, and prevails; is called Israel: God blesseth him; he inquires after God's name; calls the place Peniel: Jacob halts, Genesis 32:24–31. The Jews' observation in memorial of it, Genesis 32:32.*<sup>35</sup>

929 Chapters: *Jacob sees angels at his camp and names the place Mahanaim, "the camps" of god. Jacob prepares to meet Esau by communicating words of peace, praying to Yahweh, sending Esau hundreds of animals in droves, and splitting his camp in two with the hope that at least one will survive. Jacob wrestles with a divine man who injures his leg and changes his name to Israel. Jacob names the site Peniel, "the face of god."*<sup>36</sup>

Poole's could have been considered an outline.

<sup>33</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32.

<sup>36</sup> From [929 Chapters](#); accessed March 2, 2019.

### Outlines of Genesis 32 (Various Commentators)

J. Vernon McGee:<sup>37</sup>

Crisis In The Life Of Jacob (32:1-23)  
 Wrestling At Peniel (32:24-26)  
 Jacob's Name Changed To Israel (32:27-32)

Matthew Henry:<sup>38</sup>

Jacob is still upon his journey toward Canaan; and never did so many memorable things occur in any march, as in this of Jacob's little family. By the way he meets,  
 (1,) With good tidings from his God, Genesis 32:1–2.  
 (2,) With bad tidings from his brother, to whom he sent a message to notify his return, Genesis 32:3–7. In his distress, 1, He divides his company, Genesis 32:7–8. 2, He makes his prayer to God, Genesis 32:9–12. 3, He sends a present to his brother, Genesis 32:13–23. 4, He wrestles with the angel, Genesis 32:24–32.

The Cambridge Bible:<sup>39</sup>

1–2. Jacob at Mahanaim.  
 3–12. The Approach of Esau, and Jacob's Prayer.  
 13–21. Jacob's Present to Esau.  
 22–32. Jacob's Wrestling with the Angel.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge:<sup>40</sup>

Genesis 32:1, Jacob's vision at Mahanaim; Genesis 32:3, His message to Esau; Genesis 32:6, He is afraid of Esau's coming; Genesis 32:9, He prays for deliverance; Genesis 32:13, He sends a present to Esau, and passes the brook Jabbok; Genesis 32:24, He wrestles with an angel at Peniel, where he is called Israel; Genesis 32:31, He halts.

Arno Gaebelein:<sup>41</sup>

1. The vision at Mahanaim (Genesis 32:1-2)
2. The message to Esau (Genesis 32:3-5)
3. Esau's coming and Jacob's fear (Genesis 32:6-8)
4. Jacob's prayer (Genesis 32:9-12)
5. Preparing to meet Esau (Genesis 32:13-23)
6. Jacob's prayer at Peniel (Genesis 32:24-32)

David Guzik provides an actual outline:<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>38</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32 chapter introduction.

<sup>39</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32 chapter introduction.

<sup>40</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32 chapter introduction.

<sup>41</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>42</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:1–32.

## Outlines of Genesis 32 (Various Commentators)

### JACOB PREPARES TO MEET ESAU

- A. Jacob hears of Esau's approach.
1. (Genesis 32:1–2) Jacob meets the angels of God at Mahanaim. He realizes God is with him and he has angelic protection.
  2. (Genesis 32:3–6) Jacob's message to Esau.
  3. (Genesis 32:7–8) Jacob's fear and carnal preparation.
  4. (Genesis 32:9–12) Jacob's prayer.
  5. (Genesis 32:13–21) Jacob sends many gifts to Esau.
- B. Jacob wrestles with God.
1. (Genesis 32:22–23) Jacob sends all his possessions over the river.
  2. (Genesis 32:24–25) A Man wrestles with Jacob.
  3. (Genesis 32:26) Jacob's plea to the Man.
  4. (Genesis 32:27–29) Jacob's name is changed, and he is a blessed man.
  5. (Genesis 32:30–32) The memorials of this event.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.:<sup>43</sup>

The outline of Genesis 32 is as follows:

- (1) Angels of God meet Jacob at Mahanaim (32:1-2)
- (2) Jacob sends messengers to Esau (32:3-6)
- (3) Jacob divides his family out of fear of Esau (32:7-8)
- (4) Jacob prays for protection from Esau and claims covenant promises of God (32:9-12)
- (5) Jacob sends gifts to Esau (32:13-21)
- (6) Jacob sends family across Jabbok (32:22-23)
- (7) Jacob prays as he wrestles the God-Man, Jesus Christ at Peniel (32:24-32).

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## Outline of Genesis 32 (929 Chapters)

- 1-3. Jacob encounters Yahweh's angels at Mahanaim
  1. Laban leaves in peace
  - 2-3. Jacob sees Yahweh's angels, so he calls the place Mahanaim, "the two camps" of God
- 4-22. Jacob sends offerings to Esau and prepares for the worst
  - 4-6. Jacob sends words of peace to Esau in Edom
  7. Jacob learns that Esau approaches with 400 men
  - 8-9. Jacob divides his camp in two so that one may survive
  - 10-13. Jacob praises Yahweh and petitions him to save him and his offspring
  - 14-16. Jacob separates hundreds of she goats, he goats, ewes, rams, male and female camels, cows, bulls, and female and male donkeys as gifts for Esau
  - 17-22. Jacob sends the animals group by group in droves with the message that Jacob is right behind them
- 23-33. Jacob's fight with a divine man at Peniel
  - 23-24. Jacob brings his wives and possessions across the Jabbok
  25. A [divine - v. 33] man wrestles Jacob, who is left alone
  26. The divine man injures Jacob's leg
  - 27-29. Jacob asks for a blessing, and his name is changed to Israel because he "persevered (s-r-y) with god ('el)"
  30. The divine man does not reveal his name
  31. Jacob names the place Peniel because he saw the "face (p-n-y) of god ('el)"

<sup>43</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

### Outline of Genesis 32 (929 Chapters)

- 32. Jacob leaves Penuel (variant spelling) limping
- 33. Cultural note: this is why the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the leg [sciatic nerve?]

From [929 Chapters](#); accessed March 2, 2019.

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The ESV; capitalized is used below.

### A Synopsis of Genesis 32 from the Summarized Bible

- Contents:** Jacob becomes Israel. Preparation for meeting Esau. Wrestling against the angel.
- Characters:** Jacob, Esau, angel.
- Conclusion:** Either we lean on God or on our own plans. The arrangements of unbelief and impatience prevent God acting for us and He must bring us to the end of our own strength.
- Key Word:** Afraid, Genesis 32:7.
- Strong Verses:** Genesis 32:24 (*And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.*), Genesis 32:30 (*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."*).
- Striking Facts:** To be alone with Christ is the only way to arrive at a knowledge of ourselves and our ways. Jacob was a wrestled-with man, and until the seat of his own strength was touched, he did not reach the place of blessing.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 32 (slightly edited).

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It is helpful to see what came before and what follows in a brief summary.

### The Big Picture (Genesis 27–34)

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Genesis 27–28	Jacob’s disputes with his twin brother Esau causes him to finally leave Canaan.
Genesis 29:1–30	Jacob has come to Haran and meets his family. He marries two of his cousins.
Genesis 29:31–30:24	Jacob’s children born to him in the east.
Genesis 30:25–43	Jacob’s final years with Laban: salary disputes, Jacob’s schemes; Jacob’s prosperity.
Genesis 31	Jacob surreptitiously leaves Laban, where he has lived for 20 years, taking his wives and children with him. Laban chases him down and they come to an understanding. Laban returns to his home.
Genesis 32:1–8	Jacob, upon separating from his Uncle Laban, proceeds closer to Canaan, anticipating an uncertain meeting with his brother Esau. Concerned over what might happen, Jacob divides his people into two camps, separating out his wife and children, hoping to preserve them.
Genesis 32:9–12	Jacob’s marvelous prayer.
Genesis 32:13–21	Jacob prepares many gifts for Esau.

### The Big Picture (Genesis 27–34)

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Genesis 32:22–32	In the night, Jacob finds himself wrestling with the Lord. He walks away from that night with a limp and a new name ( <i>Israel</i> ).
Genesis 33:1–16	Jacob and Esau actually meet. Jacob offers his gift to Esau.
Genesis 33:17–20	Jacob moves to Succoth and then to Shechem. He chooses not to follow or meet up with his brother Esau.
Genesis 34	The rape of Dinah and revenge is gotten against Shechem.

These chapters cover a considerable portion of Jacob’s life.

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The first title is often applicable to the entire chapter (although it may pertain just to the verses which follow it to the next section heading).

I went with Bob Utley’s choices, as they were already completely done up for me. However, there is not much difference between the translations below.

#### Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 32 (from Dr. Bob Utley)

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (FOLLOWS MT)
Jacob's Fear of Esau	Esau Comes to Meet Jacob	Jacob's Reconciliation with Esau (Gen. 32:1 to Gen. 33:20)	Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau	Jacob Prepares For His Meeting with Esau
Gen. 32:1-2 Gen. 32:3-5 Gen. 32:6-8 Gen. 32:9-12 Gen. 32:13-21	Gen. 32:1-8   Gen. 32:9-12 Gen. 32:13-21	Gen. 32:1-2 Gen. 32:3-5 Gen. 32:6-8 Gen. 32:9-12 Gen. 32:13-21	Gen. 32:1-2 Gen. 32:3-5 Gen. 32:6-8 Gen. 32:9-12 Gen. 32:13-21	Gen. 32:4-7  Gen. 32:8-14 a Gen. 32:14-22
Gen. 32:22-23 Jacob Wrestles	Wrestling with God		Jacob Wrestles at Peniel Gen. 32:22-24 a	Jacob Wrestles with God Gen. 32:23-25 a
Gen. 32:24-32	Gen. 32:22-32	Gen. 32:22-32	Gen. 32:24-26 a Gen. 32:26 b Gen. 32:27 a Gen. 32:27 b Gen. 32:28 Gen. 32:29 a Gen. 32:29 b Gen. 32:30-32	Gen. 32:25-30  Gen. 32:31-32

From Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32 chapter comments).

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**Changes—additions and subtractions (for Genesis 32):**

I have pretty much codified the *various commentators* tables. They have the passage at the front, then the topic covered. This allows you to see several points of view; or, if you choose to, confine yourself to the comments of some specific men.

Many of these new charts and ideas will be eventually added to previous chapters of Genesis.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

I just discovered the Casual English Bible by Stephen M. Miller. Concerning his translation, he writes:

*I write the way people talk. No Christian jargon. No religious clichés. No preaching.*

*I don't tell you what to think. Instead, I report what some of the top Bible experts say they think. I pull from the heads of the tradition-minded as well as the mavericks.*

*I write especially for non-Christians, new Christians – people curious about the Bible and about what Christians believe.*

*As a 19-year-old college student graciously described my writing, I keep it “simple, not stupid.”<sup>44</sup>*

I drew from hundreds of sources for this chapter. I literally stand on the shoulders of thousands of men in order to put this document together.

William Wenstrom, Jr. and David Guzik (among others) had some very insightful things to say about this chapter.

A great many commentators proclaimed this chapter enigmatic, and difficult to explain. At the very end of this chapter, Jacob has a physical altercation with God—he actually wrestles God. God hurts Jacob's leg, but Jacob will not let go—he demands to be blessed. There are a whole lot of topics which need to be discussed here, but the main one is, *just what the heck is going on and what does it mean?* Near the end of this chapter, I will put all of that together for you, in a few paragraphs.

We always need to be mindful of what we learn in Genesis (or, in any other part of the Old Testament). Even though *Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever*, that does not mean that God's interaction with man is exactly the same in every dispensation; or that God's interaction is Charley Brown is the same as it is with Lucy van Pelt. So, Jacob will wrestle with a physical manifestation of God at the end of this chapter. This does not mean that every believer will have this experience or that every believer will see an angel, at some point in their lives, Who just turns out to be God. Nevertheless, there are a great many things that we can learn in this chapter, despite the fact that it all occurred 4000 years ago.

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## The Two Camps

<sup>44</sup> From <https://www.casualenglishbible.com/about/> accessed March 9, 2019.

This is actually Genesis 32:2–3 in the Hebrew and 32:1–2 in the Greek. The Greek is a more logical break than is found in the Hebrew. The Hebrew manuscripts begin this chapter with Genesis 31:55; therefore, most of the *Jewish* and Catholic Bibles (along with several others) follow the Hebrew chapter division (which is *not* inspired). Many of the translations below will contain Genesis 31:55. There are at least 3 different ways that verses have been numbered. I have gone with the common English chapter and verse divisions.

The verse in question is Gen. 31:55 **Early in the morning Laban arose and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned home.** (ESV). This really properly closes out the previous chapter and the previous narrative. Genesis 32:1 is like a new chapter in Jacob's life, even if it occurs 30 minutes after Genesis 31:55. So, I will mention the Hebrew verse numbering (and chapter division) within the Hebrew exegesis; but the traditional division which we find in our Bibles is the best approach.

Genesis 32:1–2 **So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place Mahanaim.**

### Introducing Genesis 32:1–2 (various commentators)

Morgan G. Campbell: *As he [Jacob] returned to his own land, the same conflicting principles which have been evident throughout are still manifest. His going at all was in direct obedience to the distinct command of God. There was really no other reason to return. He might still have stayed with Laban and outwitted him for his own enrichment. Nevertheless, the manner of his going was characterized by independence and confidence in his own ability. This is seen in the account of the elaborate and carefully calculated preparation he made for meeting Esau. He was ready to placate Esau with presents, and prepared a list of them.*<sup>45</sup>

Arno Gaebelein: *What a welcome it was when he came near to his land, that the angels of God met him. They were like divine ambassadors sent to welcome him back to assure him of God's presence and protection.*<sup>46</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *[T]he Holy Spirit opens the story of Jacob meeting Esau by presenting the vertical dimension (God, the angels and Jacob) of the story before the horizontal (Jacob and Esau)...Jacob's vision of these angels in Genesis 32:1-2 would reassure him once again of the divine presence and protection.*<sup>47</sup>

One of the lessons in this narrative is learning to see things from God's point of view (the Divine perspective). What we see here, in these first 2 verses, is God's protection for Jacob (something that we enjoy as well). We all worry far too much, because God has our safety and preservation under control (an exception to this is when a believer is utilized by God as the ultimate human sacrifice of martyrdom<sup>48</sup>).

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As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young's translation (however, I do not preserve the consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

Kukis slavishly literal:

Kukis moderately literal:

<sup>45</sup> Morgan G Campbell, *Exposition on Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>46</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>47</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>48</sup> This happens throughout the Middle East and other areas where the laws of divine establishment are not in effect for the most part.

And has gone Jacob to his way and so meet with him messengers of Elohim. And so says Jacob as when he saw them, “An army of Elohim this [is].” And so he called a name of the place the that *Mahanaim*.

Genesis  
32:1–2

So Jacob went on his way and [an encampment of] Elohim's angels met with him. When Jacob saw them, he said, “This [is] the army of Elohim.” Therefore, he called the name of that place *Mahanaim*.

Kukis not-so-literal paraphrase:

So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, “This is the army of God.” Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac (= Aramaic) and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation<sup>49</sup>; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

<sup>49</sup> I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use [www.latinvulgate.com](http://www.latinvulgate.com).

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From [http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos\\_genesis.html](http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_genesis.html) and first published in 1862.

The very fact that we have ancient Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic translations of the Bible testifies to its accuracy. There may be a difference word or phrase here or there; the Greek may have a singular where the Hebrew has a plural, but there is no set of doctrines in the Latin Bible which are any different from those found in the Greek Bible or the Syriac Bible. These different cultures when they chose to translate the Bible chose to translate it as accurately as possible. Where human viewpoint would expect to find doctrinal differences between the Bible of the Hebrews, of the Greeks or of the Romans, no such differences exist.

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And has gone Jacob to his way and so meet with him messengers of Elohim. And so says Jacob as when he saw them, "An army of Elohim this [is]." And so he called a name of the place the that <i>Mahanaim</i> .
Dead Sea Scrolls	Although there are a few words in several verses in this chapter, there is not enough to provide us with any insight into the original text of this chapter.
Targum (Onkelos)	<u>And Laban arose in the morning, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them, and went; and Laban returned to his place.</u> And Jakob went on his way, and the angels of the Lord met him. And when Jakob saw them, he said, This is a host [Or, "camp."] from before the Lord; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862). These are the final verses of Genesis 31 in the Targum of Onkelos.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob went on his way, and the angels of the Lord met him. And Jakob said when he saw them, <u>These are not the host of Esau who are coming to meet me, nor the host of Laban, who have returned from pursuing me; but they are the host of the holy angels who are sent from before the Lord.</u> Therefore the name of that place he called, in the language of the sanctuary, Machaniam.
Jerusalem targum	And Jakob, when he beheld them, said, <u>Perhaps they are a host from Laban, the brother of my mother, coming to set against me the array of battle to slay me; or (rather) they are a host of the holy angels from before the Lord, who are come to save me from their hands.</u> And he called the name of that place Machanaim. What is missing from the first verse may be due to this coming from the Pseudo-Jonathan document above.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Jacob also went on the journey <u>he had begun</u> : and the angels of God met him. And when he saw them, he said: These are the camps of God, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim, <u>that is, Camps.</u>
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When he saw them, Ya'aqub said, "This is God's army." He called the name of that place Mahanaim.
Peshitta (Syriac) <sup>50</sup>	AND Jacob also went on his journey, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; so he called the name of that place Mahanaim.
Septuagint (Greek)	JACOB prepares to meet Esau. Gn.32.3-21

<sup>50</sup> From the George Lamsa Translation of the Peshitta, taken from <http://www.studylight.org/>

And Jacob departed for his journey; and having looked up, he saw the host of God encamped; and the angels of God met him. And Jacob said, when he saw them, This is the Camp of God; and he called the name of that place, Encampments. This is the New Brenton translation from <http://www.katapi.org.uk/>

Significant differences: There is additional text found in the Latin and a lot extra in the Greek. There is considerable additional text in the targums, which are not in agreement with one another.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:<sup>51</sup>

Bible in Basic English	And on his way Jacob came face to face with the angels of God. And when he saw them he said, This is the army of God: so he gave that place the name of Mahanaim.
Easy English	Jacob continued to go to his father's house. And the angels of God met him. Jacob saw them and said, 'This is where God's army is!' So he called that place Mahanaim. Now Jacob had to meet Esau. Jacob had deceived Esau out of his blessing. Then he had left Isaac's house because Esau wanted to kill him. Jacob had seen the angels of God before (28:12). Now, God sent his angels to meet Jacob to show that he was with him.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	<b>Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau</b> Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw God's angels. When he saw them, he said, "This is God's camp!" So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.
Good News Bible (TEV)	<b>Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau</b> As Jacob went on his way, some angels met him. When he saw them, he said, "This is God's camp"; so he named the place Mahanaim.
<i>The Message</i>	And Jacob went his way. Angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them he said, "Oh! God's Camp!" And he named the place Mahanaim (Campground).
Names of God Bible	<b>Jacob Sends Messages and Gifts to Esau</b> As Jacob went on his way, <b>Elohim's</b> angels met him. When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is <b>Elohim's</b> camp!" He named that place Mahanaim [Two Camps].
NIRV	<b>Jacob Gets Ready to Meet Esau</b> Jacob also went on his way. The angels of God met him. Jacob saw them. He said, "This is the army of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim.
New Simplified Bible	Along the way God's angels met Jacob. When he saw them, Jacob said: »This is God's camp!« He named that place Mahanaim.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	<b>JACOB PREPS FOR A NERVOUS REUNION</b> <b>Angel campout</b> As Jacob continued his trip, angels came to meet him. Jacob saw them and said, "This is God's camp." He named the place Two Camps [Hebrew: <i>Mahanaim</i> .].
Common English Bible	<b>Jacob prepares to meet Esau</b> Jacob went on his way, and God's messengers approached him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp," and he named that sacred place Mahanaim.
Contemporary English V.	As Jacob was on his way back home, some of God's angels came and met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." So he named the place Mahanaim.

<sup>51</sup> Many of these Bibles fall into 2 or more categories. The CEV, for instance, is **approved** by the Catholic Church, it is a limited vocabulary Bible, and it is a paraphrase, for the most part.

The Living Bible	So Jacob and his household started on again. And the angels of God came to meet him. When he saw them he exclaimed, "God lives here!" So he named the place "God's territory!"
New Berkeley Version	As Jacob resumed his travel, God's angels met him and when Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp," and named that place, Mahanaim."
New Life Version	Jacob went on his way, and God's angels met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp!" So he gave the place the name Mahanaim.
New Living Translation	As Jacob started on his way again, angels of God came to meet him. When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed, "This is God's camp!" So he named the place Mahanaim.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, as Jacob [was about to] continue on his journey, he looked up and saw the camp of the army of God, and a messenger of God [coming to] meet him. And when Jacob saw this, he said: 'Why, this [place] is the campground of God!' So he named that place, <i>The Campgrounds</i> .
Beck's American Translation	<b><i>Jacob Sends Greetings to Esau</i></b> As Jacob was traveling along, he met God's angels. When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is God's army," and he called the place Mahanaim ["Two armies" or "Two Groups"].
International Standard V	<b><i>Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau</i></b> As Jacob went on his way, angels from God met him [This v. is 32:2 in MT, and so through v. 33]. As he was watching them, Jacob said, "This must be God's camp," so he named that place Mahanaim [The Heb. name <i>Mahanaim</i> means <i>two camps</i> ].
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Jacob, too, set out to continue his journey, and as he went, God's angels met him. This is God's encampment, he said when he saw them, and called the place Mahanaim, which means a Camp.
Translation for Translators	<b>Jacob sent gifts to Esau as he prepared to meet him</b> As Jacob and his family continued traveling, some angels, whom God sent, met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's army camp!" So he named that place Mahanaim, <i>which means "two camps."</i> 6

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob is to have gone on his journey, and the angelic messengers of he of mighty ones was to meet him. Jacob was to see them, and was to say: This is to be he of mighty ones encampment. He was to call the name of the place Mahanaim.
Conservapedia	Jacob went on his way, and Messengers of God [These are the angels.] came upon him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God!" And he named that place Mahanaim [Which in Hebrew literally means "two camps," being the dual form of the word for "camp."].
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Laban then rose up in the morning, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them, and went and returned to his own place. But Jacob continued his journey; and a Messenger of GOD met him. So Jacob said, " What a glorious encampment of God this place is ! " — therefore he called the name of that place, " The Encampment."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Jacob sware by him that his father Isaac feared. Then Jacob did sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and tarried all night in the hill. And early in the morning Laban rose up and kissed his children and his daughters, and blessed them and departed and went unto his place again. But Jacob went forth on his journey. And the angels of God came and met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said: this is Gods host: and called the name of that same place, Mahanaim. This is the final paragraph in Genesis 31 in Tyndale's Bible.
HCSB	Preparing to Meet Esau

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

H. C. Leupold

### CHAPTER XXXII

(8) Preparations for Meeting Esau (31:55-32:32)

And Laban arose early in the morning and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Thereupon Laban went and returned to his place; whereas Jacob continued along his route. And angels of God met him; and Jacob said, when he saw them: This is God's host. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim (double host or camp).

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):** Several Catholic Bibles begin this chapter with Genesis 31:55.

The Heritage Bible

And Jacob walked on his way, and the messengers of God impinged upon him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's army, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

New American Bible(2011)<sup>52</sup>

Early the next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he set out on his journey back home. Meanwhile Jacob continued on his own way, and God's angels encountered him. When Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's encampment." So he named that place Mahanaim [Mahanaim: a town in Gilead (Jos 13:26, 30; 21:38; 2 Sm 2:8; etc.). The Hebrew name means "two camps." There are other allusions to the name in vv. 8, 11.]. The NAB begins this chapter with Genesis 31:55.

[32:1–22] Jacob's negotiations with Esau. Laban kisses his daughters and grandchildren good-bye but not Jacob. On leaving Mesopotamia, Jacob has an encounter with angels of God (vv. 2–3), which provokes him to exclaim, "This is God's encampment," just as he exclaimed upon leaving Canaan, "This is the house of God, the gateway to heaven" (28:11–17).

New Jerusalem Bible

Early next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban left to return home. While Jacob was going on his way, angels of God encountered him, and on seeing them he said, 'This is God's camp,' and he named the place Mahanaim. The NJB begins this chapter with Genesis 31:55.

Revised English Bible

As Jacob continued his journey he was met by angels of God. When he saw them, Jacob exclaimed, "This is the company of God," and he called that place Mahanaim.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:** Some Jewish Bibles begin this chapter with Genesis 31:55.

Complete Jewish Bible

**(Maftir)** Early in the morning Lavan got up, kissed his sons and daughters, and blessed them. Then Lavan left and returned to his own place. Ya'akov went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Ya'akov saw them, he said, "This is God's camp," and called that place Machanayim [two camps]. Genesis 31:55 is included for context.

exeGesés companion Bible

### **ANGELS OF ELOHIM ENCOUNTER YAAQOV**

And Yaaqov goes on his way  
and the angels of Elohim encounter him:  
and when Yaaqov sees them, he says,  
This is Camp Elohim!  
- and he calls the name of that place  
Machanayim/Double Camp.

Hebraic Roots Bible

And Jacob went on his way, and the cherubs of Elohim met him. And when he saw them, Jacob said, This is the camp of Elohim. And he called the name of that place, Mahanaim (Two Camps).

<sup>52</sup> Also called the revised edition.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Early in the morning, Laban kissed his sons and daughters and bade them good-by; then Laban left on his journey homeward. Jacob went on his way, and angels of God encountered him. When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim. The Jewish Bible begins this chapter with Genesis 31:55.
Kaplan Translation	<i>Jacob's Journey, Marriage and Children</i> Laban got up early the next morning and kissed his grandsons and daughters goodbye. He then blessed them and left to return home. Jacob also continued on his way. He encountered angels of God [According to others, 'divine messengers,' a welcoming committee sent by Rebecca (Sefer HaYashar), p.82)]. When Jacob saw them, he said, 'This is God's camp.' He named the place Twin Camps (Mahanaim) [It was a city on the border between Gad and Manasseh, associated with Ramath-Mitzpeh (Joshua 13:26, 13:30). Also see Joshua 21:38, 1 Chronicles 6:65; 2 Samuel 2:8, 2:12, 2:29, 17:24,27. Some identify Machanaim with Khirbath al-Makhna, 2.5 miles north of Aijalon, which would place it 14 miles north of the Jabbok River, and 10 miles east of the Jordan. Jacob was thus apparently headed toward the juncture of the Jordan and the Jabbok. According to others, however, Machanaim was actually on the Jabbok River.]. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions. The Jewish Bible begins this chapter with Genesis 31:55.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov went on his derech, and the malachim of Elohim met him. And when Ya'akov saw them, he said, This is Mahaneh Elohim; and he called the shem of that makom (place) Machanayim.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Ya'aqob went on his way, and the messengers of Elohim met him. And when Ya'aqob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of Elohim." And he called the name of that place Maḥanayim.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	<b>Jacob's Fear of Esau</b> Then as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him [to reassure and protect him]. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim (double camps).
The Expanded Bible	<b>Jacob Meets Esau</b> When Jacob also went his way, the angels [messengers] of God met him. When he saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim [ <sup>c</sup> sounds like "two camps" in Hebrew; a city in the hill country of Gilead; Josh. 13:26, 30].
Kretzmann's Commentary	<b>Verses 1-8</b> The Messengers to Esau And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him, literally, they came up with him, joined him. Their protection had shielded him on Mount Gilead, and the meeting with them at this time gave him the assurance of their further assistance. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim (double host). He thus commemorated in the name of the place where he was shown this vision the fact that the army of the Lord joined his own little band for the sake of protection. The camp of the angels may have been invisible to all eyes but his own, but he had received his encouragement nevertheless, and went his way with greater cheer.
NET Bible®	<i>Jacob Wrestles at Peniel</i> So Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed [ <i>Heb</i> "and Jacob said when he saw them."], "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most

of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. Language footnotes will be placed in the Hebrew exegesis. Some footnotes will be quoted elsewhere in this document.

The Pulpit Commentary

**And Jacob** (after Laban's departure) **went on his way** (from Galeed and Mizpah, in a southerly direction towards the Jabbok), **and the angels of God**—literally, the messengers of Elohim, not chance travelers who informed him of Esau's being in the vicinity (Abarbanel), but angels (cf. Psalm 104:4)—**met him**. Not necessarily came in an opposite direction...but simply fell in with him, lighted on him. **And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host:**—Mahaneh Elohim; i.e. the army (cf. Genesis 1:9; Exodus 14:24) or camp (1Samuel 14:15; Psalm 27:3) of God, as opposed to the Mahanath, or bands of Jacob himself (vide Genesis 32:7, Genesis 32:10)—**and he called the name of that place Manahan.**—i.e. Two armies or camps.

The Voice

**Jacob went on his way as well. As he went, messengers of God met him *along the way*. When Jacob saw them, he acknowledged that this was God's camp, so he named that place Mahanaim, *which means "two camps."***

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> had walked to his road and messengers of Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> reached him,...

Footnote: - This verse is the first verse of chapter 32 in Hebrew Bibles but in English Bibles this verse is the last verse (55) of chapter 31. For the remainder of this chapter the verse numbers in English Bibles will be one number lower. For instance, verse 32:5 in the Hebrew Bible will be 32:4 in English Bibles.

...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> said just as he saw them, this is the campsite of Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> and he called out the title of that place Mahhanayim <sup>[Two camps]</sup>,...

Concordant Literal Version

**And Jacob goes his way. And seeing in a vision, he sees the camp of the Elohim encamped. And coming upon him are messengers of the Elohim. And saying is Jacob as he sees them, "The camp of the Elohim is this!" And calling is he the name of that place Mahanaim.**

English Standard Version

**Jacob Fears Esau**

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

NASB

**Jacob's Fear of Esau**

Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim.

New European Version

**Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau**

Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When he saw them, Jacob said, This is God's army. He called the name of that place Mahanaim.

New King James Version

**Esau Comes to Meet Jacob**

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

Third Millennium Bible

And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's host." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim [that is, Two hosts or camps].

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob has gone on his way, and messengers of God come upon him. And Jacob says, when he has seen them, "This is the camp of God;" and he calls the name of that place "Two Camps."

**The gist of this passage:**

Jacob, traveling back to the Land of Promise, encounters the angels of God. He names that place, *Mahanaim*, which means, *two camps*

### Genesis 32:1a (= Genesis 32:2a in the Hebrew)

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ăuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
derek <sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1870 BDB #202

Between vv. 1a and 1b, the Greek has: ...and having looked up, he saw the host of God encamped...

**Translation:** So Jacob went on his way...

In Genesis 31, Jacob finally broke totally free from Laban. In the final years of working for Laban, Jacob believed that he had been giving him a raw deal. Therefore, Jacob packed and left in the middle of the night, timing this in such a way that Laban would not know he was gone for several days. However, Laban did eventually discover this, he and some of his men rode out to find Jacob and they did. Laban caught up to Jacob when he was in the hill country of Gilead. Although Laban had many issues with Jacob, one of them was the removal of some of his figurines which he calls *gods*. Rachel stole them and she is not discovered. When Laban was unable to find the figurines, he began to reduce his bluster and Jacob dialed his own up a notch or two.

Even setting aside this problem with the figurines, both men believed that they had a lot to complain about concerning one another. So, after a lot of shouting and expressing of opinions, Jacob and Laban pretty much came to an agreement. Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren goodbye, and he returned to Padan-aram. We pick things up here right after he and Jacob go their separate ways. Jacob continues on his way back to Canaan, as God had ordered him.

### Genesis 32:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 32:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
pāga <sup>c</sup> (פגַע) [pronounced paw-GAHḠ]	<i>to fall upon, to meet, to encounter, to reach; to entreat [by request], to assail [with a petition], to urge; to strike, to kill, to slay; to touch out of boundary; to reach [to anyone]; to strike a covenant [with someone], to make peace</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6293 BDB #803
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
mal <sup>o</sup> āk <sup>e</sup> (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced mah <sup>o</sup> -AWK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isaiah 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "Angels" is the noun mal'akh...which means, "messenger" is used in the Old Testament with reference to "elect" angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the "preincarnate" Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1). <sup>53</sup>			
ʾĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...and [an encampment of] Elohim's angels met with him.

This is very odd, in my opinion. First of all, the verb found here is often a verb used for an aggressive encounter (but not always). We do not have any interaction which is recorded between Jacob and the angels; nor do we know if Jacob's wives or children could see these angels (the implication I get from the narrative is, this is something only Jacob saw). Yet, even though there appears to be no direct interaction between Jacob and the angels, God the Holy Spirit uses the verb pāga<sup>c</sup> (פגַע) [pronounced paw-GAHḠ], which means, *to fall upon, to meet, to encounter, to reach; to entreat [by request], to assail [with a petition], to urge; to strike, to kill*. Strong's #6293 BDB #803. Although I do not believe that there was any interaction between Jacob and the angels (none is recorded), I believe the use of this word is to suggest that this is more to Jacob than simply a vision. I believe that the camp was really there and Jacob was being allowed to see what the rest of us do not see.

Clarke: *Our word angel comes from the Greek ἀγγελος aggelos, which literally signifies a messenger; or, as translated in some of our old Bibles, a tidings-bringer. The Hebrew word מַלְאָךְ malach, from לָאָךְ laach, to send, minister to, employ, is nearly of the same import; and hence we may see the propriety of St. Augustine's remark:... "It is a name, not of nature, but of office;" and hence it is applied indifferently to a human agent or messenger, 2Samuel 2:5; to a prophet, Haggai 1:13; to a priest, Mal. 2:7; to celestial spirits, Psalm 103:19, Psalm 103:20, Psalm 103:22; Psalm 104:4.*<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1.

Clarke further suggests that these angels have the appearance of man *surrounded or accompanied by light or glory, with or in which Jehovah was present*. We don't know that there is a certainty of this; but it is not unreasonable. Jacob had seen angels before, and he sees these and recognizes them.

Angels existed several billion years before we were on this earth (I say this based upon the age of the earth and based upon the fact that the angels dwelt on the earth with the dinosaurs before we did. Because many of them fell and became degenerate, God packed the earth in ice. For those that fell, there had to be judgment and for those who did not fall, there needed to be a revealing of God's love tempered with His justice. Angels who fell are called demons and they operate more or less under Satan's authority with their attempts to vex the Christian (although, most Christians can be left alone because they will shoot themselves in the foot without any help) and they attempt to usher in a world of lustful satisfaction, unity, brotherhood and world peace, with severe punishment for those who do not want to go along with Satan's program.

The word for angels (v. 1) and messengers (v. 6) in the Hebrew is the same: mal'âk (מַלְאָךְ) [pronounced *mal-AWK*] and it can mean *messenger, one sent with a message, a prophet (inasmuch as they are sent with a message, angel, as well as a theophanic angel (Jesus Christ prior to His incarnation)*. These are likely angels because nothing of the conversation is recorded. Therefore, their message was non-verbal. I believe that Jacob was to see them and have confidence in the protection and guidance of God.

Genesis 32:1 So Jacob went on his way and [an encampment of] Elohim's angels met with him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:1–2 So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

### Genesis 32:1b: General comments about angels (various commentators)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *[E]lect angels are employed by God to guard (Genesis 3:24), to communicate with God's people (Genesis 18:1) and to protect God's people (Genesis 19:1-22; 28:10-15).*<sup>55</sup>

David Guzik: *Angels, though "higher" beings than us, are ordained by God to be our servants (Hebrews 1:14) and they minister to us even as they ministered to Jesus (Matthew 4:11). In 2Kings 6:15–17 Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the tremendous angelic host surrounding them.*

Guzik then provides a more recent example, which comes from a Billy Graham book: *John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands, told of how one night hostile natives surrounded his missions headquarters, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. He and his wife prayed through the entire night, and when daylight finally came, their attackers all left. A year later, the chief of the tribe became a Christian, and Paton asked the man about that night. The chief replied, "Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary explained only he and his wife were there. The chief insisted he had seen hundreds of big men with shining garments and swords circling the mission headquarters, so the natives were afraid to attack (Billy Graham in *Angels, God's Secret Agents*, page 3). That night in the New Hebrides Islands, there certainly was a "double camp"!*<sup>56</sup>

As an aside, when it comes to signs, wonders and unusual events during the post-canon Church Age, I tend to be skeptical, particularly when a person's life is filled with miraculous doings. However, an unusual occurrence during an extreme circumstance—that does not seem unlikely to me. God has the same power today as when He empowered His Son. However, during the Church Age, God tends to allow most of His power to be revealed by His Word.

<sup>55</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>56</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:1–2.

### Genesis 32:1b: General comments about angels (various commentators)

Furthermore, in the example above, these angels are with us. These angels with Jacob—they did not just show up the night before he met Esau. They have been with him all along. They simply revealed their presence to Jacob. No doubt, the same was true of Paton's experience.

Angels are used by God as special messengers, revealing His Word. They provide protection; they act on God's orders to do things.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:1–2 [So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place Mahanaim.](#)

### 3 Points on Angels (Adam Clarke)

Angels with feigned names, titles, and influences, have been and still are invoked and worshipped by a certain class of men; because they have found that God has been pleased to employ them to minister to mankind; and hence they have made supplications to them to extend their protection, to shield, defend, instruct, etc. This is perfectly absurd

1. They are God's instruments, not self-determining agents.
2. They can only do what they are appointed to perform, for there is no evidence that they have any discretionary power.
3. God helps man by ten thousand means and instruments; some intellectual, as angels; some rational, as men; some irrational, as brutes; and some merely material, as the sun, wind, rain, food, raiment, and the various productions of the earth. He therefore helps by whom he will help, and to him alone belongs all the glory; for should he be determined to destroy, all these instruments collectively could not save. Instead therefore of worshipping them, we should take their own advice: See thou do it not - Worship God.

In short, angels are not designed for us to worship.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 32:2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The angels are there to give Jacob confidence in all that has occurred. They are also his guardian angels. God uses angels in many different ways, and one of those ways is to provide us with protection. Jacob is about to face a real spiritual battle in which he will weigh the pros and cons of a particular action and he will have the clear choice to believe God and to take God at His Word or to take the low road of human viewpoint. Such a choice is extremely relevant to our lives today.

Interestingly enough, Jacob has been able to see angels on at least two occasions. Although Abraham ate a meal with the Revealed Lord and two angels, it is not clear that he knew that these were angels (although, at some point, he must have, since that fact is recorded in Scripture).

Jacob, on the other hand, when he was leaving the Land of Promise, he came across an elevator/escalator where angels were transported between heaven and earth. Here, upon his return, angels meet him.

Genesis 32:1 [So Jacob went on his way and \[an encampment of\] Elohim's angels met with him.](#)

I believe that the proper response of Jacob should have been one of increased confidence. No matter what he was facing, parked right next to his camp was an encampment of angels. Jacob's faith will appear to be initially bolstered by this, and he will name this, *The Place of Two Camps*. Unfortunately, as so often happens, Jacob will

revert to human viewpoint and try to appeal to Esau through bribery. God is there; Jacob is protected by Him; but Jacob simply does not fully believe that.

In this case, the MKJV says: *and the angels of God met him*. This is the masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *pāga*<sup>57</sup> (פָּגַע) [pronounced *paw-GAHG*], which means *to fall upon, to meet, to encounter, to reach; to entreat [by request], to assail [with a petition], to urge; to strike, to kill, to slay; to touch out of boundary; to reach [to anyone]; to strike a covenant [with someone], to make peace*. Strong's #6293 BDB #803. Although this is rather a momentous event, we are not really told much about it, apart from the fact that it did occur. We know that Jacob records this event; and it appears that the angels initiate the event (they are the subject of the verb).

Jacob could have *seen* the angels; but that verb was not used. Given the verb used here, there appears to be some sort of interaction or more occurring than simply seeing the camp of angels; but what happened more than that is not defined.

Whatever interactions that Jacob is having here, we are not privy to that. The word, often used for two armies coming face to face, has such a wide variety of uses that it is nearly impossible to specify exact what interactions—if any—took place. Twice in this passage, Jacob is said *to see* them; which suggests that there was no actual interaction between the two camps (Jacob's camp and the Angels' camp).

Given the verb and given that angels are the subject of the verb, this is more than Jacob looks out in the distance and sees an encampment of angels. But what they actually do here is not clear. One possible guess is, they act as a welcoming committee of sorts. Another is, they are there providing Jacob with protection.

However, exactly what they do or say is not clear; and Jacob will make a statement in v. 2, but that statement does not appear to be directed toward the angels. Jacob will see them; he will correctly identify them (although we do not know if he speaks to himself or to others who are with him).

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The phrase "angels of God" refers to the elect angels of God since: (1) If the preincarnate Christ were in view, the singular form of the noun mal'akh would be used and not the plural form as it is here. (2) Jacob names the place "the camp (army) of God" ruling out a reference to human beings. (3) The noun Elohim, "God" stands in apposition to the noun mal'akh, "angels."*<sup>57</sup>

The text of Genesis 32 does not tell us exactly why Jacob is seeing these angels (or meeting them). Now, even though the Hebrew says that these angels *met with him*, this is not the same thing as a meeting you or I might take. Jacob is not being taken through the camp, meeting each angel, shaking their hand (wing?), and then moving on to the next angel.

Benson reasonably suggests<sup>58</sup> that only Jacob could see them; and that seems the most likely situation.

Genesis 32:1 So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him.

### Genesis 32:1b: Why the angels were seen by Jacob (various commentators)

Benson suggests that this is like the magistrates of a city coming out to greet an anticipated and elevated visitor. You will recall that, as Jacob was leaving the Land of Promise, the angels also appeared to him. He had a vision of the ladder/escalator of God, with angels going up and coming down. Here, they welcome home the man and his sons—all of whom would make up the Hebrew people—they and their descendants.

<sup>57</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1.

### Genesis 32:1b: Why the angels were seen by Jacob (various commentators)

Clarke: *For what purpose the angels of God met Jacob, does not appear from the text; probably it was intended to show him that he and his company were under the care of an especial providence, and consequently to confirm his trust and confidence in God.*<sup>59</sup>

Arthur Pink: *But at this juncture God's host made its appearance, as though to show him to whom he owed his recent escape, and as if to further assure him that He who had delivered, did deliver, and he might safely trust would deliver him...[This situation] reminds us of the experience of the Children of Israel in the wilderness, centuries later, when the Pillar of Cloud went before them by day, and the Pillar of Fire protected their rear by night.*<sup>60</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *The appearance of this invisible host may have been designed to celebrate Jacob's triumph over Laban, as after Christ's victory over Satan in the wilderness angels came and ministered unto him (Rupertus, Wordsworth), or to remind him that he owed his deliverance to Divine interposition (Calvin, Bush, Lange), but was more probably intended to assure him of protection in his approaching interview with Esau (Josephus, Chrysostom, Rosenm ller, Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), and perhaps also to give him welcome in returning home again to Canaan (Kurtz), if not in addition to suggest that his descendants would require to fight for their inheritance (Kalisch).*<sup>61</sup>

I believe that these angels were both a welcoming party and there to give Jacob confidence in God, as he is about to meet Esau.

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Benson further suggests that these angels have been with Jacob all along. Remember, he was not just guided to the homeland of his Uncle Laban but the first woman that he sets eyes on is the woman that he loves and will marry. No doubt, there was a great deal of divine guidance in all of that.

We also have the oddity that Jacob in his dream, when going to Padan-aram, dreamed of angels going up and down between earth and heaven. My point is, it is odd for Jacob to—for reasons which I cannot explain yet—to have encounters with angels as opposed to encounters with the **Revealed God** (as the **Angel of God**). However, Jacob will encounter the Revealed God at the end of this chapter—the Man who wrestles with Jacob until dawn.

Considering this entire chapter, I believe that God revealed these angels to Jacob with the intent of giving him something to have confidence in. He will fear Esau and his 400 troops; and God wants Jacob to consider God's guidance and protection—something that Jacob has received all of his life.

Genesis 32:1–2 **So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place Mahanaim.**

### Genesis 32:1b: The invisible conflict before Jacob (various commentators)

Dr. John Gill: *These [angles] appeared in a visible form, most probably human, and in the habit, and with the accoutrements of soldiers, and therefore afterwards called an host or army. Aben Ezra thinks that Jacob alone saw them, as Elisha first saw the host of angels before the young man did that was with him, 2Kings 6:17.*<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>60</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_33.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_33.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

<sup>61</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 31:1.

<sup>62</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:2.

## Genesis 32:1b: The invisible conflict before Jacob (various commentators)

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *What a different scene is presented to him when his spiritual eye is opened, and God permits him to see those invisible forces which were engaged on his side.*<sup>63</sup>

The NET Bible: *The phrase angels of God occurs only here and in Gen 28:12 in the OT. Jacob saw a vision of angels just before he left the promised land. Now he encounters angels as he prepares to return to it. The text does not give the details of the encounter, but Jacob's response suggests it was amicable. This location was a spot where heaven made contact with earth, and where God made his presence known to the patriarch. See C. Houtman, "Jacob at Mahanaim: Some Remarks on Genesis XXXII 2-3," VT 28 (1978): 37-44.*<sup>64</sup>

Robert Dean: *Jacob has a vision that takes place in verse one that seems like God opens up his vision so that he sees not only what is going on in the physical world, the natural realm, but he also sees what is beyond that. God opens his eyes to reveal to him that God is protecting him. He is surrounded by this military encamped. This is what the word mahanaim often refers to, an encampment of an army. He is surrounded by this army of angels that are there to protect him. Why would he be so concerned about being protected? Because the last time that he was home in this land he was leaving as fast as he could because his brother Esau was breathing threats of murder. Jacob has no idea of the kind of reception he is going to have from Esau and he is fearful. So at the very beginning we see this hint of what is going on in the passage, this foreshadowing, that God is reminding Jacob that God and God alone is His protection and the one who is providing for him.*<sup>65</sup>

Chuck Smith: *In what form the angels met him here is not declared, just that the angels of God met him. Angels, it seems, are able to materialize and to speak to people. Actually in the book of Hebrews, we are told to be careful to entertain strangers. You might be entertaining angels without even knowing it.*<sup>66</sup>

Whedon: *Angels of God met him* — *How or in what form, we are not told. Some suppose he had another dream, like that at Beth-el; but the absence of any mention of dream, or night vision, and the statement in Genesis 32:2 that "Jacob saw them," argues rather that the vision was an open one by day. His eyes were probably opened, as were those of the servant of Elisha, (2Kings 6:17,) and he beheld all around him a host of the angels of God.*<sup>67</sup>

I see this as another revelation of the invisible conflict, as well as a reason to have faith in God's protection while in Canaan and while meeting Esau.

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Jacob now has three reasons to trust God in his venture westward: (1) God specifically told Jacob to go; (2) things with Laban were worked out satisfactorily; and (3) Jacob knows that he is camped right next an angel encampment. That in itself should be enough reason to have confidence.

There are two categories of angels: fallen and elect. The fallen angels have rejected the authority of God and have sinned; elect angels have not. This doctrine concentrates on the elect angels.

This doctrine is not the same as the Doctrine of the **Angelic Conflict**. That doctrine focuses more upon the warfare between the fallen and elect angels, and how it plays out in our own lives.

## Wenstrom and Ballinger on the Function of Angels

<sup>63</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>64</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 6, 2016.

<sup>65</sup> From [Dean Ministries](#), accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>67</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:1.

1. Angels are God's servants who are dispatched from the throne room of heaven to execute God's purposes. The ministry of the elect angels falls into several categories. Generally speaking, the elect angels: (1) Protect, (2) Provide, (3) Prepare, (4) Proclaim the Word of God and (5) Execute God's Judgments.
2. Angels are created spirit beings (Ps. 148:2, 5) in eternity past, (Job 38:4, 7) since the Lord Jesus Christ created the angels in eternity past (Col. 1:16). They are in eternity (present) a higher category of beings than humans are (Heb. 2:6-7), however, in eternity (future), redeemed humans will be a higher category of beings than the angels (Ps. 8:4-5).
3. There are innumerable angels (Heb. 12:22) and they do not die and neither does their number increase or decrease (Luke 20:36).
4. There are now 2 categories of angels in the cosmos: (1) Elect (2) Non-elect or fallen. The elect angels of God are arranged in ranks as well as
5. Wrapping one's head around the concept and function of angels, it might be best understood as, the CEO of a company delegates responsibilities to those under him. This does not mean that he is incapable of taking care of these responsibilities, nor does it mean that he is adverse to dealing with such things personally. In a large organization, the one at the top is primarily all about delegating responsibilities to those within the chain of command. Although this is not a perfect analogy, it may help us to understand God's use of the angels to take care of certain responsibilities.
6. In relation to God, the elect-angels perform the following services:
  - 1) They act as attendants around the throne of God, and are waiting to serve Him and do His bidding. Psalm 103:20 Isa. 6:1f Job 1:6 2:1 Rev. 5:11 8:1ff
  - 2) They continually, night and day, offer praise and worship God in heaven. Isa.6:3 Psalm148:1,2 Heb. 1:6 Rev.4:8; 5:11-12
  - 3) Some angels are observers who rejoice over what the Lord does. Job 38:6-7 Luke 2:12-13 15:10
  - 4) Some angels will function as soldiers in battle with Satan. Rev. 12:7
  - 5) Angels are used by the God as instruments to execute His judgments. Revelation 7:1 8:2
7. In relation to the nations, the elect-angels and non-elect angels perform the following services:
  - 1) Angels announce and inflict judgment (Sodom was a city-state). Genesis 19:13
  - 2) Michael, the archangel, is the guardian of the nation of Israel. Daniel 10:13, 21 12:1 Jude 9
  - 3) The non-elect angels rule over the Gentile nations (Daniel 4:17 Ephesians 6:11-16) and seek to influence their human leaders (Daniel 10:21 11:1).
  - 4) In the Tribulation the elect-angels will be the agents God uses to pour out His judgments. See Revelation 8-9 and 16.
8. Angels were quite active in the life and ministry of Jesus. In relation to Christ, the elect-angels perform the following services:
  - 1) Angels informed Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds of Christ's birth. Luke 1:26-38 2:8-15 Matt.1:20
  - 2) An angel warned Joseph to take Mary and the baby Jesus and flee into Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15), and an angel directed the family to return to Israel after Herod died (vv. 19-21).
  - 3) Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation. Matt.4:11
  - 4) An angel strengthened Him in Gethsemane (obviously, this would be strengthening Jesus in His humanity—in this case, the resolve of His humanity). Luke22:43
  - 5) Angels were poised to deliver Him from His enemies. Matt.26:53
  - 6) An angel rolled the stone from the empty tomb. Matt.28:1-7
  - 7) Angels announced His resurrection to the women on Easter morning. Matthew 28:5-6 Luke 24:5-7
  - 8) Angels were present at His ascension and gave instruction to the disciples. Acts 1:10-11
  - 9) Angels ascended with Him into heaven. Acts 1:11
9. In relation to His coming again, the elect-angels perform the following services:
  - 1) The voice of the archangel will be heard at the translation of the church. 1Thess. 4:16
  - 2) They will accompany Him in His glorious return to earth. Matt. 25:31 2Thess. 1:7
  - 3) They will separate the wheat from the tares (the righteous from the unrighteous) at Christ's second coming. Matt. 13:39-40
  - 4) Angels announce and inflict judgment. Rev. 14:6-7 Acts 12:23 Rev. 16:1
10. Angels in relationship to some individual believers:

- 1) The angels delivered Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom. Genesis 19
  - 2) Angels prepared the way for the servant of Abraham who went to find a wife for Isaac. Genesis 24
11. In relationship to the believer, angels have done/will do the following:
- 1) Angels protect and deliver God's people. Hebrews 1:14 Daniel 6:22 Psalm 91:11 Genesis 19:11 Acts 12:11 Matthew 18:10
  - 2) They guide and encourage believers. Matthew 28:5-7 Acts 8:26 27:23,24
  - 3) They interpret God's Word to men (no longer an issue with the closing of the canon). Daniel 7:16 10:5,11 Zech.1:9,19 4:1,5 5:5-11 6:4,5
  - 4) There is the teaching angel of Revelation. This is a concentrated period of conflict, so that the accumulation of doctrine in a person's soul is not a lifetime endeavor. Rev.1:1 17:7 22:16
  - 5) Angels mediated the Law to Moses. Acts 7:53 Gal.3:19
  - 6) Angels carry the saved home when they die. Luke 16:22
  - 7) They execute judgment on individuals and societies (Acts 12:23 Gen. 19:12,13 Ezek. 9:1,5,7; note the active role they play in the judgments of the Tribulation, Rev. 16).
  - 8) Hebrews 1:14 describes ministry of the elect-angels "servant-spirits who are divinely commissioned and repeatedly dispatched for service on behalf of those who are destined to inherit salvation."
12. In relation to the Church:
- 1) Hebrews 1:14 describes ministry of the elect-angels "servant-spirits who are divinely commissioned and repeatedly dispatched for service on behalf of those who are destined to inherit salvation." In this, however, Scripture points to a number of specific ministries:
  - 2) The elect-angels bring answers to prayer. Acts 12:5-10
  - 3) They help in bringing people to the Savior. Acts 8:26; 10:3
  - 4) They may encourage in times of danger. Acts 27:23- 24
  - 5) They care for God's people at the time of death. Luke 16:22
  - 6) How some of these things occur in our own lives today is unknown; this is a set of activities which we do not observe in the post-canon period of the Church Age.
13. Interestingly enough, the doctrine of positional sanctification states that the church age believer is positionally higher than the angels by virtue of their union with Christ through the Baptism of the Spirit, which takes place at the moment of salvation (Ephesians 2:6).
14. In relation to the introduction of a new dispensation, angels are actively involved when God institutes a new epoch in history:
- 1) They joined in praise when the earth was created. Job 38:6-7
  - 2) They were involved in the giving of the Mosaic law. Gal. 3:19 Heb. 2:2
  - 3) They were active at the First advent of Christ. Matt. 1:20 4:11
  - 4) They were active during the early years of the church. Acts 8:26 10:3, 7 12:11
  - 5) They will be involved in events surrounding the Second advent of Christ. Matt. 25:31 Thess. 4:1
15. Angels as spectators.
- 1) They rejoice when even one sinner is saved. Luke 15:10
  - 2) They actually learn Bible Doctrine from the local church, taking a keen interest in our assembly. Ephesians 3:10 1Peter 1:12
  - 3) They observe all the affairs of men, and are pleased or offended, as the passage on hair suggests. 1Corinthians 11:10
  - 4) They took great interest in the incarnation. 1Timothy 3:16
16. The angelic hierarchy is divided into two categories:
- 1) The college of heralds and
  - 2) The angelic army. Most angels do not have wings. Wings are an insignia of rank.
    - (1) Seraphim have the highest rank with six wings (Isa. 6:2 Rev. 4:8).
    - (2) Cherubim have four wings, plus the uniform of wisdom (Gen. 3:24 Ezek 1, 10, 28ff).
17. Miscellaneous points:
- 1) We are never told to pray to angels or to depend upon angels. Our prayer and dependence is to be directed to God the Father; and, if angels are involved, then He will see to that.
  - 2) Although there is great angelic activity in the church age, they do not appear to be visibly manifest to us in the post-canon Church Age. Bear in mind, seeing an angel in the Old Testament was rare (just like miracles in the Old Testament were rare); such things appear to be even more rare in the

post-canon, New Testament period. Personally, I would be suspicious of anyone who claims to have seen an angel or witnessed a miracle. This does not mean that I doubt the power of God; but we live in a period of human history where His Word has eclipsed the manifestation of God's supernatural power. 2Peter 1:16–21

- 3) Furthermore, God is teaching angels as well; and there is no better way to teach someone than to have them actually do something. Illustrative of this: I recall seeing my father fix the brakes of my car on several occasions. However, a roommate, later on, told me how to fix my own brakes, but did not touch them himself. I learned how to do my own brakes from my roommate because of this approach.
- 4) Man cannot see angels for they are invisible but can be seen by man when God takes one of two actions: (1) He lifts the veil of the spiritual dimension (Genesis 28:10-15 32:1-2 2Kings 6:17). (2) He allows them to change their form to human (Heb. 13:2).
- 5) Angelic involvement in this earthly realm communicates God's essence and character to them as well.

I realize that angels may seem rather fantastic to some, but what in this universe is not fantastic? The sun, the existence of so much water on earth, that we are made of molecules whose size is too small to even imagine, airplanes, computers, birth and life itself?

From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=1163](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1163) accessed January 14, 2015

and <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angels.html> accessed January 14, 2015.

Also From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019. These points were occasionally edited and new material was added as well.

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I do not believe that what Jacob was a vision in the sense that, he did not see something that was not there. What Jacob saw was something which was there—but I don't think that anyone else could see it.

Genesis 32:1–2 So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

### Genesis 32:1: The angels were a sign of encouragement to Jacob (commentators)

Jamieson: *[T]his [experience of seeing angels] occurring to Jacob in his return to Canaan, was an encouraging pledge of the continued presence and protection of God: Psalm 34:7, Hebrews 1:14.*<sup>68</sup>

OTH: *Jacob was now receiving divine encouragement to meet the new dangers of the land he was entering. His eyes were opened to see a troop of angels, 'the host of God' sent for his protection, and forming a second camp beside his own; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim (the two camps or hosts).*<sup>69</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *[T]he presence of these elect angels would be a sign to Jacob of God's presence and protection from Esau and would therefore be a great encouragement to Jacob as he made his way back home. This vision of angels would reassure Jacob that God cares for him and was also still accessible to him as he encountered his brother Esau.*

Wenstrom continues: *Just as the angels appeared to Jacob in order to reassure him as he was leaving Canaan facing an unknown future (from the human perspective) and preparing to meet his deceitful uncle Laban who cheated him so the angels appear to Jacob again in order to reassure him as he faces the unknown (from the human perspective) and prepares to meet his old adversary, his twin brother Esau.*<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>69</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17. OTH = Old Testament History?

<sup>70</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

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## Genesis 32:2a (= Genesis 32:3a in the Hebrew)

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-ăguh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'ăsher (כִּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i> ] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, as just; because; according to what manner, in a manner as, when, about when</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this for example.			
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
machăneh (מַחֲנֵה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i> ]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
This is the first occurrence of this word in the Bible.			
Lange: <i>Why the angels are called hosts.</i>			
1. <i>From their multitude.</i>			
2. <i>From their order.</i>			
3. <i>From their power for the protection of the saints, and the resistance and punishment of the wicked.</i>			
4. <i>From their rendering a cheerful obedience as become a warlike host.</i> <sup>71</sup>			
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

<sup>71</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

**Genesis 32:2a (= Genesis 32:3a in the Hebrew)**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

**Translation:** When Jacob saw them, he said, "This [is] the army of Elohim."

Jacob sees a great number of angels; and this is the second time that he has seen so many angels. He says—and we do not know to whom he speaks—"This is the army of God."

Given the circumstances, this should give Jacob great confidence. Right there with him is the army of God. How could he fear his own brother if right beside him is an encampment of God's angels? However, the key to Jacob is, despite seeing the angels, he will not demonstrate confidence in God. We can see and hear a great many things; but our function in life depends upon our faith in the truth of God.

The impression here is that, Jacob is seeing so many angels. As we already know, he is not the poster boy for the spiritual life. He is, however, in the line of promise. All of his children will be the chosen of God. It is only logical that God protects His people.

Genesis 32:2a [When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God."](#)

**Genesis 32:2a: The angels are God's host (or, army) (various commentators)**

Benson: *This is God's host* — Or army; so the angels are justly called, because of their great number, their excellent order, their mighty power, and the service they perform for God and his church, for the protection of which they are sent.<sup>72</sup>

Benson also suggests that the angels appeared to Jacob in *two camps* (one in front and one behind); but that seems unlikely to me. The *two camps* spoken of would have been Jacob's camp and the camp of the angelic host.

The Cambridge Bible: *The Heb. word for "host" (mahaneh) is usually, and ought here to be, rendered "camp." The angels are regarded as the warriors of Jehovah; cf. the narrative in Joshua 5:13–15, and 1Kings 22:19; Psalm 103:21; Psalm 148:2.*<sup>73</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[A]ngels have this name from their number, order, strength, and military exploits they perform... The Jewish writers say, the host of God is 60,000, and that the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, never dwells among less.*<sup>74</sup>

Here, I am thinking of a camp of 10 or 20 angels; and ancient Jewish commentators believed that there were quite a few more than that. I would have no idea how anyone could come up with a number here.

We do have a similar situation in 2Kings 6:17 [Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.](#) (ESV) So this suggests quite a large army of angels.

<sup>72</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>73</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>74</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:2. Gill cites Bereshit Rabba, sect. 75. fol. 66. 1 for the number of angels.

I believe that the angels have always been there; and Jacob is simply being allowed to see them.

Related passages of Scripture: Joshua 5:14 2Kings 6:17 Psalm 34:7 103:21 148:2 Dan. 10:20 Luke 2:13.<sup>75</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Jacob has left Paddan-aram and his Uncle Laban, and is now at the cusp of Canaan. Laban, Jacob's uncle and father-in-law, caught up with him east of the Jordan and they came to an agreement and then parted, having agreed to a non-aggression pact.

At this time, Jacob is preparing to meet his estranged brother, Esau.

**God's timely revealing of Jacob's guardian angels:** One may reasonably ask, *why do the angels appear to Jacob now, but not previously with Laban?* First of all, the angels have always been with Jacob. Had he taken time to review his life, God has looked out for him in extraordinary ways, despite his inherent hardheaded nature (many of us can appreciate God's forbearance in this realm). With Laban, he always had a vested interest in Jacob's health and welfare, despite being so angry with him. Jacob was the husband of Laban's daughters and the father of his grandchildren. He had been a decent husband and father. Any harm coming to Jacob would have harmed Laban's daughters and grandchildren. Furthermore, this massive brood would have become Laban's responsibility had he done anything to Jacob. Furthermore, what child might not avenge the death of his father? So, Laban can yell, jump up and down, get right in Jacob's face and voice his displeasure; but raising a hand against Jacob would be a foolish thing for him to do.

Now, with Esau, things are much different. He has great power and prestige and he has threatened his brother Jacob's life for 20 years now. Whereas, Jacob did not really do much by way of harm to Laban, he certainly did to Esau. He seemed to have taken the blessing which should have been Esau's. Now, rationally speaking, this was a long time in the past and Esau has come out of it pretty well. But a long-standing hatred is not always rational.

God has always provided Jacob with the protection of these angels. God has been with Jacob throughout his life, despite his many and spectacular failures. Revealing these angels was to give Jacob confidence in God; but that confidence was not in Jacob's soul. Jacob has to have the inner spiritual depth to trust God, and that he lacks. Jacob needs the Bible doctrine in his soul—he needs a place in his soul where he can anchor his trust and confidence, but that is lacking.

God allowing Jacob to see these angels is an object lesson for us. We cannot depend upon exterior signs for our spiritual lives; we must develop spiritually from the inside out (which is the exact opposite approach of the tongues movement).

Genesis 32:1–2 So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

It comes down to this: what is the most real in your life? God's promises and provisions or the exigencies of daily life?

### Genesis 32:1–2: Jacob's Visible and Invisible World (T. H. Leale)

- I. JACOB'S VISIBLE WORLD. He had just escaped the persecutions of his father-in-law, and was now expecting to meet with a fiercer enemy in his brother. All was dread and anxiety.
- II. JACOB'S INVISIBLE WORLD. What a different scene is presented to him when his spiritual eye is

<sup>75</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:2.

## Genesis 32:1–2: Jacob's Visible and Invisible World (T. H. Leale)

opened, and God permits him to see those invisible forces which were engaged on his side. We are told that "the angels of God met him." He was weak to all human appearance; but he was really strong, for God's host had come to deliver him from any host of men that might oppose. The host of God is described as parting into two bands, as if to protect him behind and before; or to assure him that as he had been delivered from one enemy, so he would be delivered from another enemy, which was coming forth to meet him. Thus Jacob was taught—

1. To whom he owed his late mercies.
2. The true source of his protection.
3. His faith is confirmed. It is justified for the past, and placed upon a firmer basis for the future.

The Bible suggests that what you cannot see or feel is what is most real and most important in life.

*The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:1.

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Genesis 32:1–2 So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

A few minor observations:

### Observations About Jacob, God's Providence and God's Angels

1. Angels appear to Jacob on two occasions: when he is leaving the Land of Promise to go east; and when he returns to the land.
2. We should not infer from this that angels are only involved in Jacob's life when in the Land of Promise. When he went to Paddan-Aram, Jacob met and married his wives, and his children will become the heads the 12 tribes of Israel. God's part in all of this cannot be minimized. This massive camp of angels indicates this truth.
3. Many things occurred in Paddan-aram which clearly indicate that God is with Jacob, despite the goofy things that Jacob does. Whenever Laban tried to put one over on Jacob, God turned things to Jacob's favor.
4. This has confused readers for many years. Jacob had his own ideas in Paddan-aram (like the selective breeding of Laban's livestock), and people try to put that on God. Laban acted according to his volition, Jacob acted according to his own volition, and God acted according to His sovereignty, respecting the volition of the two men. You cannot line up Jacob's volition with God's sovereignty—in fact, much of Jacob's life is spent wrestling with God.
5. Now, even though Jacob was outside of the land of Canaan for 20 years, it stands to reason that God's agents, the angels, were also with Jacob all this time, even though they were never manifested to him in Paddan-aram. God did not manifest Himself to Jacob either in Paddan-aram until it was time for Jacob to leave that area.
6. Seeing these angels at this point in time should have given Jacob confidence, in addition to the fact that he possessed God's promises about the future of his seed. However, it is clear in this chapter that he still fears Esau. It appears that he might make some spiritual progress in the next chapter.
7. Recall that God promised Jacob, as he was leaving the Land of Promise: "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Gen 28:15; ESV)
8. Seeing the angels and perhaps by taking inventory of what God had provided Jacob during these intervening years, should have given Jacob great confidence that God has been with him all the time.
9. Despite being protected by these angels, Jacob sets that aside and approaches Esau with both a plan and a backup plan. Jacob continually wants to control a situation and manipulate those around him.
10. In other words, Jacob still trusts in himself, but not in God, in his day-to-day life.

## Observations About Jacob, God's Providence and God's Angels

11. In this chapter, Jacob will wrestle with the Lord Jesus Christ, which is an indication of what his life has been like up to this point. He is continually fighting the Lord Jesus Christ, even though God is on Jacob's side.

We may easily conclude that Jacob's relationship with God is much different than Abraham's relationship to God. Many of us find Jacob far more relatable than Abraham.

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Genesis 32:1–2a [So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God."](#)

How should Jacob receive these angels? What should be in his mind? His soul should be filled with confidence, not with fear. He should recognize that God has sent him angels to welcome him back into the Land of Promise. Jacob should not be worried about his estranged brother Esau, or about anything else that he might encounter. God is there with him.

Genesis 32:1–2a [So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God."](#)

### Genesis 32:1–2a: Jacob and the Angels (various commentators)

Dr. John Gill: *[T]he angels of God [are sent by God to Jacob]...to comfort and help him, to protect and defend him, to keep him in all his ways, that nothing hurt him, Psalm 91:11; these are ministering spirits sent forth by God to minister to his people, the heirs of salvation; and such an one Jacob was.*<sup>76</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Just as the angels ascending and descending had then represented to him the divine protection and assistance during his journey and sojourn in a foreign land, so now the angelic host was a signal of the help of God for the approaching conflict with Esau of which he was in fear, and a fresh pledge of the promise (ch. Genesis 28:15), 'I will bring you back to the land,' etc.*<sup>77</sup>

Barnes: *Twenty years ago Jacob saw the mystical ladder connecting heaven and earth, and the angels of God thereupon ascending and descending from the one to the other. Now, in circumstances of danger, he sees the angels of God on earth, encamped beside or around his own camp Psalm 34:8. He recognizes them as God's camp, and names the place Mahanaim, from the double encampment.*<sup>78</sup>

As an aside, Barnes calls this a vision. I don't see why this would not be considered something which really happened. Who knows if some of these *visions* merely allow us to look at what is actually occurring right next to us?

<sup>76</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1.

<sup>77</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17 (I am guessing that K-D refers to Keil and Delitzsch). Slightly edited.

<sup>78</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

## Genesis 32:1–2a: Jacob and the Angels (various commentators)

H. W. Beecher: *I did not see, early in the morning, the flight of all those birds that filled all the bushes and all the orchard trees, but they were there, though I did not see their coming, and heard their songs afterwards. It does not matter whether you have ministered to you yet those perceptions by which you perceive angelic existence. The fact that we want to bear in mind is, that we are environed by them, that we move in their midst. How, where, what the philosophy is, whether it be spiritual philosophy, no man can tell, and they least that think they know most about it. The fact which we prize and lay hold of is this, that angelic ministration is a part, not of the heavenly state, but of the universal condition of men, and that as soon as we become Christ's we come not to the home of the living God, but to the "innumerable company of angels."*<sup>79</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *The appearance of the angels to Jacob on his return from Haran, as on his journey...gives him the assurance of God's presence. In chap. 28 it was a dream; here we are told the angels "met him."*<sup>80</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Jacob recognized them as "God's host," and names the place "Mahanaim," meaning "two camps." Jacob had not yet learned that his interests ought to be merged with God's interests, therefore he considers God's "camp" separate from his.*<sup>81</sup>

David Guzik: *It was not as if God's angels just joined Jacob. They were with him the entire time. Now Jacob could see God's angels with him and it provided great encouragement.*<sup>82</sup>

Matthew Henry: *Those that keep in a good way have always a good guard; angels themselves are ministering spirits for their safety, Hebrews 1:14. Where Jacob pitched his tents, they pitched theirs about him, Psalm 34:7. They met him, to bid him welcome to Canaan again; a more honourable reception this was than ever any prince had, that was met by the magistrates of a city in their formalities. They met him to congratulate him on his arrival.*<sup>83</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *The angels represents YHWH's presence and protection.*<sup>84</sup>

Wesley: *[The angels] met him to congratulate his arrival, and his escape from Laban. They had invisibly attended him all along, but now they appeared, because he had greater dangers before him. When God designs his people for extraordinary trials, he prepares them by extraordinary comforts.*<sup>85</sup>

Whedon: *[Jacob] at once recognises them as the same class of heavenly powers that had appeared to him in the vision of Beth-el. He has around him his own company, no small host; and behold, he is also encompassed by another camp, God's company of holy watchers, set to guard and guide him in his way.*

Whedon then writes: *The great lesson of this event was that of the immanent providence of God. His angels ever guard the ways of his chosen.*<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:1.

<sup>80</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:1.

<sup>81</sup> From <https://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>82</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>83</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>84</sup> Paraphrased from Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>85</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 32:1.

<sup>86</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:2.

### Genesis 32:2b (= Genesis 32:3a in the Hebrew and so throughout)

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרַךְ) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
mâqôwm (מִוְקָם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHH</i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Although the KJV renders this word as *this* most of the time, BDB gives this usage with the definite article as properly *that*.

You will note that this is identical to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun.

Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced <i>makhk-uh-AH-yim</i> ]	<i>two camps; transliterated Mahanaim</i>	proper singular noun; location	Strong's #4266 BDB #334
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Obviously, this would be the first occurrence of this noun in Scripture.

**Translation:** *Therefore, he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

Jacob named this place Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced *makh-an-AH-yim*] and it means *two armies, two camps*. Jacob named it this because there was his group that was encamped there and the group of angels that were encamped there. We are slightly east of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea, although we do not know exactly where the original site was. As we will see in the future, Machānayim is frequently mentioned in connection with David.

Jacob actually called that place Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced *makhk-uh-AH-yim*], which is transliterated *Mahanaim*; and it means *two camps* (a reference to Jacob's camp and the camp of the angels). Strong's #4266 BDB #334.

Jacob so naming this place *two camps* is an interesting choice. This is somewhat thematic for this chapter.

### The Doctrine of Two Camps (Mahanaim)

1. Originally, there was his camp and Laban's camp—although they apparently camped in the same place

## The Doctrine of Two Camps (Mahanaim)

- when Laban came upon him (you will recall that they made a covenant between each other and then Laban spent the night there). Genesis 31
2. At this point in the narrative, there are two camps: Jacob's camp and the camp of the angels of God. Genesis 32:1–2
  3. Jacob will recognize that God has made him so prosperous that he is able to divide his own people into two camps. Genesis 32:8–10
  4. Later, Jacob will organize into two camps; one which is a present to Esau and the other which is his family. Genesis 32:13–16, 21–23
  5. When Jacob meets Esau, there will be two companies: Jacob's and Esau's. Genesis 33

Although Jacob had one intention for the use of Mahanaim, choosing this word was rather prophetic.

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Other than these camps being near one another, there does not appear to be any interaction whatsoever between Jacob and the angels of that camp. I don't think that there was; and it is my opinion that only Jacob could see them.

It is interesting that God spoke to Jacob on two occasions; but He is not spoken of here. The two camps would have been his own camp and that of the angels. Throughout Scripture, it is emphasized that we live side-by-side a plethora of angels.

Often in science fiction literature, there is the concept of two (or more) realities or dimensions existing side-by-side. This is actually not strictly science fiction; it is a reality. Angels do live among us, but in another dimension, so to speak. They can see us; we cannot see them (except in rare circumstances like this).

Most people watch some television, movies or DVD's. In fact, many people will binge-watch a series, watching an entire season in a few days. This is what angels do, they watch us. We provide for them the greatest morality play ever produced: human history. By watching us, angels learn about God, God's creation, free will, justice, righteousness and love.

Have you ever watched an historical movie and you found it satisfying, but you wonder just how much of the movie was Hollywood-ed up. Some people might actually reach for a history book, having their interest piqued by such a movie, wondering, *just what really happened?* Angels get to see what really happened. Furthermore, they have the added dimension of being right smack dab in the middle of the Angelic Conflict; and the added dimension of the reality of God (which most movies lack).

Genesis 32:2 *When Jacob saw them, he said, "This [is] the army of Elohim." Therefore, he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*

Genesis 32:2 *When Jacob saw them, he said, "This [is] the army of Elohim." Therefore, he called the name of that place Mahanaim.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:1–2 *So Jacob went on his way and [an encampment of] Elohim's angels met with him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This [is] the army of Elohim." Therefore, he called the name of that place Mahanaim.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:1–2 *So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place Mahanaim.* (Kukis paraphrase)

It is quite interesting that Jacob is, on two occasions, tied to angels. Remember when God first spoke to Jacob, Jacob observed angels traveling between heaven and earth. Here, he observes a camp of angels. I believe that both visions (using this word not suggesting that what Jacob saw was in any way false or unreal)<sup>87</sup> were designed to give Jacob perspective, hope and guidance. Throughout his life, Jacob found his feet mired in mud, and God revealed to him that there was far more to life than the mud which discolored his feet and ankles and sometimes slowed his journey.

It appears that quite a number of angels were assigned to Jacob because of his line; although it is not altogether clear what they did. We can only suspect what they did, based upon the Doctrine of Angels which we just studied.

No doubt, God, because He designated a line of promise, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, angels would be following this line with great interest.

We have studied this concept before; but the idea is, angels observe us. There are billions of angels, and a great many of them were observing Jacob and his life (which was none too impressive). Yet, directly from Jacob, would come God's chosen people, the Jews.

Jacob, upon seeing this encampment of angels, should have been filled with confidence and comfort. These angels represent both God's presence and protection.

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Genesis 32:2b [Therefore, he called the name of that place Mahanaim.](#)

### Mahanaim (Orville J. Nave)

1. Mahanaim is the place where Jacob had the vision of angels. Genesis 32:2
2. It is the town of, allotted to Gad. Joshua 13:26; Joshua 13:30
3. Mahanaim is one of the Levitical cities. Joshua 21:38
4. Ishbosheth establishes himself at, when made king over Israel. 2Samuel 2:8–12
5. David lodges at, at the time of Absalom's rebellion. 2Samuel 17:27–29; 1Kings 2:8

Orville J. Nave (1841-1917), A.M., D.D., LL.D. *Nave's Topics*; ©early 1900's; from e-Sword, topic: Mahanaim. Edited.

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Genesis 32:1–2 [So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place Mahanaim.](#)

### Mahanaim (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Mahanaim means two hosts, or, companies. The termination –aim [actually, yim] denotes the dual. Jacob here refers to the two "companies," or "encampments," one of the angels, and the other of his own followers. See also Genesis 32:7; Genesis 32:10.*<sup>88</sup>

MacLaren: *Long centuries after Jacob's experience at Mahanaim, another trembling fugitive found himself there, fearful, like Jacob, of the vengeance and anger of one who was knit to him by blood. When poor King David was flying from the face of Absalom his son, the first place where he made a stand, and where he remained during the whole of the rebellion, was this town of Mahanaim, away on the eastern side of the Jordan. Do you not think that to the kingly exile, in his feebleness and his fear, the very name of his resting-place would be an omen? Would he not recall the old story, and bethink himself of how round that other frightened man.*<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> I believe that Jacob saw what was really there.

<sup>88</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:2 (edited).

<sup>89</sup> Alexander MacLaren, D. D., Litt. D., *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

## Mahanaim (various commentators)

Robert Dean: *What we see here is that he has two camps. He calls it mahanaim, which is a dual ending in the Hebrew indicating two camps. It is a reference to the encampment of the angels and his own physical encampment. He knows from this that God is the source of his protection.*<sup>90</sup>

The NET Bible: *The name Mahanaim apparently means “two camps.” Perhaps the two camps were those of God and of Jacob.*<sup>91</sup>

Matthew Poole: *Mahanaim, i.e. two hosts; so called, either because the angels divided themselves into two companies, and placed themselves some before, others behind him, or some on each side of him, for his greater comfort and security; or because the angels made one host, and his family another.*<sup>92</sup>

In my opinion, the two camps refers to a camp of angels and the camp of Jacob.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Mahanaim was afterwards a distinguished city, which is frequently mentioned, situated to the north of the Jabbok; and the name and remains are still preserved in the place called Mahneh (Robinson, Pal. Appendix, p. 166).*<sup>93</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *Mahanaim, afterwards a distinguished city in the territory of Gad (Joshua 13:26), and frequently referred to in subsequent Scripture (2Samuel 2:8; 2Samuel 17:24; 27; 2Samuel 19:32; 1Kings 4:14), as well as mentioned by Josephus ('Ant.' 7. 9, 8).*<sup>94</sup>

C. I. Scofield: *Mahanaim...is, two hosts, or bands -- the visible band, Jacob and his servants; the invisible band, God's angels. Compare (2Kings 6:13-17).*<sup>95</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *“Mahanaim” is the proper noun machanayim...(makh-ah-na-yim), which means, “two camps,” referring to Jacob’s human encampment and the angels encampment and was located on the Jabbok River, along which the major east-west trade route connecting the Trans-jordan King’s Highway and the coastal Via Maris run.*<sup>96</sup>

We don't know if this place of Jacob's matches exactly with the Mahanaim found later in Scripture.

Scriptures on Mahanaim: Joshua 21:38 2Samuel 2:8, 12 17:24, 2Samuel 17:26–27 1Kings 2:8 4:14.<sup>97</sup>

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Genesis 32:1–2 So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, “This is the army of God.” Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

<sup>90</sup> From [Dean Ministries](#), accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>91</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 6, 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>93</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>94</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>95</sup> C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>96</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>97</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:2.

## Genesis 32:2b: The location of Mahanaim (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Mahanaim was in later times a place of considerable importance. During Absalom's rebellion it was the residence and head-quarters of David; see 2Samuel 17:24; 2Samuel 17:27. Cf. 2Samuel 2:8; 2Samuel 2:12; 2Samuel 2:29; 1Kings 2:8. The site is uncertain: from Genesis 32:11 it would appear to be not far from the banks of the Jordan, and from Genesis 32:22 to lie north of the Jabbok (modern Zerka). In Joshua 13:26–30, it appears to lie on the confines of Gad and Manasseh.*<sup>98</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Mahanaim... was situated between mount Gilead and the Jabbok, near the banks of that brook.*<sup>99</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *Mahanaim...[is] mentioned by Josephus ('Ant.' 7. 9, 8), as a strong and beautiful city, has been identified with Mahneh, a deserted ruin six or seven miles north-west by north of Ajlun (Mount Gilead), and about twenty miles from the Jabbok; but the narrative appears to say that Mahanaim lay not north of Ga-leed, but between that place and Jabbok. Hence Porter suggests Gerasa, the most splendid ruin east of the Jordan, and bordering on the Jabbok, as occupying the site of Mahanaim.*<sup>100</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *Mahanaim was situated between Gilead and the river Jabbok, near the present Djezan.*<sup>101</sup>

Whedon: *The site of Mahanaim is probably the modern Maneh, on the north of mount Ajlun. It was on the border of Gad and Manasseh, (Joshua 13:26; Joshua 13:30,) and was a city of the Levites. Joshua 21:38. Here Ishbosheth, Saul's son, reigned two years.*<sup>102</sup>

A word of caution from Leupold: *Though Mahanaim is repeatedly mentioned in the Scriptures, we cannot be sure of its exact location. It must have lain somewhere east of Jordan near the confluence of the Jordan and the Jabbok. The present site Machneh often mentioned in this connection seems too far to the north.*<sup>103</sup>

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**Gen 32:1–2** Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim [= *two camps*]. (ESV)

Jacob then continued to travel west when the angels of God met him. He called this place *two camps*, because he had his camp and the angels had theirs.

Now let's pull this together with the last verse of the previous chapter: Gen. 31:55–32:2 **Early in the morning Laban arose and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned home. Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.** (ESV)

Laban goes east, returning home; Jacob goes west, returning home. There was very little for Laban to return to. He had sons; but remember, they were just as selfish as Laban, their father, was. The larger portion of Laban's family, married to or sired by Jacob, was going to Canaan. This would become the home of the Jewish people, just as God had promised Abraham, Jacob's grandfather.

<sup>98</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>99</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>100</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>101</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:2.

<sup>102</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:2.

<sup>103</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:-33:17.

Throughout all of this excursion, God has been with Jacob. Jacob seems to miss the big picture, but God has protected and prospered Jacob greatly. Gen. 30:43 **Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.** (ESV). God has promised to stay with Jacob the entire time, and it is clear that God has kept that promise (Genesis 28:15 31:3). And, after Laban leave, Jacob sees the camp of angels nearby, providing Jacob and his family with protection. If only Jacob could have placed his faith in God's unequivocal promises.

Genesis 32:1–2 **So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place Mahanaim.**

Genesis 32:1–2 **Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim.** (Jack M. Ballinger)

### **Genesis 32:1–2 Jacob Encounters Angels (Jack M. Ballinger)**

1. Jacob breaks camp and continues his livestock drive moving from the highlands of Gilead.
2. With Laban out of the picture Jacob has a fresh concern and that is a prospective encounter with his brother Esau.
3. Shortly into his renewed journey Jacob is met by a company of angels (v.1).
4. Separation from Laban is followed by an encounter with angels.
5. The term "met" (paga) has the nuance of a chance or unexpected encounter.
6. It is said that Jacob personally "saw them" suggesting perhaps that he was the only one in his entourage to catch visual contact with these "angels of Elohim."
7. Jacob even ascribes a name to the place where this chance encounter took place.
8. "Mahanaim" means "Two Camps."
9. Like the vision/dream where Jacob saw angels ascending and descending on a stairway to heaven there is no speech explaining their significance.
10. Unlike the vision at Bethel this viewing is a face to face encounter and not a visionary experience as in a dream.
11. In both instances Jacob names the place (e.g., Bethel/Mahanaim).
12. They encounter Jacob but say nothing.
13. They are merely there and silent.
14. Jacob upon seeing them declares, "This is God's camp!"
15. Jacob did not name the place "Mahaneh-Elohim" as in "God's camp."
16. The dual reference in the name ascribed by Jacob demonstrates that there are two camps namely, Jacob's and God's.
17. Clearly the purpose of this gracious encounter was designed to strengthen and encourage Jacob as he was getting ever closer to an encounter with his brother Esau.
18. The angels of God were there if need be to protect and deliver Jacob from any hostile force that he might encounter.
19. Jacob's preoccupation now is the threat posed by a vengeful Esau.
20. Jacob can also be encouraged by the deliverance he has just experienced from the hands of his antagonistic father-in-law.
21. It is irrational to think that God would deliver him from one danger only to be consumed by the threat that is looming on the horizon.
22. V. 2 is a reminder that God has guarding angels watching over the interests of God's people to act demonstrably on their behalf if God so directs.
23. Mahanaim is located east of the Jordan, on the border between the tribe of Manasseh and the tribe of Gad (Josh. 13:26, 30).
24. It served as a temporary residence for David following the Absalom coup (2Sam. 17:24, 27).
25. Jacob, like his father and grandfather, was beset by a strong fear grid.
26. Yet God had promised him protection and success both at the outset and at the conclusion of this Haran exile (Gen. 26:3 "I will be with you and bless you..." and Gen. 31:3 "Return to the land of your fathers and

## Genesis 32:1–2 Jacob Encounters Angels (Jack M. Ballinger)

to your relatives, and I will be with you.").

27. The inner struggle was between his STA and the promise of God.
28. Will he faith-rest the situation or will he engage in energy of the flesh to deal with the test?

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen32.htm> accessed March 2, 2019.

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Genesis 32:1–2 But Jacob went to his way, and the angels of elohiym met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, "this is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim. (Ron Snider)

## Summary Genesis 32:1–2 (by Ron Snider)

1. Having concluded matters with Laban and having closed the book on that association, Jacob continues his journey into Canaan proper.
2. When he arrives on the outskirts of what was officially Canaan, he is met by a company of angels.
3. He would certainly recognize them, since he had seen angels before at Bethel.
4. The vision then was designed to comfort and encourage Jacob at a difficult time in his life.
5. The appearance of these angels is designed to remind him of the fact that these powerful creatures are at the beck and call of God, and are busily engaged in supporting the believer.
6. They are ever present to protect the believer from enemies, both seen and unseen.
7. In commemoration of this event Jacob names the place "two camps".
8. The two camps were Jacob's relatively powerless nomadic group, and the angelic army.
9. This appearance was designed to strengthen him for the crisis he is soon to face with his brother.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

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## Jacob Sends a Message to Esau

Jacob has been out of the land for 20 years now; however, he left on bad terms with Esau. At the urging of his mother, Jacob pretended to be Esau in order to steal the blessing from his father that was meant for Esau. Therefore, at that time, Esau was ready to kill him. So, upon his return, 20 years later, Jacob wants to patch things up with Esau. Obviously, he does not want to live in fear of Esau killing him.

*Bowie: Having achieved reconciliation with Laban, Jacob now finds his old fears returning—those fears that sent him away from home in the first place. "This long passage is a vivid picture of a man who could not get away from the consequences of an old wrong. Many years before, Jacob had defrauded Esau. He had got away to a safe distance and he had stayed there a long time. Doubtless he had tried to forget about Esau, or at any rate to act as if Esau's oath to be avenged could be forgotten. While in Laban's country he could feel comfortable. But the time had come when he wanted to go back home."<sup>104</sup>*

<sup>104</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:-33:17.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Genesis 32:3-6 records Jacob sending a delegation to his brother Esau in order to communicate to him his desire to reconcile with him.*<sup>105</sup>

Jacob being cautious and circumspect upon his being reunited with Esau was rational.

Jacob meeting up with Esau more or less begins here (with Jacob's message to Esau) and goes to Genesis 33:16–17, where Esau returns home going south and Jacob continues going east into Canaan.

**And so sends Jacob messengers to his faces unto Esau his brother land-ward of Seir a country of Edom. And so he commands them, to say, "Thus you [all] will say to my adonai Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob: with Laban I have stayed and so I remain [there] until now. And so he is to me oxen and donkey, a flock and a male-servant and a maid-servant. And so I send to make known to my adonai to find grace in your [two] eyes.' "**

Genesis  
32:3–5

**Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir [in] the country of Edom. He instructed them, saying, "Thus will you say to my adonai Esau: 'So speaks your servant Jacob [to you]: I have stayed with Laban and I remained [with him] until now. I [now] have oxen and donkeys, flocks, male and female servants. Therefore, I am sending [my messengers] to know [if] I might find grace in the sight of my adonai.' "**

**Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: "This is what you will say to my lord Esau, 'This is a message from your servant Jacob: I have been staying with Laban, our uncle, all of this time. I now own oxen and donkeys and flocks, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my messengers to you in the hope that I might find grace in the sight of my lord.' "**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sends Jacob messengers to his faces unto Esau his brother land-ward of Seir a country of Edom. And so he commands them, to say, "Thus you [all] will say to my adonai Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob: <i>with Laban I have stayed and so I remain [there] until now. And so he is to me oxen and donkey, a flock and a male-servant and a maid-servant. And so I send to make known to my adonai to find grace in your [two] eyes.</i> ' "
Targum (Onkelos)	AND Jakob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir [Sam. Vers. gabla, (gebel,) "the mountain."], in the region of Edom; and he instructed them, saying, So shall you tell to my lord, to Esau: Thus saith thy servant Jakob, With Laban I have dwelt, and have tarried, until now. And I have oxen, and asses, sheep, and servants, and handmaids, and have sent to show my lord, to find grace in thine eyes.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Gabla the territory of the Edomites, and instructed them to say, Thus shall you speak to my lord Esau: Thus saith thy servant Jakob, With Laban have I dwelt, and have tarried until now. <u>And of all that in which my father blessed me there is nothing in my hand; but I have a few oxen and asses, sheep, and servants and handmaids; and I have sent to tell my lord that that blessing hath not profited me; that I may find mercy in thine eyes and that thou mayest not maintain (enmity) against me on account thereof.</u>
Revised Douay-Rheims	And he sent messengers before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir to the country of Edom: And he commanded them, saying: Thus shall ye speak to my lord

<sup>105</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

Esau: Thus said your brother Jacob: I have sojourned with Laban, and have been with him until this day. I have oxen, and asses, and sheep, and menservants, and women servants: and now I send a message to my lord, that I may find favour in your sight.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

Ya'aqub sent messengers in front of him to Esau, his brother, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. He commanded them, saying, "This is what you shall tell my lord, Esau: 'This is what your servant, Ya'aqub, says. I have lived as a foreigner with Laban, and stayed until now. I have cattle, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favour in your sight.'"

Peshitta (Syriac)

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall you speak to my lord Esau; Thus says your servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now; I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and maidservants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find mercy in your sight.

Septuagint (Greek)

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, to the country of Edom. And he charged them, saying, Thus shall you say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob; I have sojourned with Laban and tarried until now. And there were born to me oxen, and asses, and sheep, and men-servants and women-servants; and I sent to tell my lord Esau, that your servant might find grace in your sight.

Significant differences:

All the ancient versions are in agreement, except that one of the targums has a lot of additional text.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

Now Jacob sent servants before him to Esau, his brother, in the land of Seir, the country of Edom; And he gave them orders to say these words to Esau: Your servant Jacob says, Till now I have been living with Laban: And I have oxen and asses and flocks and men-servants and women-servants: and I have sent to give my lord news of these things so that I may have grace in his eyes.

Easy English

Jacob sent men with messages in front of him. He sent them to his brother Esau. He was in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. Jacob told his men, 'This is what you must say to my master Esau: Your servant Jacob says, "I have been staying with Laban. I have stayed there until now. I have cows and donkeys, sheep and goats. And I have male and female servants. Now I am sending this message to my lord so that you will be happy with me."'

Good News Bible (TEV)

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the country of Edom. He instructed them to say: "I, Jacob, your obedient servant, report to my master Esau that I have been staying with Laban and that I have delayed my return until now. I own cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and slaves. I am sending you word, sir, in the hope of gaining your favor."

*The Message*

Then Jacob sent messengers on ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir in Edom. He instructed them: "Tell my master Esau this, 'A message from your servant Jacob: I've been staying with Laban and couldn't get away until now. I've acquired cattle and donkeys and sheep; also men and women servants. I'm telling you all this, my master, hoping for your approval.'"

NIRV

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau. Esau lived in the land of Seir. It was also called the country of Edom. Jacob told the messengers what to do. He said, "Here's what you must tell my master Esau. 'Your servant Jacob says, "I've been staying with Laban. I've remained there until now. I have cattle and donkeys and sheep and goats. I also have male and female servants. Now I'm sending this message to you. I hope I can please you.'"

New Simplified Bible Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in Seir, the country of Edom. He informed them to say: »Your obedient servant, Jacob, reports to my master Esau that I have been staying with Laban and that I have delayed my return until now. »I own cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and slaves. I am sending you word in the hope of gaining your favor.«

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	<p><b>Gifts for big brother Esau</b></p> <p>Jacob sent scouts ahead to find his brother Esau, who lived in a land called Seir, sometimes known as Edom [In what is now the country of Jordan.]. Jacob told the scouts, “Give this message to Esau, my superior. ‘Hello big brother. It’s me, here to serve you. I’ve been living all these years with Uncle Laban. I’m coming home with oxen, donkeys, and flocks, along with slaves—men and women. I’ve sent these scouts ahead to tell you this. I’m hoping you will welcome me.’”</p>
Common English Bible	<p>Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, toward the land of Seir, the open country of Edom. He gave them these orders: “Say this to my master Esau. This is the message of your servant Jacob: ‘I’ve lived as an immigrant with Laban, where I’ve stayed till now. I own cattle, donkeys, flocks, men servants, and women servants. I’m sending this message to my master now to ask that he be kind.’”</p>
Contemporary English V.	<p>Jacob sent messengers on ahead to Esau, who lived in the land of Seir, also known as Edom. Jacob told them to say to Esau, "Master, I am your servant! I have lived with Laban all this time, and now I own cattle, donkeys, and sheep, as well as many slaves. Master, I am sending these messengers in the hope that you will be kind to me."</p>
The Living Bible	<p>Jacob now sent messengers to his brother, Esau, in Edom, in the land of Seir, with this message: “Hello from Jacob! I have been living with Uncle Laban until recently, and now I own oxen, donkeys, sheep, goats, and many servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform you of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to us.”</p>
New Berkeley Version	<p>Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the Seir range of the Edom country, charging them, “You must say to my master Esau, “Your servant Jacob says, I have been living as a stranger with Laban and stayed there until now. I have come to possess oxen, donkeys, herds and male and female servants, and I have sent to tell my master about it, hoping to gain your favor.’ ”</p> <p>Jacob wanted Esau to see that he now no longer stood in need of the blessing he had so cruelly exacted from his elder brother.</p>
New Century Version	<p>Jacob’s brother Esau was living in the area called Seir in the country of Edom. Jacob sent messengers to Esau, telling them, “Give this message to my master Esau: ‘This is what Jacob, your servant, says: I have lived with Laban and have remained there until now. I have cattle, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. I send this message to you and ask you to accept us.’”</p>
New Life Version	<p>Jacob sent men to carry news before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He told them, "Say this to my lord Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, "I have been living with Laban, and stayed there until now. I have cattle and donkeys and flocks and men and women servants. And I have sent to tell my lord, hoping to find favor in your eyes.' "</p>
New Living Translation	<p><b>Jacob Sends Gifts to Esau</b></p> <p>Then Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother, Esau, who was living in the region of Seir in the land of Edom. He told them, “Give this message to my master Esau: ‘Humble greetings from your servant Jacob. Until now I have been living with Uncle Laban, and now I own cattle, donkeys, flocks of sheep and goats, and many</p>

servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform my lord of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to me.”

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir and the country of the Edomites. He told them to say to Esau, 'Lord, this is what your servant Jacob has said: <i>I have visited with Laban and stayed there until now. And [during this time], oxen, burros, sheep, and male and female servants were born to me. Now I've sent [my messengers] to beg you, my lord Esau, to help your servant find favor in your eyes.'</i>
Beck's American Translation	Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the country of Seir, the land of Edom. He gave them these orders: "Tell my lord Esau, 'Your servant Jacob says, "I've been staying with Laban and was delayed till now. But now I have cattle, donkeys, flocks, male and female servants, and I'm sending men to tell my lord about it, so that he will be kind." ' "
International Standard V	Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of him into the land of Seir (that is, into the territory of Edom) to meet his brother Esau. He instructed them, "This is what you are to say to my master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob told me to tell you, "I've journeyed to stay with Laban and I've remained there until now. I now have cattle, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. I'm sending this message to you, sir [Lit. <i>to my lord</i> ], so that you'll show favor to me.'"
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And now he sent messengers of his own on before him, to greet his brother Esau in the country of Seir, which is Edom's territory. These were his directions, You are to tell my lord Esau this, from his brother Jacob: I have been living abroad, on a visit to Laban, and am but just returned. I have brought back oxen and asses and sheep, men-servants and women-servants with me. And now, my lord, I have sent these envoys to thee, to secure thy good will.
Translation for Translators	Jacob told some men to go ahead of him to his older brother Esau, who was living in Seir, the land where the descendants of Edom lived. He told them, "This is what I want you to say to Esau: I, Jacob, who want to be your servant and want you to be my master, have been living with our uncle Laban, and I have stayed there until now. I now own many cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and male and female slaves. Now I am sending this message to you, sir, hoping that you will be friendly toward me/treat me kindly when I arrive."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob was to send out messengers turned before Esau, his brother, to the solid grounds of Seir, the field of Edom. He was to lay charge on them, to the intent: You is to say to my lord Esau: Your servant Jacob is to have said: I am to have stayed with Laban, and was to be a nonnative there. To me are oxen, asses, small cattle, and men servants and maid servants, and I was to send out to announce it to my lord, to find favor in your eye.
Conservapedia	Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, toward the land of Seir, in the region of Edom. He instructed them thus: "Say this to my lord Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says this: I sojourned with Laban, and stayed [The word for "stayed" actually means "delayed."] there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants. I am sending this message to you, my lord, in the hope that I will find grace in your eyes."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	<b>Meeting of Esau and Jacob</b> Then Jacob sent messengers before himself to his brother Esau, at Mount Seir, in the land of Edom, and he commanded them saying; "You shall say this to my Lord Esau, — 'Jacob, your servant, says thus, — " I have lodged with Laban, and stayed



New RSV	Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, instructing them, 'Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have lived with Laban as an alien, and stayed until now; and I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male and female slaves; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favour in your sight." '
Revised English Bible	Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau to the district of Seir in Edomite territory, instructing them to say to Esau, "My lord, your servant Jacob sends this message: I have been living with Laban and have stayed there till now. I have acquired oxen, donkeys, and sheep, as well as male and female slaves, and I am sending to tell you this, my lord, so that I may win your favour."

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	<p><b>Haftarah Vayetze: Hoshea (Hosea) 12:13(12)–14:10(9) (A); 11:7–12:12(11) (S)</b>  <b>B'rit Hadashah suggested reading for Parashah Vayetze: Yochanan (John) 1:43–51</b>  <b>Parashah 8: Vayishlach (He sent) 32:4(3) –36:43</b></p> <p>Ya'akov sent messengers ahead of him to 'Esav his brother toward the land of Se'ir, the country of Edom, with these instructions: "Here is what you are to say to my lord 'Esav: 'Your servant Ya'akov says, "I have been living with Lavan and have stayed until now. I have cattle, donkeys and flocks, and male and female servants. I am sending to tell this news to my lord, in order to win your favor." '"</p>
exeGesés companion Bible	<p>And Yaaqov sends angels  at the face of Esav his brother  to the land of Seir, the field of Edom:  and he misvahs them, saying,  Say thus to my adoni Esav:  Your servant Yaaqov says thus:  I sojourned with Laban and delayed there until now:  and I have oxen and he burros,  flocks and servants and maids:  and I send to tell my adoni,  to find charism in your eyes.</p>
Israeli Authorized Version	<p>And Yaakov sent messengers before him to Esav his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And He Commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my YY Esav; Thy servant Yaakov saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my YY , that I may find grace in thy sight.</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p><i>Jacob Meets Esau</i>  Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to Edom's Field [See Genesis 25:30. The area was apparently named for Esau.] in the Seir area [See Genesis 14:6. This seems to contradict the statement that Esau did not settle in Seir until after Jacob's arrival (Genesis 36:8). Some say that Esau did not actually live in Seir now, but only visited it regularly (Ramban on Genesis 36:6; Sforno, Chizzkuni). Others say that this was not Mount Seir, and that the area was named for Esau (Josephus 2:2:1; see notes on Genesis 25:25, 26:20). It appears that Esau now lived in the plains near Seir, and later invaded the hill country (see Aggadath Bereshith). In general, Seir is the area south of the Zered Brook and the Dead Sea. The messengers were therefore sent a distance of 90 miles from Machanaim.]. He instructed them to deliver the following message:  'To my lord Esau. Your humble servant Jacob says: I have been staying with Laban, and have delayed my return until now. I have acquired cattle, donkeys, sheep, slaves and slave-girls, and am now sending word to tell my lord, to gain favor in your eyes.'</p>

## Orthodox Jewish Bible

## [VAYISHLAH]

And Ya'akov sent malachim before him to Esav achiv unto Eretz Seir, the country of Edom.

And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto adoni Esav; Thy eved Ya'akov saith thus, I have sojourned with Lavan, and stayed there until now;

And I have shor (oxen), and chamor, tzon, and eved, and shifchah; and I have sent to tell adoni, that I may find chen (grace) in thy sight.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

## The Expanded Bible

Jacob's brother Esau was living in the area called Seir in the country of Edom [14:6]. Jacob sent messengers to Esau, telling them, "Give this message to my master [lord] Esau: 'This is what Jacob, your servant, says: I have lived [sojourned; lived as an alien] with Laban and have remained [or been detained] there until now. I have cattle, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. I send this message to you [my master/lord] and ask you to accept us [to find grace in your eyes].'"

## Kretzmann's Commentary

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau, his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. As Esau's family grew, he gradually loosened the bonds which tied him to the home of his parents, since he felt that he really had no part in the patriarchal blessing. He made the wilderness of Zin, with Mount Hor, his home, the level portion of which was known as the fields of Seir. 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; and I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants; and I have sent to tell my lord that I may find grace in thy sight. This message with its humble, almost abject submissiveness was intended to conciliate Esau; it was purposely held like the report of a subordinate to his superior officer, otherwise the details may well have been omitted.

## NET Bible®

Jacob sent messengers on ahead [*Heb* "before him."] to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the region [*Heb* "field."] of Edom. He commanded them, "This is what you must say to my lord Esau: 'This is what your servant Jacob says: I have been staying with Laban until now. I have oxen, donkeys, sheep, and male and female servants. I have sent [Or "I am sending."] this message [The words "this message" are not in the Hebrew text, but have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.] to inform my lord, so that I may find favor in your sight.'"

## The Pulpit Commentary

And Jacob sent messengers (with the messengers of Jacob, the messengers of Elohim form a contrast which can scarcely have been accidental) before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir,—vide on Genesis 14:6. Seir, nearly equivalent in force to Esau (Ewald), and meaning the rough or bristling mountain (Gesenius), was originally occupied by the Horites, but afterwards became the seat of Esau and his descendants (Deut. 2:4; 2Chronicles 20:10), though as yet Esau had not withdrawn from Canaan (Genesis 36:5–8)—the country (literally, plain or level tract = Padan (male Hoses Genesis 12:13) of Edom, as it was afterwards called. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus;—the expression "my lord" may have been designed to intimate to Esau that he (Jacob) did not intend to assert that superiority or precedency which had been assigned him by Isaac's blessing (Genesis 27:29), at least so far as to claim a share in Isaac's wealth (Calvin, Bush, Gerlach), but was probably due chiefly to the extreme courtesy of the East (Gerlach), or to a desire to conciliate his brother (Keil), or to a feeling of personal contrition for his misbehavior towards Esau (Kalisch), and perhaps also to a secret apprehension of danger from Esau's approach (Alford, Inglis)—I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed—*אָהַרְתִּי* the fut. Kal. of *אָהַרְתִּי* occurring only here, is a contraction for *אָהַרְתִּי*, like *קֹטַל* for *תִּקְוֹת*

(Psalm 104:29; vide Gesenius, § 68, 2)—there until now: and I have (literally, there are to me, so that I stand in need of no further wealth from either thee or Isaac) oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and women servants:—cf. Genesis 12:16 (Abraham); Genesis 26:13, Genesis 26:14 (Isaac)—and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight (cf. Genesis 33:8, Genesis 33:15; Genesis 39:4; and vide Genesis 6:8; Genesis 18:3).

The Voice

Jacob *knew* he had to pass by the territory of Edom where his brother Esau lived in the land of Seir. He sent messengers ahead with a message for Esau.

**Jacob** (to his messengers): This is what I want you to say to my master Esau: “Your servant Jacob says this: ‘I have lived with Laban as a foreigner and *stayed there working for him* until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female slaves. I have sent my messengers to inform you, my master, of all this so that I might regain your trust and favor.’”

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya’aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> sent messengers before him to Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> his brother, unto the land of Se’iyir <sup>[Hairy]</sup>, the field of Edom <sup>[Red]</sup>, and he directed them saying, in this way you will say to my lord, to Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup>, in this way your servant Ya’aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> said, I had sojourned with Lavan <sup>[White]</sup> and I delayed until now, and it came to pass, I have ox and donkey, flocks and servant and maid and I sent to tell to my lord to find beauty in your eyes,...

Concordant Literal Version And sending is Jacob messengers before him to Esau, his brother, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. And instructing them is he, saying, "Thus shall you say to my lord, to Esau, `Thus says your servant Jacob: With Laban I sojourn and it delayed me till now. And mine are becoming bulls and asses and a flock, and servants and maids. And sending am I to tell my lord Esau that your servant finds grace in your eyes.

Darby Translation And Jacob sent messengers before his face to Esau his brother, into the land of Seir, the fields of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak to my lord, to Esau: Thy servant Jacob speaks thus -- With Laban have I sojourned and tarried until now; and I have oxen, and asses, sheep, and bondmen, and bondwomen; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favour in thine eyes.

New European Version Jacob sent messengers in front of him to Esau, his brother, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. He commanded them, saying, This is what you shall tell my lord, Esau: ‘This is what your servant, Jacob, says. I have lived as a foreigner with Laban, and stayed until now. I have cattle, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favour in your sight’.

New King James Version Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 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. 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.’”

Young’s Updated LT And Jacob sends messengers before him unto Esau his brother, towards the land of Seir, the field of Edom, and commands them, saying, “Thus do you say to my lord, to Esau: ‘Thus said your servant Jacob, *With Laban I have sojourned, and I tarry until now. And I have ox, and ass, flock, and man-servant, and maid-servant, and I send to declare to my lord, to find grace in his eyes.*’ ”

**The gist of this passage:** Knowing that he may cross paths with Esau upon his return, Jacob sends messengers to him, in the land of Seir. He informs Esau that he has been staying with their Uncle Laban, and that he is now returning with a reasonable amount of wealth and he hopes to find grace in Esau’s eyes.

Genesis 32:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; what is sent (messengers, a message) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>b</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
mal'êakê (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced <i>mah<sup>e</sup>-AWK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isaiah 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *before him, before his face, in his presence, in his sight, in front of him.*

**Translation:** [Jacob sent messengers before him...](#)

We have the same word that is translated *angels* used here; it means *messengers*. Jacob has a great many servants, and he sent a delegation of these servants to Esau to, as it were, test the waters.

It is quite interesting that, even though the land is quite wide open and the Jacob is going to live in a much different place from Esau; he apparently wants to clear the air first, just in case. They still had the same father; and their paths may cross for that reason.

However, I think the primary reason for sending messengers to Esau is not for self-preservation (otherwise, why not just stay in another land?); but to simply try to set things right. God has guided Jacob out of the Land of Promise; God told Jacob when to return; and God has made a great many promises to Jacob (and Jacob gave an oath back to God). In light of all that, Jacob has some confidence in his future in the land—albeit, not a perfect confidence by any means.

Given how Jacob left things and given when he had done; speaking with Esau at his return was the only reasonable thing to do.

Let me further suggest that Jacob really does not have a choice at this point. God has told him to return to the land; he is returning to the land; and it is inevitable that he cross paths with his brother Esau again. Furthermore, having seen the encampment of angels, Jacob has a renewed confidence—although that will change in vv. 6–7.

Genesis 32:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ēsāv (עֲשָׂו) [pronounced gay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
'âch (אָח) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth [ground]; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê; construct form	Strong's #776 BDB #75
Sê'yr (שֵׂעִיר) [pronounced say-GEER]	<i>hairy, shaggy; transliterated Seir</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #8165 BDB #973
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
'Ēdōwm (אֶדְוָם) [pronounced eh-DOHM]; also 'Ēdōm (אֶדְוָם) [pronounced eh-DOHM]	<i>reddish; and is transliterated Edom, Edomites</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #123 BDB #10

**Translation:** ...to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir [in] the country of Edom.

He sent these messengers to his brother Esau, who was living in the land of Seir, which is in Edom.<sup>106</sup> I find this quite interesting. Jacob had to know, somehow, where his brother lived, which apparently was no longer with their parents in Canaan. So, he apparently kept in touch, with whatever means were available in that era—not necessarily with Esau, but with his mother and/or father—so that he knew where Esau was and how to make contact with him. This information is missing, how Jacob determined where to locate Esau. Did he send messengers ahead to determine this while returning to Canaan? Did he keep in touch while living in Haran?

Not many commentators noticed this (or wrote about it); but all that is available to do is to speculate. Who informed Jacob? How did he know? I am unaware of any clues which solve this minor mystery.

Dr. Peter Pett: *[Jacob] is aware of his brother's whereabouts. He has clearly kept in touch with his family who have kept him informed.*<sup>107</sup>

**The Split Between Jacob and Esau:** You may recall that Jacob and Esau split up on very bad terms. Isaac was going to give his end-of-life blessing to Esau, but Rebekah, their mother, told Jacob to pretend to be Esau and thus take away his blessing. Esau soon found out that his father Isaac had blessed Jacob instead of him (he did not know of his mother's participation), and he was furious. In fact, Esau even fantasized about killing his brother Jacob over this. Rebekah decided that she needed to get Jacob out of town, but she could not say that this was

<sup>106</sup> There is some confusion as to the relationship between Seir and Edom.

<sup>107</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:3–5.

about Esau's threats. She should not have known about such threats or why Esau is mad at Jacob. If she reveals that she knows this information, then she is also revealing that she instigated all of this to begin with, which she did. This would have put her on the outs with her husband Isaac and her son Esau forever more.

As an aside, we never find out whether Esau knew that his mother had a hand in this deception or not. Esau did move away from his family, which was rare in the ancient world. Did he know or did he simply leave Canaan, recognizing that he had not long-term future in Canaan. That is, if Esau was not the line of promise—and he was not—then if he recognizes opportunities outside of Canaan, why not pursue them?

Anyway, back to the deception, Esau's anger, Rebekah's secret and Jacob needing to leave in order to preserve his life: the cover story—and this was a good one—is that Jacob needed to marry a woman who is not a heathen. There had been the acknowledged problem that his brother Esau had married Canaanite women, and they made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah (we don't know how exactly; I would think it involved the wives' worship of false gods). So Jacob would be sent back east to marry a woman from their eastern family. Presumably—although this is never directly stated—such a woman would worship the same, Revealed God, as did Isaac and Rebekah.

So, 20 years ago, Jacob was sent away; thus allowing time for his brother Esau to cool down over his stolen blessings. Esau will recognize, after the fact, that God blessed him as well.

So, Jacob is returning to the land, some 20 years later, but he has no idea as to the reception that Esau would give him.

Thomas: *[Jacob] knows that there can be no peace and quiet until his relations with Esau are assured and put on a proper footing. Not until that matter was settled could Jacob feel certain of his future.*<sup>108</sup>

Matthew Poole: *[Jacob sent messengers to Esau] to acquaint him with his coming, and with the state of his affairs, that he may obtain pardon for his former errors, and Esau's favour and friendship for the future.*<sup>109</sup>

You will note that Jacob somehow knows *where* to send this message. Esau would have moved to Seir *after* Jacob left Canaan.

The word for *messengers* is exactly the same word translated *angels* in v. 1. It is the word mal<sup>o</sup>âk<sup>e</sup> (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced *mah<sup>o</sup>-AWK<sup>e</sup>*], and it means, *messenger* or *angel*. This word is also used for a prophet (Isaiah 42:19) and for a priest (Mal. 2:7). Strong's #4397 BDB #521. However, here it means *messengers*.

At this time that Jacob returns, Isaac, their father, is still alive; and we do not know about their mother.

Horim = Horites.

### Seir (from Nave's Topical Bible)

1. A range of hills trending southwest from the Dead Sea. Deut. 1:2
2. Along the route from Horeb to Kadesh barnea. Deut. 1:1–2
3. Children of Israel journey by. Deut. 1:2; Deut. 2:1; Deut. 33:2
4. Originally inhabited by Horites. Genesis 14:6; Genesis 36:20–30; Deut. 2:12
5. Later inhabited by the children of Esau after they destroyed the Horim. Deut. 2:12; Deut. 2:22; Genesis 32:3; Genesis 33:14; Genesis 33:16; Genesis 36:8–9; Num. 24:18; Deut. 2:4–5
6. The southern boundary of the conquests of Joshua. Joshua 11:15–18

<sup>108</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>109</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:5 (edited).

Orville J. Nave (1841-1917), A.M., D.D., LL.D. *Nave's Topics*; ©early 1900's; from e-Sword, topic: Seir.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom.

### Esau and the Land of Seir (various commentators)

Matthew Poole makes a few assumptions here: *Esau had removed his habitation from Canaan, partly out of discontent at his parents; partly as most convenient for his course of life; and principally by direction of Divine Providence, that Canaan might be left free and clear for Jacob and his posterity.*<sup>110</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[The land of Seir is] a highland country on the east and south of the Dead Sea, inhabited by the Horites, who were dispossessed by Esau or his posterity (Deut. 11:12). When and in what circumstances he had emigrated there, whether the separation arose out of the undutiful conduct and idolatrous habits of his wives, which had made them unwelcome in the tent of his parents, or whether his roving disposition had sought a country from his love of adventure and the chase, he was living in a state of power and affluence, and this settlement on the outer borders of Canaan, though made of his own free will, was overruled by Providence to pave the way for Jacob's return to the promised land.*<sup>111</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Esau, recognising that he now had no part in the rulership of the family tribe (Genesis 27:39–40), had aligned himself by marriage with the confederate tribes of Ishmael (Genesis 28:9). He moved to the desert region and there built up his own tribe, no doubt with Ishmael's assistance and had thus become a minor ruler over a band of warriors with whom he lived out the active life that he had always desired. With their assistance he was able to build up his wealth. Many rich caravans would pass near their territory on the King's Highway (see Num. 20:14–21) which by one means or another would contribute to their treasury (either by toll or by robbery) and they necessarily built up flocks and herds for their own survival.*

Pett continues: *Eventually they would gain ascendancy over neighbouring peoples until the land becomes known as the land of Edom (Genesis 36:16–17; Genesis 36:21; Genesis 36:31) i.e. of Esau (Genesis 25:30; Genesis 36:1; Genesis 36:19; Genesis 36:43), although originally called the land of Seir (here and Genesis 37:30). The latter name is connected with the Horites who originally lived there (Genesis 36:20) who were clearly absorbed into the clan or confederacy.*

Pett concludes: *The land where Seir the Horite and his tribe and descendants dwelt, part of which was now controlled by Esau's men...Esau appears to lead an itinerant life, partly at home with his father who was blind and needed his assistance, and where he had his own herds and flocks, and partly out with his men adventuring in the season of such activities when the demands of farming were less. It was only after the death of his father that he finally forsook the family tribe (Genesis 36:6).*<sup>112</sup>

Although Whedon<sup>113</sup> suggests that it might be at this time that Esau is driving the Horites out of Seir; but we really have no idea when he did this (recall that 20 years have passed since Jacob left Canaan).

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The name "Seir," demarcates the Edomite territory, which was situated at the southeast border of Palestine (Judges 11:17; Numbers 34:3) and was properly called "the land of Seir" (Genesis 36:8; Gen 32:3; Joshua 24:4; Ezekiel 35:3, 7, 15) and "the country of Edom."*<sup>114</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:3.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:3.

<sup>112</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:3–8.

<sup>113</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:3.

<sup>114</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

## Esau and the Land of Seir (various commentators)

Merrill F. Unger: *The physical geography of Edom is somewhat peculiar. Along the western base of the mountain range are low calcareous hills. These are succeeded by lofty masses of igneous rock, chiefly porphyry, over which lies red and variegated sandstone in irregular ridges and abrupt cliffs with deep ravines between. The latter strata give the mountains their most striking features and remarkable colors. The average elevation of the summit is about two thousand feet above the sea.*

Unger continues: *Along the eastern side runs an almost unbroken limestone ridge, a thousand feet or more higher than the other. This ridge sinks down with an easy slope into the plateau of the Arabian Desert. Although Edom is thus wild, rugged, and almost inaccessible, the deep glens and flat terraces along the mountainsides are covered with rich soil, from which trees, shrubs, and flowers now spring up luxuriantly.*<sup>115</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *The land, or mountains, of Seir was situated south and east of the Dead Sea; forming a continuation of the eastern Syrian chain of mountains, beginning with Antilibanus, and extending from thence to the eastern gulf of the Red Sea.*<sup>116</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge passages on Seir: Genesis 14:6 33:14, 16 36:6–8 Deut. 2:5, 22 Joshua 24:4.<sup>117</sup>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:3 [Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir \[in\] the country of Edom.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:3 [Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom.](#) I don't know if Seir and Edom are the same place, if one is within the other, or if they refer to lands which are side-by-side. V. 3 makes it sound as if Seir is a region within Edom. Naming both seems to indicate some sort of distinction; but, in Genesis 36, the line of Seir and the line of Esau seem to be interrelated in some way—as if parallel families living in the same general region. In the future, there will be a family which wants to live with and exchange wives with Jacob's family. It appears that this may have been what happened between Esau and Seir.

It is quite likely that Esau, based upon his conversation with his father, realized that he would not inherit the land of Canaan for himself, so he took another route. Gen. 27:39–40 [Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck."](#) In fact, at first, Esau was waiting out the death of his father, that he might kill Jacob because of this stolen blessing (Genesis 27:41). However, it appears that he has accepted this as his fate, and, as a result, he has been doing pretty well.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown words lead us into v. 4: *The purpose of the message was that, after a residence of twenty years in Mesopotamia, he was now returning to his native land, that he did not need any thing, for he had abundance of pastoral wealth, but that he could not pass without notifying his arrival to his brother and paying the homage of his respectful obeisance. Acts of civility tend to disarm opposition and soften hatred (Eccles. 10:4).*<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019. Wenstrom cites The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (c) 1988.

<sup>116</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:3.

<sup>117</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:3.

<sup>118</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:4 (slightly edited).

Genesis 32:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâvâh (צוּ) [pronounced tsaw-VAW]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to appoint; to ordain; to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge [command, order]; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect, 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence; now; in the meantime</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ădônîy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NEE]	<i>my Lord, my Master, my Sovereign; my lord [master]; can be used to refer to a possessor, an owner; transliterated Adoni, adoni</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
The difference between this spelling and those which end in –ay or –ây is a vowel point, which would have been added much later by the Massorites. However, there would have been a difference in pronunciation.			
Several translations render <i>my lord the king</i> as <i>your majesty</i> (see CEV, GNB, God's Word™, and NSB for 1Kings 1:2).			
'Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced gay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796

**Translation:** He instructed them, saying, “Thus will you say to my adonai Esau:...

Jacob does not make direct contact; he sends his servants there first. This would be the proper way of doing things.

How Esau treats Jacob's servants may give Jacob an idea how Esau will treat him. However, I believe that this is simply the way that things are done.

By calling Esau *my lord*, Jacob establishes respect for Esau among his messengers (who are probably slaves). He is making it clear that Esau should be approached with all due respect.

Jacob sends these messengers ahead of him—indicating that Jacob had a number of men who were his slaves or who worked for him. We don't realize at first the large retinue that is with Jacob. At first, it appears that it is Jacob + wives + children; but there are many more people with him than this. Previously, we have found that he had many male and female servants.

Genesis 32:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced <i>koh</i> ]	<i>so, thus, here, hence; now; in the meantime</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>GE<sup>B</sup>-ved</i> ]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** ...'So speaks your servant Jacob [to you]:...

These are the words which Jacob's servants are to say to Esau. The first words his servants will say are, "This is what your servant Jacob has to say..."

Genesis 32:3–4b Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: "This is what you will say to my lord Esau, 'This is a message from your servant Jacob:...' "

### Genesis 32:4a-b: Understanding Jacob's motivation at this point (a discussion)

Benson: *was conscious how deeply he had offended his brother, and remembered the enmity which his brother cherished against him, and hence was not without an apprehension that he might now execute the threatened revenge.*

Benson continues: *Jacob had had of the divine protection; though he had just seen himself surrounded with a host of guardian angels; though he had undertaken his journey in obedience to God's express command, and had God's renewed promise to assure him of a safe return, (Genesis 28:15; Genesis 31:13,) yet a consciousness of having injured his brother, and of his brother's having it in his power, should God permit him, to avenge himself, damps his faith, and fills him with the most painful and distressing apprehensions.*<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:6–7.

## Genesis 32:4a-b: Understanding Jacob's motivation at this point (a discussion)

The NET Bible: *The narrative recounts Jacob's groveling in fear before Esau as he calls his brother his "lord," as if to minimize what had been done twenty years ago.*<sup>120</sup>

Benson: *He calls Esau his lord, and himself his servant, to intimate that he did not insist on the prerogatives of the birthright and blessing which he had obtained for himself, but left it to God to fulfil his own purpose in his seed.*<sup>121</sup>

My point of view is, Jacob's approach to Esau here is one of respect and humility. He was really sent to Haran for his stealing Esau's blessing. Finding a wife there was a good cover story; and Jacob did. In any case, Jacob wants to make up for how he deceived his brother.

What many commentators tend to do here is confuse the order in which these events take place, and then draw some wrong conclusions. Let me be more specific: Jacob will find out the Esau is coming towards him with 400 men (v. 6) and he becomes afraid (v. 7). When Jacob sends out his original message to Esau, Jacob has a plan, but it seems to be more related to Esau's anger 20 years ago than to anything else. Jacob does not necessarily know the size of Esau's retinue at this point.

I don't believe that Jacob was *groveling in fear* when he first contacted Esau. However, when he finds out that Esau is traveling with 400 men, then Jacob will begin to feel the fear.

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Genesis 32:3–4b [Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: "This is what you will say to my lord Esau, 'This is a message from your servant Jacob:..."](#)

### Jacob's exercise of normal prudence

At this point in the narrative, I believe that Jacob is showing normal prudence throughout this chapter:

1. He refers to himself as a servant; to Esau as *lord*.
2. He sends messengers of peace to Esau.
3. He prays to God and calls God to consider His promises.
4. He divides his company into two camps, so as to save one in case Esau attacked.
5. He sends a present ahead of everyone, hopefully to mollify Esau.

Some odd motivations are attributed to Jacob throughout this chapter; but common sense prudence seems to explain most of what he does.

The Geneva Bible comments: *He revered his brother in worldly things, because he mainly looked to be preferred to the spiritual promise.*<sup>122</sup> That may be giving Jacob a skosh too much credit.

The points are more or less taken from *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:3–9; T. H. Leale.

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<sup>120</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 6, 2016.

<sup>121</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:4.

<sup>122</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 32:4.

## Genesis 32:4a-b: Jacob's Language shows respect toward Esau (a discussion)

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob adopts the language of extreme courtesy and respect.*<sup>123</sup>

Clarke: *Jacob acknowledges the superiority of his brother; for the time was not yet come in which it could be said, [The elder shall serve the younger](#).*<sup>124</sup>

Calling Esau *lord* is a title of respect. Jacob is not subjugating himself to Esau or, in some way, returning his blessing to him. Jacob is not renouncing his right of primogeniture nor is he even telling Esau, "You're the superior man."<sup>125</sup>

At this point, I believe that Jacob has a greater assurance of his place in the plan of God. I don't mean that he has complete and full confidence; but the last thing on his mind is, *how can I put one over on Esau?*

Dr. John Gill: *[Jacob expressed] great humility and modesty; for though his father Isaac by his blessing had made him lord over Esau, the time was not come for this to take place, his father not being yet dead; and besides, was to have its accomplishment not in his own person, but in his posterity.*<sup>126</sup>

I think that Gill might be giving Jacob too much credit. Would this have been his motivation. Jacob's prudence is the right approach, given the circumstances by which he left Canaan.

J. Vernon McGee: *This fellow Jacob is still clever, isn't he? He just cannot let go, even after his experience with Laban. He is returning back to the land, and he remembers the last time he saw Esau twenty years ago, when Esau was breathing out threatenings against him. Notice that Jacob sends servants and instructs them, saying, "When you get to Esau my brother, say to him, "My lord Esau." " Of all things! And then he has them refer to himself as "Your servant Jacob." That's not the way Jacob had spoken before. He had manipulated for the birthright and had stolen the blessing. He had been a rascal, but now his talk is different. I guess he had learned a few things from Uncle Laban.*<sup>127</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *From this point Jacob sent messengers forward to his brother Esau, to make known his return in such a style of humility ("thy servant," "my lord") as was adapted to conciliate him.*<sup>128</sup>

God had given Jacob preeminence over his brothers (Genesis 27:29). It is not up to Jacob to do anything in order for this to take place. Certainly upon meeting his estranged brother after 20 years, throwing that in his face would have been the exact wrong approach.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Notice the deferential language that Jacob instructs the delegation to use when addressing Esau, "my lord" and "your servant." He uses these deferential terms to convey to Esau that his intentions are peaceful and conciliatory and that he does not wish to claim the promise that "the older shall serve the younger."*<sup>129</sup>

Robert Deffinbaugh: *The substance of his message to Esau was that he had returned a wealthy man. In this case he was not coming back in order to place a claim on his father's wealth. Jacob sought to assure Esau that his return was a friendly and non-threatening one. All that he sought was Esau's favor.*<sup>130</sup>

<sup>123</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:4.

<sup>124</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:4.

<sup>125</sup> Paraphrased from Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:4.

<sup>126</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:4.

<sup>127</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32) (slightly edited).

<sup>128</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:4-7.

<sup>129</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>130</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019. Wenstrom cites *The Book of Genesis*; Biblical Studies Press, 1997.

## Genesis 32:4a-b: Jacob's Language shows respect toward Esau (a discussion)

Bruce K. Waltke: *Although this introductory greeting conforms to the customary epistolary style of the ancient Near East, nevertheless, through this courtesy Jacob begins to right the arrogance toward his brother that brought him in diametrical opposition to his promised destiny (27:29). Like Abraham with Lot, Jacob takes the first step toward giving up the rights of his election to the blessing (13:1-12), trusting God to fulfill the promise. His rivalry with Esau is about over.*<sup>131</sup>

The principle of respect might be found in Prov. 15:1 [A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.](#)

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### Genesis 32:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law<sup>b</sup>-VAWN</i> ]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
gûwr (גּוּר) [pronounced <i>goor</i> ]	<i>(1) to temporarily reside, to sojourn, to stay temporarily; (2) to stir up, to strive with, to quarrel with; and, (3) to dread, to be afraid of, to stand in awe of</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect (this verb is a homonym; all basic meanings are given)	Strong's #1481 BDB #158
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
’âchar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>aw-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>to remain behind, to stay behind; to delay, to tarry; to leave behind</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #309 BDB #29
‘ad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i> ]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
‘attâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced <i>gahT-TAWH</i> ]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773

**Translation:** *...I have stayed with Laban and I remained [with him] until now.*

Jacob first explains where he has been all of this time. Both men are familiar with Laban and with his family back east. So, Jacob does not have to describe just exactly who this Laban fellow is. I think that both men, as children, heard the story of Isaac and Rebekah many times as a bedtime story; so that they remembered it—this is Genesis 24, which has all the trappings of a bedtime story (but, let me quickly add, it is true). Both Jacob and Esau had a picture in their minds of the land of Laban; and of the circumstances surrounding the fetching of their mother from the east.

<sup>131</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019. Wenstrom cites Genesis, A Commentary, page 442, Zondervan.

Jacob has been with this brother of their mother up until this time. Esau would have been well-acquainted with his Uncle Laban, even though they likely never met.

Unlike before, when Jacob tried to deceive or manipulate his brother, now he is being straightforward and honest. Without coming out and saying it directly, Jacob, in my opinion, seems to be communicating, “This is not the old Jacob; I am not going to try to exploit our family relationship for my own benefit.” At the same time, I don’t think that Jacob has given much thought to Esau and where he might be at, mentally and emotionally speaking, at this time. I believe that Jacob, 20 years later with 20 years of maturity, is communicating to an Esau of 20 years ago. I base this on Jacob’s reaction to Esau when his servants return with a message.

Genesis 32:4 He instructed them, saying, “Thus will you say to my adonai Esau: ‘So speaks your servant Jacob [to you]: *I have stayed with Laban and I remained [with him] until now.*’” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered *subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which*. Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).

lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004

Apart from the book of Job, this is the first time that this word occurs in the Bible.

w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chămôwr (חֲמוֹר) [pronounced khuh-MOHR]	<i>ass, male donkey, he-ass, burrow</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2543 BDB #331
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

Also spelled ts<sup>o</sup>ôwn (צֹאֵן) [pronounced tseh-OWN].

w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
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## Genesis 32:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced GE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shiph <sup>e</sup> châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced shif-KHAW]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046

**Translation:** *I [now] have oxen and donkeys, flocks, male and female servants.*

It is not immediately clear to me why Jacob tells Esau about his own personal holdings. Is he offering them to Esau? I don't believe that Jacob is bragging.

The purpose of telling Esau that he has all these possessions is to let Esau know that Jacob does not need the material gain of his father's inheritance. Jacob did not return to take anything from Esau. Furthermore, this indicates that there may be some generosity on Jacob's part. But, this being Jacob, perhaps the whole reason for this present is to attempt to manipulate his brother Esau.

Jacob has to know a few things about his brother in Seir—after all, he knew where to send his messengers. So, at some point in time, he received messages, either from home, or just general family news (Genesis 36 will be a list of the descendants of Esau—so Jacob, who I believe wrote this portion of the Word of God, got this information from somewhere).

This is interesting information to share; and Jacob is sharing this via his messengers *rather* than telling Esau about his marriages and children. Maybe Jacob knows about Esau's family (to some limited degree); and perhaps Esau already knows a little something about Jacob's family. Jacob does know where to end his messengers.

Does Jacob think that his family situation is too complex and it needs some personal explanation? Does Jacob want to simply surprise Esau with his family?

My theory is, Jacob did not want Esau to know about his wives and children, and, at first, Jacob will hide them from Esau. Then, after wrestling with God, Jacob makes his wives and children the first thing that Esau sees, *after* all of his gifts have been paraded by him. So Jacob, unsure of what might transpire (will Esau kill him?), first thinks about hiding and protecting his wife and children. Therefore, if he tells Esau about them, then Esau will be looking for them, if he wants to exact revenge upon Jacob.

In any case, Jacob has been greatly blessed by God. Genesis 30:43 33:11. It will appear that the same is true of Esau.

## Genesis 32:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 32:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect; what is sent ( <i>messengers, a message</i> ) is implied; with the directional hê	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

The hê locale (which I call the locative hê or the directional hê) is a word, after a verb of motion, with the *âh* (ה) ending. This is called the *directive hê* or the *he locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

This does not make sense to me.

lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5046 BDB #616

**Translation:** *Therefore, I am sending [my messengers]...*

Jacob explains why he is sending messengers to Esau.

The NET Bible: *The form is a preterite with the vav consecutive; it could be rendered as an English present tense – as the Hebrew perfect/preterite allows – much like an epistolary aorist in Greek. The form assumes the temporal perspective of the one who reads the message.*<sup>132</sup>

## Genesis 32:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾādônîy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NEE]	<i>my Lord, my Master, my Sovereign; my lord [master]; can be used to refer to a possessor, an owner; transliterated Adoni, adoni</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10

The difference between this spelling and those which end in *-ay* or *-ây* is a vowel point, which would have been added much later by the Massorites. However, there would have been a difference in pronunciation.

Several translations render *my lord the king* as *your majesty* (see CEV, GNB, God's Word™, and NSB for 1Kings 1:2).

<sup>132</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 6, 2016.

## Genesis 32:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i> ]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
chên (חֵן) [pronounced <i>khayn</i> ]	<i>grace, favor, blessing</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2580 BDB #336
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

This phrase is literally *in your eyes*, but it can be translated *in your opinion, in your estimation, to your way of thinking, as you see [it]*. The dual and plural forms of this word appear to be identical. Possibly, this could also mean, *as you please, as you want, as you desire, whatever you think is right*.

**Translation:** *...to know [if] I might find grace in the sight of my adonai.' "*

Essentially, Jacob wants to know what Esau thinks about him. Will Esau treat Jacob in grace or will he seek to harm him?

*Lord* is the word 'âdôwn (אָדוֹן) [pronounced *aw-DOWNE*] and this can be a reference to any one of the Trinity and it can be a term of respect and deference directed towards a person. Jacob is obviously using this in the latter sense.

2 or 3 commentators made a mistake when evaluating Jacob's message. The NEV commentary writes: *Jacob evidently forgot or resigned the promise that the elder would serve the younger when he sent messengers to Esau, describing himself as Esau's servant, and Esau as his Lord.*<sup>133</sup>

This is language of submission and respect. It does not mean that Jacob is saying, "Look, the blessing of the firstborn and the covenant—that all goes to you now." Not at all. Jacob is just being polite and ingratiating himself to his brother, whom he has wronged on several previous occasions.

Jacob is sending the message that he has returned to the Land of Promise. Jacob realizes that he has done wrong to his twin brother, and he wants to give his brother a very generous gift in order to indicate that he recognizes that his actions were wrong; and that they need to be friends at this point.

Despite the fact that Jacob will appear to be very generous, his approach is to manipulate Esau—perhaps not as dramatically as he has done before, but enough hoping to mollify Esau.

At this point in time, Jacob is not certain as to what he will do. He will flounder between divine and human viewpoint a couple times in this passage. He'll begin with human viewpoint, then he will trust God, then he will return to human viewpoint. He wrestles with God's promises and his own fears. So, at this point in time, he is not

<sup>133</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen32com.html> accessed March 6, 2019.

certain what he will do. There are portions of this passage, when compared to the next chapter which seem contradictory, but that is not the case. It is simply that, he puts together a plan, and then he changes that plan. He sees things from God's perspective; but then he starts thinking with human viewpoint.

**Application:** It is God's desire that all believers think with divine viewpoint. Philip. 2:5 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* (BSB) Romans 12:2 *Do not be conformed to this world, but continuously be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may be able to determine what God's will is—what is proper, pleasing, and perfect.* (NIV) Colossians 1:9b *We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,* (NIV; capitalized)

In Jacob's message, there is an important omission: remember how the cover story was, Jacob went to Haran to find and marry a woman who is civilized and not such a heathen? Jacob says nothing about that. He does not tell Esau, in this message, about his wives or children. I think that Jacob—at the time of sending a message to Esau—was formulating a plan in his mind to preserve his family by hiding them. This is not mentioned until later in this chapter (vv. 7–8); but their non-mention suggests to me that Jacob had this option of hiding them firmly tucked away in his mind, just in case. It appears to me that later in this chapter, this is exactly what Jacob does. The night before meeting Esau, Jacob seems to hide his family away, moving them to a safer area (vv. 21–24a). The evidence convinces me that Jacob had several plans in mind (well, at the very least, this particular plan), and so he followed through with this plan. Let me add that, the next morning, Jacob seemed to have a change of heart, because his family will be right there with him when he meets Esau in Genesis 33.

Genesis 32:5 *“I [now] have oxen and donkeys, flocks, male and female servants. Therefore, I am sending [my messengers] to know [if] I might find grace in the sight of my adonai.”* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:4–5 [Jacob's instructions to his messengers:] He instructed them, saying, “Thus will you say to my adonai Esau: ‘So speaks your servant Jacob [to you]: *I have stayed with Laban and I remained [with him] until now. I [now] have oxen and donkeys, flocks, male and female servants. Therefore, I am sending [my messengers] to know [if] I might find grace in the sight of my adonai.*’” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:3–5 Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir [in] the country of Edom. He instructed them, saying, “Thus will you say to my adonai Esau: ‘So speaks your servant Jacob [to you]: *I have stayed with Laban and I remained [with him] until now. I [now] have oxen and donkeys, flocks, male and female servants. Therefore, I am sending [my messengers] to know [if] I might find grace in the sight of my adonai.*’” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:3–5 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: “This is what you will say to my lord Esau, ‘This is a message from your servant Jacob: *I have been staying with Laban, our uncle, all of this time. I now own oxen and donkeys and flocks, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my messengers to you in the hope that I might find grace in the sight of my lord.*’” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:3–5 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: “This is what you will say to my lord Esau, ‘This is a message from your servant Jacob: *I have been staying with Laban, our uncle, all of this time. I now own oxen and donkeys and flocks, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my messengers to you in the hope that I might find grace in the sight of my lord.*’”

### Genesis 32:5c: Finding grace in the eyes of Esau (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob hopes to be reconciled and desires to propitiate his brother. He has not forgotten his brother's threats (Genesis 27:41).*<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:5.

## Genesis 32:5c: Finding grace in the eyes of Esau (various commentators)

Dr. John Gill: *[Jacob desired to] share in his good will, which was all he wanted, and that friendship, harmony, and brotherly love, might subsist between them.*<sup>135</sup>

Benson had an interesting take on Jacob's wealth, although this is certainly conjecture: *This message of Jacob shows great prudence in him; for had he returned into Canaan without informing his brother, and making him acquainted with the substance he had brought with him from Haran, Esau, who lived at a distance from his father Isaac, probably would have thought, when he came to take possession of Isaac's property on his death, that Jacob had obtained all his substance from his father, to Esau's prejudice, which might have created an irreconcilable misunderstanding between them.*<sup>136</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:3–5 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: "This is what you will say to my lord Esau, 'This is a message from your servant Jacob: *I have been staying with Laban, our uncle, all of this time. I now own oxen and donkeys and flocks, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my messengers to you in the hope that I might find grace in the sight of my lord.*' "

I believe that Jacob is somewhat conflicted. He knows what he did previously and he probably recognizes that this was not the right thing to do. However, none of that is mentioned in his note to his estranged brother. I believe that Jacob has some faith in God and God's promises, but not absolute complete faith. Jacob is showing some reasonable deference as he seems to be feeling his brother out, to determined his state of mind at this point.

I believe that Jacob's message was to convey his own life briefly and honestly, and without any intention of being duplicitous towards his twin brother.

Genesis 32:3–5 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. He also commanded them saying, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau; I now own oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." (Jack M. Ballinger)

## Genesis 32:3–5 Emissaries Sent (Jack M. Ballinger)

### Maneuvers to Offset the Esau Threat (vv. 4-22)

1. Jacob, strictly speaking, abandons reliance on the divine promise to bring his safely back to the land of promise with a view to fulfilling the promise to make his seed innumerable (cf. 26:3-4; 31:3).
2. Once again he resorts to energy of the flesh antics to deliver himself from a potentially harmful situation.
3. His efforts to influence the sheep and goats genetically was wasted energy and futile.
4. It is God who brings success and deliverance.
5. Here in the first scene of this episode with his brother Jacob sends emissaries to mollify his brother.
6. Note the use of the term male-akim here and in the previous verse dealing with angels.
7. Jacob's actions beginning with this initial contact is to feel-out Esau to see if the old grudge might be forgiven or forgotten.
8. Jacob assumes the worst and acts accordingly.
9. The destination of the messengers sent by Jacob is said to be "in the land of Seir/the country of Edom."
10. Somehow Jacob knew where his brother was living after all these years.
11. Seir reflects the fact that Esau was hairy.

<sup>135</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:5.

<sup>136</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:5.

## Genesis 32:3–5 Emissaries Sent (Jack M. Ballinger)

12. Edom recalls the color red associated with Esau both in appearance and in connection with the lentil stew incident.
13. During the twenty years of their separation Esau had been busy building a small kingdom.
14. How did Jacob know that he would cross paths with Esau who lived on the east side of the Dead Sea?
15. Jacob's migration back to Canaan was not a small operation and news of a significant livestock drive would have spread.
16. The specific message to be relayed to his brother contains a brief summation of Jacob's years with Laban, a low-key reference to Jacob's property and a statement of hope that the he might find favor with his estranged brother (vv. 4-5).
17. The header is: "To my lord Esau: Thus says/speaks your servant Jacob."
18. Jacob's language is deferential.
19. He postures himself as the inferior when in point of fact he is the dominant one based on the oracle of Rebekah.
20. In as few a words as possible Jacob condenses his twenty year stay in Haran (v.4).
21. Next he makes mention of his physical assets, and in so doing he uses singulars (collective) in the listing in v.5.
22. Does he intimate that these are Esau's for the taking?
23. Jacob avoids giving out too much information but just enough to perk Esau's interest.
24. He avoids any direct mention of the falling out that happened twenty years hence.
25. Finally, Jacob states his purpose in making contact with his brother.
26. He tells him he hopes to find "favor in [his] eyes."
27. Without saying as much, Jacob is offering a fig leaf that the old rift between them might be healed.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen32.htm> accessed March 2, 2019.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**And so return the messengers unto Jacob, to say, "We came unto your brother unto Esau and [he] is coming to meet you and four hundreds a man with him."**

Genesis  
32:6

**The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and [he informed us that he] is coming to meet you and [also there are] 400 men with him."**

**The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We met up with your brother Esau, and he informed us that he will come out to meet you. Also there are 400 men with him."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so return the messengers unto Jacob, to say, "We came unto your brother unto Esau and [he] is coming to meet you and four hundreds a man with him."
Targum (Onkelos)	And the messengers returned to Jakob, saying, We came to thy brother, to Esau; and he cometh also to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the messengers returned to Jakob, saying, We came to thy brother, to Esau, and he also cometh to meet thee, and four hundred chief <u>warriors</u> [Polimarkeen] with him. [Jerusalem. And four hundred men, <u>warlike leaders</u> with him.].
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying: We came to Esau your brother, and behold he comes with speed to meet you with four hundred men.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	The messengers returned to Ya'aqub, saying, "We came to your brother Esau. Not only that, but he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

Peshitta (Syriac)	And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau, and behold he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau, and lo! he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him.

Significant differences: Two targums interpret these 400 men as *warriors*. That is not in the text, but it is not necessarily an inaccurate understanding. Dr. John Gill comments: *The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call these four hundred men leaders or generals of armies, which is not probable; they were most likely Esau's subjects, his tenants and servants.*<sup>137</sup>

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	When the servants came back they said, We have seen your brother Esau and he is coming out to you, and four hundred men with him.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When the messengers came back to Jacob, they said, "We went to your brother Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you. He has four hundred men with him."
<i>The Message</i>	The messengers came back to Jacob and said, "We talked to your brother Esau and he's on his way to meet you. But he has four hundred men with him."

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	After Jacob's scouts delivered the message, they reported, "We met your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you. He is bringing 400 men with him."
Contemporary English V.	When the messengers returned, they told Jacob, "We went to your brother Esau, and now he is heading this way with four hundred men."
The Living Bible	The messengers returned with the news that Esau was on the way to meet Jacob—with an army of 400 men!
New Berkeley Version	The messenger returned to Jacob with the report, "We arrived at your brother Esau's and he is now on the way to meet you, accompanied by 400 men."
New Living Translation	After delivering the message, the messengers returned to Jacob and reported, "We met your brother, Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you—with an army of 400 men!"

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, the messengers returned to Jacob and said: 'We reached your brother Esau, and {Look!} now he's coming to meet you with four hundred men!'
Beck's American Translation	The messengers came back to Jacob. "We came to your brother Esau," they said; "he's coming to meet you. There are four hundred men with him."
International Standard V	Later, the messengers returned to Jacob and reported, "We went to your brother Esau. He's now coming to meet you—and he has 400 men with him!"
Revised Knox Bible	And this was the news the messengers brought back with them, We found your brother Esau; even now he comes hastening to meet you, with four hundred men.
Translation for Translators	The messengers went and gave that message to Esau. When they returned to Jacob, they said, "We went to your older brother Esau. Now he is coming to you, and four hundred men are coming with him."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<sup>137</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:6.

Awful Scroll Bible	The messengers were to turn back to Jacob, to the intent: We are to have come to your brother Esau, and he is to be coming to encounter you with hundreds of men.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	When the messengers returned to Jacob they reported; " We went to your brother, to Esau, and he is also coming to call upon you, and four hundred men with him."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And the messengers came again to Jacob saying: we came unto your brother Esau, and he comes against you and four hundred men with him.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother, Esau, and also he is walking to meet you, and four hundred men with him.
New American Bible (2002)	When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We reached your brother Esau. He is now coming to meet you, accompanied by four hundred men."
New Jerusalem Bible	The messengers returned to Jacob and told him, 'We went to your brother Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you; there are four hundred men with him.'
Revised English Bible	The messengers returned to Jacob and said, "We went to your brother Esau and he is already on the way to meet you with four hundred men."

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And the angels return to Yaaqov, saying, We came to your brother Esav and he also comes to meet you with four hundred men.
Kaplan Translation	The messengers returned to Jacob with the report: 'We came to your brother Esau, and he is also heading toward you. He has 400 men with him.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And the malachim returned to Ya'akov, saying, We came to Esav achicha, and also he cometh to meet thee, and arba me'ot ish with him.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

Kretzmann's Commentary	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. The return of Jacob's messengers without a friendly greeting was intended by Esau to make an ominous impression. As a princely sheik of the desert he came with his retainers, his sons, his servants, and other adherents, with whose aid he was gradually driving out the Horites from the land of Seir. If nothing else, Esau wanted to have his brother feel his superior power, for this he valued more highly than the promise of a religious dominion in the dim and distant future.
The Pulpit Commentary	And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee (vide Genesis 33:1), and four hundred men with him. That Esau was attended by 400 armed followers was a proof that he had grown to be a powerful chieftain.
The Voice	The messengers <i>went out to Esau and then</i> returned to Jacob <i>with a troubling report</i> . <b>Messengers:</b> We went to your brother Esau <i>and gave him your message</i> . He is coming to meet you, but 400 men are with him.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and the messengers turned back to Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> saying, we came to your brother, to Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> and also walking to meet you and four hundred men with him,...
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Concordant Literal Version	And returning are the messengers to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother, Esau, and, moreover, going is he to meet you, and four hundred men with him.
Green's Literal Translation	And the messengers came back to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau, and also he <i>is</i> coming to meet you, and four hundred men <i>are</i> with him.
Modern English Version	The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you, and what is more, four hundred men are with him."
NASB	The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."
New European Version	The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau. Not only that, but he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to your brother Esau, and moreover he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him.
Young's Updated LT	And the messengers turn back unto Jacob, saying, "We came in unto your brother, unto Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him."
<b>The gist of this passage:</b>	The messengers tell Jacob that they made contact with Esau and he is coming to meet him with 400 men.

<b>Genesis 32:6a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שוב) [pronounced <i>shoo<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
mal'âkê (מלאך) [pronounced <i>mahl<sup>e</sup>-AWK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isaiah 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Ya'âqôb (יעקב) [pronounced <i>yah-âuh-KOH<sup>b</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** The messengers returned to Jacob,...

Jacob sent messengers to Esau, and now they are coming back to him. This is generally good news. Esau did not abuse them, harm them or threaten them. So, first impression is, everything looks good.

Genesis 32:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'âch (אח) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced gay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796

**Translation:** ...saying, "We came to your brother Esau,..."

His messengers tell him that they were able to find Esau, and since they have returned, that in itself seems to be a good thing.

Quite obviously, Jacob's information that Esau was in Seir was accurate.

Genesis 32:6c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>is walking, is going, is departing, is advancing, is traveling</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

## Genesis 32:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896

**Translation:** ...and [he informed us that he] is coming to meet you...

Now there is the problem. Esau is coming to meet Jacob. Obviously, Esau would have to tell the messengers this; therefore, the inserted text simply fills out the story.

## Genesis 32:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ar <sup>e</sup> ba' (עָבָרָא) [pronounced ahr <sup>e</sup> -BAHÇ]	<i>four</i>	masculine singular noun; numeral	Strong's #702 BDB #916
mê'ôwth (תּוֹאֲמ) [pronounced may-OHTH]	<i>hundreds</i>	feminine plural noun; numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** ...and [also there are] 400 men with him."

Esau coming to meet him is very much what Jacob would expect. However, Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men. That is a small army. Jacob will find this to be very disconcerting.

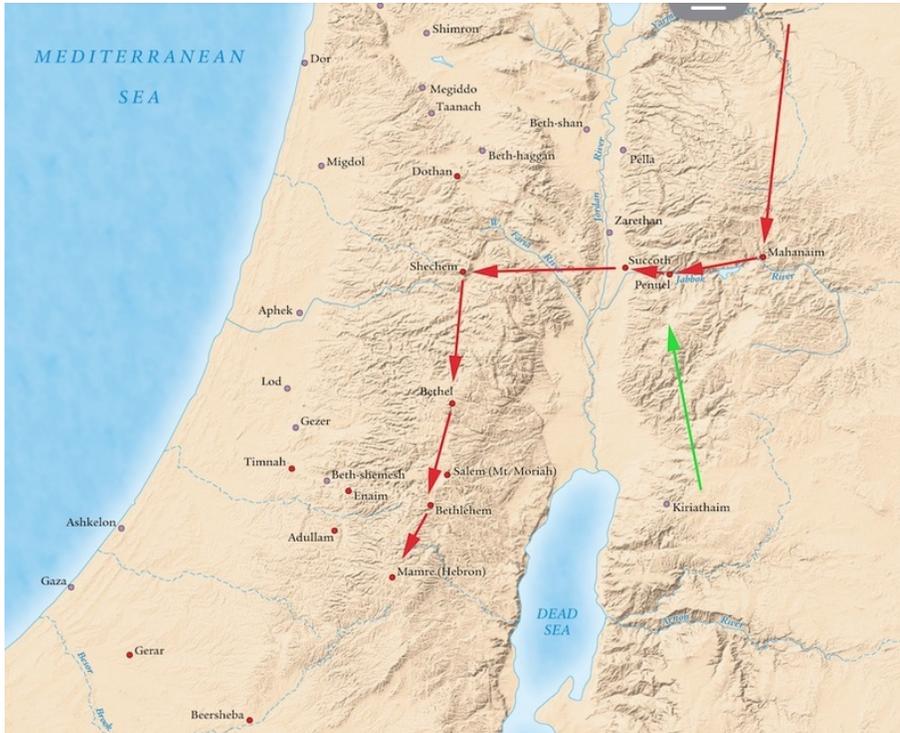
It ought to be clear that the number of men is probably a round number, estimated by the messengers.

This is interesting. 400 men indicates that Esau is very successful and that he has many people who work for him and support him (probably most of these men are slaves, which was a profession of sorts in that era). Is Esau trying to make Jacob a little fearful about this meeting? Or does Esau simply want to impress his brother? Or—and we should not rule this out—is this simply the way that Esau travels?

In any case, this is all quite interesting. Not only had Esau become quite successful, but he was a leader in his own right.

No doubt that Jacob is shaken somewhat, knowing that his brother is about to meet him, and he is traveling with 400 men. Jacob has to remember, he is the son of promise. God sent angels to greet him on his return to the land. Therefore, what exactly does he need to worry about?

Jacob does not really have many choices at this time. He could go backwards to Laban, but he more or less sorted things out with his uncle, which included him going west, and his uncle going back east, with a pile of rocks between them. In Jacob traveling west, there were not a great many roads. He cannot choose to go an alternate route, hoping to miss his brother. Furthermore, Jacob knew that part of returning to the land meant that he would have to see his brother—there was likely no way around that—even if his brother did not live where Jacob planned to live.



**The Routes of Jacob and Esau** (a map); from [A Fire in My Bones](#); accessed March 6, 2019.

We do not know the routes of these two men exactly; but I will assume to the routes shown represent well-known and often used roads in the ancient era. Jacob is the red arrows, coming from Haran; and Esau is the green arrow, coming up from Seir (which is south of the Dead Sea).

And, what probably gave Jacob some comfort—although not complete confidence—is the camp of angels who were nearby. Jacob's confidence should have been complete. He is in the geographical will of God; God told him to pick up and move back to Canaan. He is aware of the camp of angels, which could interpreted as his guard.

**Application:** We face all kinds of difficulties in our lives, but what do we have? We are in union with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The God Who created the universe is in us. Now, how worried should we actually be?

The College Press Bible Study asked many questions about this: *Why was Esau in that territory in the first place? And why was he there in such force, if he was not engaged in dispossessing the occupants? Why would he be that far north, if conquest was not his design? How would he know that he would be meeting up with Jacob? Did Jacob expect to find him there, or somewhere back in the vicinity of Canaan?*<sup>138</sup>

For whatever reason, I do get concerned about some extraneous things regarding Jacob; but not as concerned when it comes to speculating about Esau. I believe that he was presenting himself to his brother as wealthy and powerful. With that many men to move about with, it is possible that he determined what would go on east of the Salt Sea and the Jordan River. However, based upon how all of this plays out, Esau does not appear to still be filled with resentment towards his brother; nor does he appear to be looking for revenge. I believe that, with 400 men with him, Esau is putting on the best look that he can. Or, in the alternative, this is how he travels now.

Genesis 32:6 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and [he informed us that he] is coming to meet you and [also there are] 400 men with him." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:6 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We met up with your brother Esau, and he informed us that he will come out to meet you. Also there are 400 men with him." (Kukis paraphrase)

<sup>138</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

Genesis 32:6 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We met up with your brother Esau, and he informed us that he will come out to meet you. Also there will be 400 men with him."

### Genesis 32:6: Esau and His 400 Men (various commentators)

400 is a round number, not to indicate exactly the number of men who were with Esau. This is a sizable strike force, even more so in this era.<sup>139</sup>

Barnes: *Four hundred men... was a formidable force. Esau had begun to live by the sword (Genesis 27:40), and had surrounded himself with a numerous body of followers. Associated by marriage with the Hittites and the Ishmaelites, he had rapidly risen to the rank of a powerful chieftain.*

Barnes continues: *It is vain to conjecture with what intent Esau advanced at the head of so large a retinue. It is probable that he was accustomed to a strong escort, that he wished to make an imposing appearance before his brother, and that his mind was in that wavering state, when the slightest incident might soothe him into good-will, or arouse him to vengeance. Jacob, remembering his own former dealings with him, has good cause for alarm.*<sup>140</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *Where Esau was, and how he had become the head of a force of four hundred men, is not related, but may have formed part of another narrative.*<sup>141</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Esau may have had a large army because he had had to subjugate the Horite (Hurrian) population of Seir (Genesis 32:6). His soldiers probably consisted of his own servants plus the Canaanite and Ishmaelite relations of his wives.*<sup>142</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *That he came with such a formidable force to meet his brother has been set down to personal vanity, or a desire to show how powerful a prince he had become (Lyra, Menochius); to fraternal kindness, which prompted him to do honor to his brother (Poole, Calvin, Clarke), to a distinctly hostile intention (Willet, Ainsworth, Candlish), at least if circumstances should seem to call for vengeance (Keil), though it is probable that Esau's mind, on first hearing of his brother's nearness, was simply excited, and "in that wavering state which the slightest incident might soothe into good will, or rouse into vengeance" (Murphy).*<sup>143</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[Esau was coming with] four hundred men... partly to show his grandeur, and partly out of respect to Jacob, and to do honour to him; though some think this was done with an ill design upon him, and which indeed seems probable; and it is certain Jacob so understood it.*<sup>144</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Esau's] reason for going to meet Jacob with such a company may have been, either to show how mighty a prince he was, or with the intention of making his brother sensible of his superior power, and assuming a hostile attitude if the circumstances favoured it, even though the lapse of years had so far mitigated his anger, that he no longer seriously thought of executing the vengeance he had threatened twenty years before.*<sup>145</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Paraphrased from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 55 (footnote).

<sup>140</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:4–9.

<sup>141</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>142</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>143</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>144</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>145</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:4–7.

## Genesis 32:6: Esau and His 400 Men (various commentators)

Murphy: *It is vain to conjecture with what intent he advanced at the head of so large a retinue. It is probable that he was accustomed to a strong escort, that he wished to make an imposing appearance before his brother, and that his mind was in that wavering state, when the slightest incident might soothe him into good will, or arouse him to vengeance.*<sup>146</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *Jacob assumes the worst Esau is coming with a strong force to conquer and kill Jacob. This will be payback for the deceit Jacob perpetrated on Esau 20 years earlier.*<sup>147</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Evidently, it appears from the text of Genesis 32:6 that the delegation never made contact with Esau and never communicated Jacob's desire to reconcile with Esau since they are never said to speak with Esau. Therefore, it appears that the messengers only went far enough to discover that Esau was advancing toward them accompanied by four hundred men, which would understandably cause them to think that Esau had hostile intentions.*

Wenstrom continues: *So the delegation never makes contact with Esau out of fear of him because they saw the four hundred men and immediately assumed that Esau's intentions were hostile and they conveyed that fear to Jacob by emphasizing the four hundred men.*<sup>148</sup>

Because it is clear that Esau has the larger force of fighting men by far, we tend to put all of this on Esau's head, simply because he is the stronger party here. However, what Whedon suggests makes so much sense—Esau has been burned before by Jacob, so he shows up with his mobile strike force, just in case.

It does appear that Jacob's men did not actually speak directly to Esau, but we do not know this for certain. And, even though Whedon makes some good points, we do not even know Esau's intent or concerns. It makes perfect sense for Esau to have no concern about meeting his brother. He seems to have already reconciled himself to the fact that Jacob will continue with the land promises first made to Abraham and Isaac.

The alternative viewpoint is, this is just how Esau travels at this time.

Furthermore, it is important to observe that, Esau was with these 400 men when Jacob's servants found him. Therefore, he has not gathered this force with the intent of harming Jacob.

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Genesis 32:6 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We met up with your brother Esau, and he informed us that he will come out to meet you. Also there will be 400 men with him."

## Genesis 32:6: Esau and His 400 Men (a discussion)

Forerunner Commentary: *Esau had built up a considerable following, amassing an army of 400 men (Genesis 32:6; 33:1). Obviously, over such a short time, these men could not all have been Esau's direct descendants or even all his servants. We can deduce their identity by assembling the clues found in Genesis 36:2, 8, 20, and 24. Evidently, Esau's wife "Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite" (verses 1, 24) was also a Horite, who were the people who "inhabited the land" of Seir (verse 20). When Esau migrated to Seir (verse 8), he essentially went to live with his Horite wife's family, aristocrats of the area (verses 29-30). Many of the 400 men, then, were probably Horites, relatives of Esau's wife.*<sup>149</sup>

<sup>146</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:6 (suggestive comments).

<sup>147</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>148</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>149</sup> From [Forerunner's Commentary](#); Genesis 32:6.

## Genesis 32:6: Esau and His 400 Men (a discussion)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The four hundred men was the standard size of a militia in the days of the patriarchs (1 Samuel 22:2; 25:13; 30:10; cf. Genesis 14:14).*<sup>150</sup>

Gary Everett believed that Esau had come to kill Jacob: *Jacob needed a miracle because Esau was fully intent upon killing Jacob.*<sup>151</sup>

My problem with Everett's view is, there is nothing said as to Esau's motivation. My guess—and this is only a guess—is that Esau shows up with 400 men to intimidate Jacob and/or to show off his wealth, power and position. Or, this is simply how Esau travels now.

Matthew Henry suggests that Esau appeared to be ready to go to war with Jacob: *He receives a very formidable account of Esau's warlike preparations against him (Genesis 32:6), not a word, but a blow, a very coarse return to his kind message, and a sorry welcome home to a poor brother: He comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him.*<sup>152</sup>

Although this is the appearance, Henry also goes into great detail about Esau's motivations, which I do not believe are readily available to us (I believe that there are some things we can figure out; I will do a better job than Henry does in speculation). Henry had a lot of say about both Esau and Jacob, most of which I thought was nonsensical, so I did not quote him at length.

Matthew Poole: *[This is Esau's] usual guard, he being then a great man in those parts; or in ostentation of his power and greatness.*<sup>153</sup>

We should not rule out that this is the way that Esau traveled at this time—and that there might have been good reason to do so.

Whedon: *On receiving Jacob's message, and not knowing altogether what to make of it, and purposing not to be surprised or wronged by any new stratagem of the brother who had cheated him so sorely in the past, he proceeded at once with four hundred of his men to meet him.*<sup>154</sup>

Had the subjugation of the land of Edom and Seir been a recent thing (Deuteronomy 2:12), then it would have been normal for Esau to travel with this small army. However, it is not completely clear as to when Esau's complete domination of the land takes place, as the chiefs of the Horites living in Seir are mentioned in Genesis 36:20–21, 29–30. Although Deuteronomy 2:12 speaks of Esau's domination of that region, that does not necessarily mean that we are speaking of Esau personally; this could reference his descendants.<sup>155</sup>

This was actually a very nice sized force. They were mobile, close-knit, and dedicated.

What I think is possibly the best understanding is, Jacob's messengers came to Esau at a time when he was with his 400 men. At hearing the message, Esau immediately responded by dropping everything and leading his men north to meet his estranged brother on route.

It seems most likely to me that, at this period of time, this is simply how Esau traveled—he had a small, efficient strike force. If Esau is going to travel 30 or more miles out of his way for something, it makes far more sense for him to travel with his small army than without.

<sup>150</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>151</sup> Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

<sup>152</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:3–8 (slightly edited).

<sup>153</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>154</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:3.

<sup>155</sup> Just as the name *Israel* is used throughout the book of Exodus.

I think that key to understanding Esau and him traveling with this 400 men to meet Jacob—Esau did not hear from the messengers and *then* gather up his men. They are with him already. This is more his status quo than him showing off for his brother.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:6 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, “We met up with your brother Esau, and he informed us that he will come out to meet you. Also there are 400 men with him.”

The Bible indicates to us that Esau and his descendants controlled the land south of the Dead Sea called Edom. His movement up along the east side of the Dead Sea with relative ease suggests that they controlled much of this territory or were respected throughout most of this land.

Let me make an observation here that may give us a clue as to Esau’s motivation. When the messengers come to Esau, he is with 400 men. Therefore, he does not hear that Jacob is coming, allow his resentment to overcome him, and then goes out to get 400 men to travel with him to meet up with Jacob. Those men are with him already. So, if Jacob thought this through (and if the many commentators thought this through chronologically<sup>156</sup>), Esau being with 400 men is unrelated to Jacob coming to Canaan. Therefore, Esau traveling with these men is unrelated to Jacob and their previous disagreements.

When I first began evaluating this passage, I looked at these events too much from Jacob’s point of view: Esau is traveling to meet him and he is bringing 400 men with him. That might cause any person to be taken aback. But if these messengers came to Esau, and Esau has 400 men with him, then this is completely unrelated to Jacob returned to Canaan. Consequently, a careful, non-emotional analysis of the facts tells us that Jacob need not be worried.

Earlier, I suggested that we have no way of knowing just how many angels there were in the second encampment that Jacob saw; but now, allow me to posit that there were at least 400. God knew what was going on with Esau and God knew that he regularly moved about with a scratch army of 400. So, on the one hand, God reveals to Jacob that, “I have your back. See this encampment of angels? Your safety is assured.” But God expects Jacob to think and act on the basis of what God revealed. “You are protected by an encampment of angels; so, based upon that, how do you react to Esau’s small army?”

**Application:** In this life, God is not going to open our eyes to see the angelic configuration about us, taking incoming fire; but, God reveals enough information about His protection for us that we must think and act based upon that knowledge.

Gen. 32:6–7a 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." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. (ESV)

We know throughout much of this chapter what Jacob this thinking and what motivates him. We do not know as much about Esau, but there are some conclusions that I believe we can reasonably come to.

### Esau’s Motivation and Thinking

1. We know exactly how Jacob feels; he is afraid. Genesis 32:7
2. We do not know exactly what Esau is thinking and feeling.
3. At one time, Esau was quite upset with Jacob and he wanted to kill Jacob. Genesis 27:41
4. What someone thought and/or said 20 years ago can be unimportant to their thinking today.
5. If Esau was mad at Jacob and he had good reason to be.
6. However, there is a very important piece of information which ought to mollify Jacob’s fear: Esau is living

<sup>156</sup> I don’t know of a single commentator who looked at this situation in this way.

## Esau's Motivation and Thinking

in Seir, away from Isaac, away from the Land of Promise. That seems to indicate the Esau is no longer worried about that specific inheritance. Furthermore, Esau made that decision, even though Jacob is out of the land (Jacob was in Haran for 20 years).

7. One of the main points of contention between Jacob and Esau is the promise which God had made to Abraham and to Isaac—about the land of Canaan. Jacob wanted this, and all the other promises to fall upon him; and not upon Esau.
8. Esau is not living with Isaac in the Land of Promise. That is a very big deal. This suggests that Esau is over it. He was mad—extremely angry in fact—but he has since moved on, literally and emotionally. He lives in Seir and he is very successful and powerful there.
9. Esau leads a small, mobile force of 400 men.
10. He does not need anything from Jacob, including the blessing which Jacob connived out of their father Isaac. We sometimes think that Ishmael and Esau drew the short straw, but they didn't. They were very blessed by God.
11. All of this is confirmed when Esau meets up with Jacob. He runs to Jacob and embraces him. Genesis 33:4
12. So, if I had to guess, Esau misses his brother, loves his brother; and is not concerned about the past, their past disagreements, or his place in the Land of Promise.

Although much of this is conjecture, it does match up with the Scriptures which we have. A lot of confusion can be avoided simply by understanding that Jacob traveled with this small army of 400 men. He did not raise them up in order to come see Jacob.

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## Jacob's Distress and Confusion

Unfortunately, Jacob does not evaluate the situation using doctrine and common sense; he becomes afraid, and this short-circuits his thinking.

**And so is afraid Jacob greatly and so he is distressed to himself. And so he divides [into two] the people who [are] with him and the flock and the herd and the camels to two of camps. And so he says, "If comes Esau unto the company the one and he strikes down him, and the company the remaining to escape."**

Genesis  
32:7–8

**Jacob is greatly afraid and he is experiencing great inner stress [lit., *he is stressed regarding himself*]. Therefore, he divides the people who [are] with him, and the flocks, the herds and the camels, into two camps. He thought, *If Esau comes to one company and strikes it down, the remaining company can escape.***

**Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress. Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps. He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups. He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so is afraid Jacob greatly and so he is distressed to himself. And so he divides [into two] the people who [are] with him and the flock and the herd and the camels to two of camps. And so he says, "If comes Esau unto the company the one and he strikes down him, and the company the remaining to escape."
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob feared greatly, and it distressed him. And he divided the people that were with him, and the sheep, and oxen, and camels, into two hosts, and said, If Esau come to the one host and smite it, the host that is left may escape.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob was greatly afraid, <u>because for twenty years he had not been mindful of the glory of his father</u> ; and he had anxiety; and he divided the people who were with him, the sheep, and oxen, and camels, into <u>three troops, for a portion to Leah, and a portion to Rahel</u> . And he said, If Esau come to the one troop of them and smite it, the remaining troop may escape.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Then Jacob was greatly afraid; and in his fear divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and the sheep, and the oxen, and the camels, into two companies, Saying: If Esau come to one company and destroy it, the other company that is left shall escape.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Then Ya'aqub was greatly afraid and was distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two companies; and he said, "If Esau comes to the one company, and strikes it, then the company which is left will escape."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Jacob was afraid and greatly distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups; And Jacob said, If my brother Esau should come against one group and destroy it, then the group which is left shall escape.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob was greatly terrified, and was perplexed; and he divided the people that was with him, and the cows, and the camels, and the sheep, into two camps. And Jacob said, If Esau should come to one camp, and smite it, the other camp shall be in safety.
Significant differences:	One targum has 3 <i>camps</i> rather than two. The Latin lists 4 sets of animals rather than 3.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob was in great fear and trouble of mind: and he put all the people and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two groups; And said, If Esau, meeting one group, makes an attack on them, the others will get away safely.
Easy English	Jacob was very frightened and worried. So he separated his people into 2 groups. He also separated the animals. He thought 'If Esau attacks one group, the other group may be safe.'
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Jacob was very frightened and worried. He divided the people who were with him and all the flocks, herds, and camels into two groups. Jacob thought, "If Esau comes and destroys one group, the other group can run away and be saved."
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob was scared. Very scared. Panicked, he divided his people, sheep, cattle, and camels into two camps. He thought, "If Esau comes on the first camp and attacks it, the other camp has a chance to get away."
NIRV	Jacob was very worried and afraid. So he separated the people with him into two groups. He also separated the flocks and herds and camels. He thought, "Esau might come and attack one group. If he does, the group that's left can escape."
New Simplified Bible	Jacob was frightened and worried. He divided the people who were with him into two groups. He also divided his sheep, goats, cattle, and camels. He thought: »If Esau comes and attacks the first group, the other may be able to escape.«

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	This news terrified Jacob. He divided his caravan of people and livestock into two groups. He said, "If Esau attacks one group maybe this will give the other group time to get away."
Common English Bible	Jacob was terrified and felt trapped, so he divided the people with him, and the flocks, cattle, and camels, into two camps. He thought, If Esau meets the first camp and attacks it, at least one camp will be left to escape.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob was so frightened that he divided his people, sheep, cattle, and camels into two groups. He thought, "If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape."
The Living Bible	Jacob was frantic with fear. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups; for he said, "If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape."
New Berkeley Version	Then Jacob, greatly alarmed and distressed, divided the people that were with him, and his flocks, his herds and his camels into two camps, reasoning that if Esau should come upon one camp and destroy it, the remaining camp would escape.
New Century Version	Then Jacob was very afraid and worried. He divided the people who were with him and all the flocks, herds, and camels into two camps. Jacob thought, "Esau might come and destroy one camp, but the other camp can run away and be saved."
New Life Version	Then Jacob was afraid and troubled. And he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and cattle and camels, into two groups. For he said, "If Esau comes to the one group and destroys it, then the other group will get away."
New Living Translation	Jacob was terrified at the news. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups. He thought, "If Esau meets one group and attacks it, perhaps the other group can escape."

#### **Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	Jacob was terrified (very upset) by this. So he divided the people that were with him (as well as the cattle, camels, and sheep) into two camps. 8 And Jacob said: 'If Esau comes to one camp and attacks it, the other camp will survive.'
International Standard V	Feeling mounting terror and distress, Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, doing the same with the flocks, the cattle, and the camels. Jacob was thinking, "If Esau comes to one group and attacks it, then the remaining group may escape."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	At this, Jacob was overcome with terror, and in his extremity he divided up his followers, the flocks of sheep, too, and the cattle, and the camels, into two companies; If Esau, he thought, should meet with one company, and fall upon it, at least the other will come through safely.
Translation for Translators	Jacob was very afraid and worried. So he divided the people who were with him into two groups. He also divided the sheep and goats, the cattle, and the camels, into two groups. He was thinking, "If Esau and his men come and attack us, perhaps one of the groups will be left and will be able to escape."

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Awful Scroll Bible	The messengers were to turn back to Jacob, to the intent: We are to have come to your brother Esau, and he is to be coming to encounter you with hundreds of men. Jacob was to greatly fear, and he was to be inhibitive. He was to divide his people, the small cattle, the large cattle, and the camels, into two camps.
Conservapedia	Jacob was exceedingly afraid and distressed. He split the people with him, and the flocks, herds, and camels, into two camps. He said, "If Esau comes to one camp and destroys it, then the other, remaining camp will escape [Literally, "achieve deliverance."]."

Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Jacob, consequently, was very greatly afraid, and it distressed him ; so he divided the people who were with him, and the sheep and the cattle, and camels into two camps ; " because," he said, " if Esau comes to the one camp, and assails it, then there will be the other to fly to."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then was Jacob greatly afraid, and knew not which way to turn himself, and divided the people that was with him and the sheep, oxen and camels, into two companies, and said: If Esau come to the one part and smite it, the other may save itself.
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob was very much afraid and distressed, and he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two camps; and he said: If Esau come against the one camp and smite it, then the remaining camp may have a chance to escape.
Tree of Life Version	So Jacob became extremely afraid and distressed. He divided the people with him, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, for he thought, "If Esau comes to one camp and strikes it, the camp that's left will escape."

### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	Jacob was full of fear and dis-tressed. He then divided the people with him and the flocks, the herds and camels into two camps, thinking, "If Esau attacks one camp, the other will escape."
The Heritage Bible	And Jacob was greatly afraid, and distressed, and he split the people who were with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two armies; And he said, If Esau comes to the one army, and strikes it, then the other army which is left shall escape.
New American Bible (2002)	Jacob was very much frightened. In his anxiety, he divided the people who were with him, as well as his flocks, herds and camels, into two camps. "If Esau should attack and overwhelm one camp," he reasoned, "the remaining camp may still survive."
New Jerusalem Bible	Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people with him, and the flocks and cattle, into two camps, thinking, 'If Esau comes to one of the camps and attacks it, the remaining camp may be able to escape.'
Revised English Bible	Jacob, much afraid and distressed, divided the people with him, as well as the sheep, cattle, and camels, into two companies. He reasoned that, if Esau should come upon one company and destroy it, the other might still survive.

### **Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov became greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people, flocks, cattle and camels with him into two camps, saying, "If 'Esav comes to the one camp and attacks it, at least the camp that is left will escape."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov awes mightily and is depressed: and he halves the people with him and the flocks and oxen and the camels into two camps; and says, If Esav comes to the one camp and smites it, then the other camp which survives escapes.
Israeli Authorized Version	Then Yaakov 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; And said, If Esav come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Jacob was greatly frightened; in his anxiety, he divided the people with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, the other camp may yet escape."

Kaplan Translation	Jacob was very frightened and distressed. He divided the people accompanying him into two camps, along with the sheep, cattle and camels. He said, 'If Esau comes and attacks one camp, at least the other camp will survive.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Then Ya'akov was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided HaAm that was with him, and the tzon, and bakar, and the gemalim, into two machanot; And said, If Esav come to the one machaneh, and attack it, then the other machaneh which is left shall escape.
The Scriptures 1998	And Ya'aqob was greatly afraid and distressed. So he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups, and he said, "If Esau comes to the one group and attacks it, then the other group which is left shall escape."

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Then Jacob was very afraid and ·worried [distressed]. He divided the people who were with him and all the flocks, herds, and camels into two camps. Jacob thought, "Esau might come and ·destroy [strike; attack] one camp, but the ·other camp can run away and [the camp that is left] ·be saved [escape]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. Rebekah, who had not been informed as to a change of mind in Esau, had not called her favorite son back, nor had Esau given any sign that he would now easily be reconciled. Even the believers still have their weak flesh to contend with, and this is very easily discouraged. And he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. This division of the entire caravan into two companies was a precaution intended to save at least one half of his possessions. It shows that Jacob, although in an advanced state of panic, had not lost his natural cunning, overhasty and impatient though it was. The actual experience of danger often causes even firm Christians to forget their simple trust in the Lord's almighty power for a while.
NET Bible®	Jacob was very afraid and upset. So he divided the people who were with him into two camps, as well as the flocks, herds, and camels. "If Esau attacks one camp [ <i>Heb</i> "If Esau comes to one camp and attacks it.]," he thought [ <i>Heb</i> "and he said, 'If Esau comes to one camp and attacks it.'" The order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.], "then the other camp will be able to escape [ <i>Heb</i> "the surviving camp will be for escape." The word "escape" is a feminine noun. The term most often refers to refugees from war.]."
The Pulpit Commentary	Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed:—literally, it was narrow to him; i.e. he was perplexed. Clearly the impression left on Jacob's mind by the report of his ambassadors was that he had nothing to expect but hostility—and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;—according to Gerlach, caravans are frequently divided thus in the present day, and for the same reason as Jacob assigns—And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. It is easy to blame Jacob for want of faith in not trusting to God instead of resorting to his own devices (Candlish), but his behavior in the circumstances evinced great self-possession...(Calvin), considerable prudence (Lange)
The Voice	When Jacob heard <i>their report</i> , he was afraid and <i>extremely</i> distressed. He divided up the people who were with him, the flocks, the herds, and the camels into two camps, thinking, "If Esau comes to one camp and crushes it, at least then the other might escape." Then Jacob prayed. A portion of v. 9 is included for context.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> greatly feared and he distressed for him and he divided the people which were with him and the flocks and the cattle and the camels to two campsites, and he said, if Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> will come to the one campsite and he hit him then the campsite remaining will exist for an escape,...
Concordant Literal Version	And fearing is Jacob exceedingly, and it is distressing to him. And dividing is he the people who are with him, and the flock and the herd and the camels, into two camps. And saying is Jacob, "Should Esau be coming to one camp and smite it, yet the remaining camp will come to be delivered.
Darby Translation	Then Jacob was greatly afraid, and was distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the sheep and the cattle and the camels, into two troops. And he said, If Esau come to the one troop and smite it, then the other troop which is left shall escape.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Then was Jacob greatly afraid, and in distress. So he divided the people that were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two camps, And he said. Should Esau come upon the one camp, and smite it, yet shall the camp that is left escape.
English Standard Version	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, thinking, "If Esau comes to one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape."
Modern English Version	Then Jacob was very afraid and distressed, and he divided the people that were with him, along with the flocks and herds and the camels, into two groups. He said, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the other camp which is left may escape."
Young's Updated LT	And Jacob fears exceedingly, and is distressed, and he divides the people who are with him, and the flock, and the herd, and the camels, into two camps, and says, "If Esau come in unto the one camp, and have smitten it—then the camp which is left has been for an escape."

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob is afraid, so he divides his people and animals into two camps, with the thought that, if Esau attacks on group, the other group can escape.

7-8

<b>Genesis 32:7a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yârê' (אָרַי) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
m <sup>o</sup> ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

**Translation:** Jacob is greatly afraid...

Jacob has been very successful, given his circumstances. He now has 11 sons (if memory serves me), 2 wives, two mistresses, and God has greatly prospered him. However, even though he does have some men and women

servants (it could be a considerable number, in fact), he does not have an army of 400 men with him. If Esau is out for revenge, then he could destroy Jacob and all those with him.

Jacob's fear does him no good. Anything that he does based upon fear is not going to have a good end to it. In fact, God will have to distract Esau that night, so that he does not ruminate all night about his fear of Esau.

Jacob's fear keeps him from correctly evaluating the situation. Esau traveling with 400 men has nothing to do with him. Esau did not meet up with the messengers and say, "I am going to gather up 400 men and *then* I will come out to meet your master." Even if his own messengers were afraid, Jacob should have asked a few simple questions: "Did Esau abuse you? Did he threaten you? Did he treat you with contempt? Were those 400 men with him already?" I have no doubt that Jacob's messengers would have given him the answers that he wanted. But, Jacob is too afraid to think this through.

Not to give away the end of this circumstance, but, there will be a point, very near in the future, where Jacob's fear of Esau will be completely set aside and a non-issue. However, other things will occur and bring Jacob's fear back to focus on other areas of his personal circumstances.

**Application:** Being motivated or ruled by fear is the wrong approach for the believer in Jesus Christ. We will face difficult circumstances from time to time, and God has made provision for those circumstances in eternity past. There will be difficulties in your life that you cannot see your way out of; but, at some point, they will be in your rear view mirror.

Interestingly enough, we know Jacob's fears, but not Esau's. We don't have to speculate about Jacob; he tells us how he feels (which is one of the many examples that much of Genesis is *written* by the main character in the narrative<sup>157</sup>). So, we know that Jacob is fearful because Jacob is recording this information. And, when I say that Jacob is recording the information, I don't mean that he is writing this down on clay tablets or papyrus; but he is committing this information to memory. And he will pass along this information to his sons, along with the previous portions of Genesis which he has memorized.

This becomes particularly prominent in the narrative of Joseph's life (at this time, Joseph is Jacob's youngest son). We will read a chapter or two about events, some of which only Joseph would know—and then, suddenly, there will be a short section of events that Joseph would not have known. For instance, the sons of Jacob would come to Joseph in Egypt to purchase grain. Joseph knows all about the interaction of his brothers with himself; but the narrative in Genesis covers the circumstances of the brothers outside of Egypt, both before coming to Egypt and after leaving Egypt. If you are reading, you probably just let this just happen, and you thought nothing of it. However, what probably happened at first was, Jacob stood up and gave the book of Genesis from beginning to the end of his narrative (perhaps the end of Genesis 36), and after that, Joseph and Judah probably alternately stood up, Joseph telling things from his perspective and Judah, when the time was right, would tell things from his perspective. It would make perfect sense for Judah to stand up and fill in the blanks for Joseph; to tell about things that he, Judah, knew; that Joseph did not. This comes down to us as a seamless narrative, unless you carefully examine the narrative and recognize that no single person knows all that is happening in the final dozen chapters of Genesis.

With this understanding, from the human perspective, we expect to know how Jacob feels, because this is his narrative; we do not expect to know what Esau feels, as he is not recording (mentally) his narrative for us. All of this chapter is given to us from Jacob's perspective—and if you review this chapter, even though Jacob speaks of himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, it is clear that, what we know in this chapter came from Jacob.

I have read a great many theories on the authorship of Genesis, but this particular theory is in keeping with the customs of the Jewish people of reciting their Scriptures in public (or with family); and this approach is consistent with the higher mental capacity that men of that era would have had (Jacob could hear and memorize all the book

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<sup>157</sup> Properly, this is known as *3<sup>rd</sup> Person Limited*. The author does not speak of himself in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, but what we know in his chapters is limited to one person's knowledge.

of Genesis up to his place in it). This approach is also consistent with the many **chiasmi** found in the book of Genesis; which chiasmi are very helpful to a person trying to memorize a long passage of narrative.

Genesis 32:7–8 Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress. Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps. He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups. He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape.

### Genesis 32:7a: Jacob's Fear of Esau (various commentators)

Clarke: *Jacob, conscious that he had injured his brother, was now apprehensive that he was coming with hostile intentions, and that he had every evil to fear from his displeasure. Conscience is a terrible accuser.*

Clarke continues: *It does not appear that Esau in this meeting had any hostile intention, but was really coming with a part of his servants or tribe to do his brother honor.*

Clarke concludes: *[T]he angelic host which Jacob met with before might have inspired him with sufficient confidence in God's protection. But we find that when he needed faith most, he appears to have derived but little benefit from its influence, partly from the sense he had of the injury he had done to his brother, and partly from not attending sufficiently to the assurance which God had given him of his gracious protection.*<sup>158</sup>

The Geneva Bible: *Though he was comforted by the angels, yet the infirmity of the flesh appears.*<sup>159</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Their report left Jacob in painful uncertainty as to what was his brother's views and feelings...[Jacob's] conscience told him that there was much ground for apprehension, and his distress was all the more aggravated that he had to provide for the safety of a large and helpless family.*<sup>160</sup>

Dr. John Gill gives us a very accurate summation of why Jacob is afraid: *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed,.... Knowing what he had done to his brother in getting the birthright and blessing from him, and what an enmity he had conceived in his mind against him on that account, and remembering what he had said he would do to him; and therefore might fear that all his professions of respect to him were craftily and cunningly made to take him off of his guard, and that he might the more easily fall into his hands.*

Gill continues: *[Jacob was especially fearful] when he heard there were four hundred men with him; this struck a terror into him, and made him suspicious of an ill design against him; though herein Jacob betrayed much weakness and want of faith, when God has promised again and again that he would be with him, and keep him, and protect him, and return him safe to the land of Canaan; and when he had just had such an appearance of angels to be his helpers, guardians, and protectors.*<sup>161</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob, being quite uncertain as to his brother's state of mind, was thrown into the greatest alarm and anxiety by the report of the messengers, that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men.*<sup>162</sup>

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *[Jacob was] now expecting to meet with a fiercer enemy in his brother. All was dread and anxiety. He is scarcely delivered from one host of enemies when another is coming forth to meet him. Such was the gloomy and hopeless condition of the outward world as it appeared to Jacob's natural eye.*<sup>163</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>159</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 32:7.

<sup>160</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>161</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:7.

<sup>162</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:4–7.

<sup>163</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–2.

## Genesis 32:7a: Jacob's Fear of Esau (various commentators)

Trapp: *[Jacob] is so damped and terrified with this sad message of Esau's approach and hostile intentions, that he knows not what course to take to.*<sup>164</sup>

Trapp: *[Fear] was his weakness, ... as looking to the present peril, and "forgetting the consolation," ... that he might have drawn from the promise of God, and presence of angels. Faith quells and kills distrustful fears: but Satan, in a distress, hides from us that which should support us, and makes greater that which may appal us.*<sup>165</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett, I think, nails the situation here: *The fact that the messengers were allowed to return without a threatening reply should have assured him that Esau's intentions were not evil. And indeed had they been so Esau and his men would have arrived first. The only purpose then in allowing the messengers to return first would have been to tell Jacob what would happen to him. Esau necessarily comes accompanied by his men. He wants his brother to know that he is powerful and respected. But there is nothing like a guilty conscience for distorting the facts. What is natural behaviour takes on an ominous significance for Jacob.*<sup>166</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *[Jacob] isn't sure what he will find, especially concerning his brother who may still harbor violent intentions against Jacob.*<sup>167</sup>

David Guzik makes a great point here: *When Laban confronted Jacob with a hostile militia Jacob boldly stood up to him and spoke his mind (Genesis 31:36-42). But with Esau, Jacob was afraid to meet him. This was because Jacob knew he was in the right with Laban, but he knew he was in the wrong with Esau. Shakespeare was right when he wrote, "Conscience does make cowards of us all."*<sup>168</sup>

Scriptures on fear: Exodus 14:10 Psalm 18:4–5 31:13 55:4–5 61:2 142:4 Matthew 8:26 John 16:33 Acts 14:22 2Corinthians 1:4, 8–10.<sup>169</sup>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob is afraid because he expects the worst from Esau.

**Applying Jacob's Experience to Our Lives:** Sometimes, these narratives seem esoteric to us. Here is Jacob, a shepherd who lived 4000 years ago. He is about to meet his brother Esau, a brother he has messed over; and a man who potentially can do him harm—to the point of death. Jacob has also seen angels. What does this mean to me, as a believer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**Application:** The Christian often thinks that he ought to receive miraculous signs of encouragement in order to move from point A to point B. In fact, so often, the difficulties that some believers endure are small; their problem is, they do not have a grounding in faith (that is, in Bible doctrine). This would apply to nearly every person who prays to God, "God, give me a sign!"

**Application:** I want you to notice—God gave Jacob a sign. God allowed Jacob to see His angels camping nearby. Whereas this should have given Jacob confidence, he is yet afraid.

<sup>164</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>165</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:7 (edited) .

<sup>166</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:6.

<sup>167</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>168</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:7–8.

<sup>169</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:7.

Guzik comments here: *Jacob also had every reason to believe God would protect him. He seems to have forgotten God had a special camp of angels there to protect him. His great fear and distress is not appropriate for someone who is protected by God.*<sup>170</sup>

Guzik then adds: *[I]f Jacob really trusted God, he would be at the head of the procession to meet Esau, not the tail.*<sup>171</sup>

**Application:** Where does your confidence come from? Not from signs but from Bible doctrine in your soul.

**Application:** There is another application here, suggested by David Guzik.<sup>172</sup> Nearly all of us have things that we have done in our past which cause us guilt and grief. Sometimes, this past is as recent as yesterday. We have to leave our past in the past; we name our sins and move forward. Now, can our past misdeeds come back to bite us? Absolutely. But, God has made provision for us. You may be surprised, but there are quite a number of verses on this particular topic. However, this one comes to mind: Philip. 3:13–14 **Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** (ESV) The Old Testament version of that is Isaiah 48:13 **Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old.** (MKJV)

**Application:** This does not mean that we cannot learn from our past mistakes; but it does mean that, there is little to be gained by reliving the past and wishing that we could undo that which cannot be undone.

**Application:** There is a corollary to forgiving yourself for what you have done in the past. You must be willing to forgive others as well. You must be willing to leave their actions and misdeeds in the past.

**Application:** When it comes to someone who has wronged you in the past, you have to be willing to forgive them; and you leave it there. You don't bring it up every time that you see them (I would hate for others to do that to me). How you interact with them in the future, depending upon the severity of their actions in the past is something which requires Bible doctrine. For instance, you can have a drug addict in your family who you simply cut out of your life; and there might be another instance with another druggie that you don't.

**Application:** Taking this one step further, you must be aware that some of your misdeeds may burn bridges behind you, bridges that can never be mended again. To put it bluntly, there may be people who will never like you again, based upon things that you have done to them in the past. That old maxim remains true until today: do not burn bridges behind you (for those too young to understand that, it means, do not do something to someone that will end your relationship/friendship/kinship forever).

### Genesis 32:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>170</sup> David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:7–8.

<sup>171</sup> David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:13–21.

<sup>172</sup> David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:7–8.

## Genesis 32:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
tsârar (צָרַר) [pronounced tsaw-RAHR]	<i>to press, to compress; to bind up, to bind together; to lay hold of; to shut up; to oppress, to persecute, to treat with hostility; intransitive meanings: to be distressed [stressed, in anguish]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; probably a homonym	Strong's #6887 BDB #864 and #865
This verb only occurs 9 times in Scripture; this is the first time it occurs in the Bible (except for Job).			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...and he is experiencing great inner stress [lit., he is stressed regarding himself].

Jacob has a problem. He left Esau under the worst of circumstances. He had defrauded Esau twice, first stealing his birthright from him (when Jacob was too young to care) and then taking his blessing. As far as Jacob knows, Esau has been ruminating about these past episodes for the past twenty years. As long as Jacob does not return, Esau will likely be able to keep the entire inheritance from Isaac.

We do not know what Esau has in mind, but he has obviously been blessed in order to have 400 men to do his bidding. Esau himself not be certain what he has in mind. The 400 men will show him to be powerful and prosperous. He may be doing this intentionally to strike fear into Jacob's heart. However, as I have already pointed out, Esau did not raise up 400 men to travel with him to see Jacob—those 400 men were already with him. Therefore, there is much less reason for Jacob to fear—if he thought things through.

All of a sudden, living under the crafty and devious Laban does not seem so bad. Jacob can see that Esau is going to destroy him and all that is with him.

At this point, there are no good choices for a man in fear. He cannot return to Laban; and, even if he was able to, he cannot move his children and animals fast enough to outrun Esau. When God told Jacob to return to Canaan, that made running into Esau inevitable.

Now we will see Jacob react and wrestle within himself and wrestle with God was to his only options.

## Genesis 32:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
châtsâh (חָצַח) [pronounced khaw-TSAW]	<i>to divide [in half], to cut in half [two], to halve; metaphorically to live half of one's life</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2673 BDB #345

This is the first occurrence of this verb in Scripture (except for the book of Job).

Genesis 32:7c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'am (אִם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

**Translation:** Therefore, he divides the people who [are] with him,...

Jacob is panicked and he can only think of one way to deal with this. He cannot escape and run the other way. So he decides to divide up his camp. The idea is, he can at least save half of the people with him.

Jacob does this realizing that, if Esau attacks, he will die.

Genesis 32:7c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tsô' (צֹאן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced baw-KAWR]	<i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #1241 BDB #133

## Genesis 32:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâmâl (גַּמְלִים) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAWL</i> ]	<i>camel</i> (this is obviously a transliteration)	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1581 BDB #168
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
sh <sup>e</sup> nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>n-Ā</i> ]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
machăneh (מַחֲנֵה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i> ]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

This same word was used in Genesis 32:2 (And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.—ESV).

**Translation:** ...and the flocks, the herds and the camels, into two camps.

Everything is split up. All of the animals that are with him is split up.

Jacob is not certain what this meeting will be like. He believes that there is the possibility that Esau is still angry and might still harm him. In this, we realize that Jacob does not fully appreciate, or believe, all of the promises which God has made to him. He does not fully appreciate that he is the line of promise, and that God would make a great nation from him. Jacob does not fully appreciate that there is a camp of angels right next to him (which should give him confidence).

Jacob is going to try to preserve his wife and children. By doing this, he will be (in his own mind) *helping* God to fulfill His promises. Or, this could simply indicate that he still has doubts about what God has promised him.

Perhaps seeing that other camp of angels—which should have inspired confidence—gave Jacob the human viewpoint idea to split up his people into two camps.

**Application:** How often have you misinterpreted the events of your life? How often have you taken events, coincidences, or words spoken to mean more than what they actually do?

There are times when God works His will and you just don't see it. I recall the experience myself of suddenly looking around, and realizing just how much God had blessed me. It did not really occur to me before that. Similarly, God has made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to make a great nation of them. If Jacob would look at who is with him, he would recognize that God has blessed him with 12 sons (well, 11 at this point). By the time we get to the end of Genesis, all those with Jacob will number 75. Jacob goes to Paddan-aram by himself (or with his mother's slave); and now he is emerging with two wives, two mistresses, 11 sons, and at least one daughter—and a whole lot of livestock. He needs to open his eyes and realize just how much God has blessed him.

**Application:** It is important for the believer to be able to recognize where and how he has been blessed. Personally, it took me for a while to get to that point—but the various blessings of God have been there all the while.

Genesis 32:7 **Jacob is greatly afraid and he is experiencing great inner stress** [lit., *he is stressed regarding himself*]. **Therefore, he divides the people who [are] with him, and the flocks, the herds and the camels, into two camps.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The Expositor’s Bible Commentary develops a narrative based upon what we have been studying: *No wonder Jacob is disturbed. His wives and dependants gather round him in dismay; the children, catching the infectious panic, cower with cries and weeping about their mothers; the whole camp is rudely shaken out of its brief truce by the news of this rough Esau, whose impetuosity and warlike ways they had all heard of and were now to experience.*<sup>173</sup>

Genesis 32:7–8 **Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress.** **Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps.** **He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups.** **He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape.**

**Genesis 32:7: Jacob divides his people into two camps (various commentators)**

J. Vernon McGee: *Jacob is in a bad way, he thinks. With this brother of his coming to him, he divides up his group. He is being clever. He reasons that if his brother strikes one group, then the other one can escape.*<sup>174</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *There may well be a deliberate contrast here with verse 2 where Mahanaim also meant two companies. He has forgotten that his reliance is on God and his angelic messengers. But his policy is to let Esau arrive and think he has captured all Jacob’s possessions not knowing that there is a second which hopefully survives.*<sup>175</sup>

Murphy: *The disposal of his company into two bands, so that if one was attacked the other might escape, is characteristic of Jacob. He was a scheming man, and never neglected to take every possible precaution.*<sup>176</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *[Jacob’s plans seem] to denote a lack of faith.*<sup>177</sup>

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

**Genesis 32:8**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

<sup>173</sup> *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>174</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>175</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:7–8.

<sup>176</sup> *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:8 (suggestive comments).

<sup>177</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:7–8.

## Genesis 32:8

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
The NET Bible: <i>The Hebrew verb אָמַר ('amar) here represents Jacob's thought or reasoning, and is therefore translated "he thought."</i> <sup>178</sup>			
'īm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
The particle 'īm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative ( <i>lo, behold</i> ), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle ( <i>if, though</i> ); an indication of a wish or desire ( <i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).			
Gesenius writes: <i>Its primary power I regard as demonstrative, lo! Behold!</i> <sup>179</sup>			
bōw' (בָּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'Ēsāv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced ġay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
machāneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
Owens calls this a feminine singular noun.			
'echād (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone</i>	numeral adjective; feminine singular with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nākāh (נָכַח) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong #5221 BDB #645

<sup>178</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

<sup>179</sup> Gesenius *Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, Baker Books; ©1979; p. 55.

Genesis 32:8			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
shâ'ar (שָׂרָא) [pronounced shaw-AHR]	<i>the remaining one, the one that is left over; the leftover, the surviving</i>	Niphal participle with the definite article	Strong's #7604 BDB #983
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pelêyṭâh (פְּלִיטָה) [pronounced pehl-ay-TAW] (there is an alternate spelling)	<i>escape; deliverance; escaped remnant; who or what has escaped</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6413 BDB #812

**Translation:** He thought, *If Esau comes to one company and strikes it down, the remaining company can escape.*

The word translated *thought* actually means *to say*; but it can refer to what a person is thinking. Jacob may have expressed these thoughts aloud; and perhaps he did not.

Jacob is explaining why he is splitting his people into two camps.

Jacob plans for the worst—that if Esau is still angry, that some of those belonging to Jacob might be able to escape with their lives. More than likely, the idea is to have this other group completely out of sight, so that no one is aware that they even exist.

Genesis 32:8 He thought, *If Esau comes to one company and strikes it down, the remaining company can escape.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:7–8 Jacob is greatly afraid and he is experiencing great inner stress [lit., *he is stressed regarding himself*]. Therefore, he divides the people who [are] with him, and the flocks, the herds and the camels, into two camps. He thought, *If Esau comes to one company and strikes it down, the remaining company can escape.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:7–8 Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress. Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps. He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups. He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:7–8 Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress. Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps. He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups. He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape.

## Gen. 32:8: Jacob's reasoning for dividing his people into two camps (comments)

Gill sees his reasoning as faulty: *[O]ne would think, that, notwithstanding all this precaution and wise methods taken, there could be little expectation of escaping the hands of Esau, if he came out on such an ill design; for where could they flee? Or how could they hope to get out of the reach of four hundred men pursuing after them, unless it could be thought, or might be hoped, that the first company falling into his hands, and the revenge on them, and the plunder of them, would satiate him, and he would proceed no further?*<sup>180</sup>

L. M. Grant: *The messengers bring back word that Esau is coming with four hundred men to meet Jacob (v.6). They say nothing as to whether Esau was glad to hear of Jacob or not; and Jacob is thrown into a panic. He is so frightened that, instead of first appealing to the Lord, he divides his company into two bands, thinking that one band may escape if the first is attacked by Esau.*

Grant then applies some divine viewpoint: *Of course such human reasoning was not God's leading. God does not divide His saints in order to sacrifice one part of them for the protection of the other. He loves all His saints, and has no intention of sacrificing any of them to the enemy.*<sup>181</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob, fearing the worst, divided his people and flocks into two camps, that if Esau smote the one, the other might escape.*<sup>182</sup>

Matthew Poole: *Either by flight, or because he supposed Esau's revenge would be satisfied with the first slaughter.*<sup>183</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *[Jacob's] policy is to let Esau arrive and think he has captured all Jacob's possessions not knowing that there is a second which hopefully survives.*<sup>184</sup>

Jacob seems only able to focus on the idea that Esau has the means and desire to kill him. Although certainly the former is true; there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that Esau has no intention of harming his brother Jacob. What does Jacob actually know at this time? He knows that God has not said, "Jacob, you need to ready your men for battle; Esau is going to strike you with 400 men." This should have told Jacob that, he did not need to worry.

Jacob is using human viewpoint to solve his problem of stress and fear. However, there is literally no human viewpoint solution available to Jacob at this time.

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When we fall into fear, the first thing that happens is that we are out of fellowship. When we are out of fellowship, we immediately resort to human viewpoint. Although it is not so stated here, Jacob certainly has ideas about how to split the companies up. He will certainly place his wives and children into the company in the rear, which will be the company which will escape if the other company is destroyed. There is a certain lack of logic. If the first company is destroyed, how will he know? If he camps too close, then Esau could overtake the second camp without any difficulty (remember, with 3 days head start, Laban still pursued and caught up with Jacob).

Jacob will have at least 3 different ways that he will arrange his people, his animals and his family before meeting Esau face to face.

It is not clear that Jacob fully appreciates this, but he is in a totally helpless situation. God often needs to put us in this position. If we have wandered from Him and His Word, then we do not know how to act under pressure. We do not know how to behave and whom to trust. We might hear advice from twenty people, twenty ideas, all

<sup>180</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:8.

<sup>181</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>182</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:8–11.

<sup>183</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:8.

<sup>184</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:7–8.

human viewpoint, none of which will work. Jacob is trapped and you may not realize how trapped. He cannot go back; he and Laban set up a boundary between each other that they were not to pass over. Jacob is basically confined to a single route, which nearly everyone in the region knew. To the southwest we have the Mediterranean Sea, to the west is the Jordan River and to the East there is desert. There is really nowhere for Jacob to suddenly flee to.

God has already told Jacob to return to his homeland. As Jacob thinks more and more about his hopeless situation, he remembers that God sent him back to his homeland.

However, Jacob does not march boldly ahead. He takes two precautions, despite having been given reason for confidence (the encampment of angels). Jacob splits his camps into two, hoping to preserve one, if he is killed by his brother. Also, he tries to mollify his brother with gifts. Neither approach will be helpful.

Bear in mind, Jacob will become heir to the Land of Promise not because he has some clever scheme to mollify Esau, but because this is what God has given him.

It should be clear that Jacob really has no idea how Esau feels right now. What I believe is the case is, Jacob sees Esau's thinking today as the thinking which he had 20 years previous, when he went around saying that he would kill Jacob (Genesis 27:41). That is where Jacob's mind is, because he clearly did wrong to Esau at that time.

Esau's actual reaction to meeting Jacob—20 years after making those threats—is going to be quite different from that (Genesis 33:4). Jacob fears Esau, in part because of what he did to Esau 20 years ago and in part by Esau's company of 400 men. But Esau says and does nothing which threatens Jacob. He is traveling with 400 warriors because that is the way that he traveled about. Esau did not gather up these men in order to meet Jacob. He did not find out the Jacob is returning to the land, and so he decides, "Let me gather up 400 of my best warriors to go with me." Those men already travel with Esau.

One of the points I am making is, Jacob is wasting his time being afraid of Esau. Here are the simple facts: (1) God told Jacob to return to the land. (2) If Jacob returns to the land, Esau is going to find out about it. (3) It is the right thing to do to meet up face to face with Esau and to talk things out (if necessary). (4) A massive camp of angels is traveling with Jacob. (5) God has given Jacob that land; and God has given Jacob an eternal future. Therefore, Jacob ought to be able to conclude, I am safe; God is with me.

Jacob's fear gains him nothing. He is fearful because he is not putting together his understanding of Bible doctrine with his present circumstance.

**Application:** We might be more concerned, as God would likely have warned Jacob; but God is not going to contact us and warn us personally about some bad thing that might take place in our lives. How do we deal with such things? All I can say is, the worst things that you might anticipate for your life may not be as bad as you think they will be. As a personal example—I lost a job—and I believe unfairly—at a place where I had worked for 25 years and expected to work until I retired. I would leave this job in quiet disgrace and would have difficulty finding another job. Did this concern me? Of course it did; but it was, for the most part, out of my control. I could have sued, but maybe I would win and maybe I would not. But I knew that God made provision for my life; and He made those provisions in eternity past. When in fellowship, I understood all of that, and went along with these circumstances. Life went on. I was never in danger of going hungry, losing my house or even losing my backup assets. The end result was, my life changed dramatically. But, do you know what else changed? I was able to go from writing 1-3 hours a day to writing 3-5 hours a day (and more). God knew what He was doing, even though I did not know all of the details of what would happen.

**Application:** One more thing: there were people (2 or 3) who I believe were responsible for what happened to me. Now, should I have plotted revenge or thought about how I could get back on them? Of course not! God deals with that—I don't have to. I know that at least 2 of those people also had their lives upended as a result. I had nothing whatever to do with it. I put the matter in God's hands, focused on my spiritual responsibilities, and moved

on. God knew exactly what He was doing, even though I did not (and even though there were times I doubted Him).

**Application:** No matter what happens in your life, use and apply Bible doctrine to your life; and for the things that you cannot change, you defer to God's judgment. If you feel that you have been wrong, put that in the Lord's hands; don't spend a moment with it.

**Application:** It just so happens that in church today, the substitute pastor was teaching, adversity is to be expected; stress is optional.<sup>185</sup> Exactly appropriate to this lesson about Jacob and to situations I have had in my past.

Genesis 32:6–8 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies for he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape." (Jack M. Ballinger)

### Genesis 32:6–8 Jacob's Desperate Survival Plan (Jack M. Ballinger)

1. After some time the messengers sent return with a brief announcement.
2. They inform Jacob that they made contact with his brother and that his brother "is coming to meet you."
3. Not only are they on their way, but Esau is coming with four hundred men.
4. This news throws Jacob into full panic mode (v.7) for he assumes the worst.
5. The language in v.7 "**Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed**" is used in connection with persons in the utmost of peril (Judg. 2:15; 10:9; 1Sam. 20:6).
6. Jacob's perception of the situation is based on the fact that four hundred men are accompanying Esau.
7. For Jacob this can only mean with hostile intent.
8. Fear ruling his soul brings him to devising a survival plan.
9. He thinks that if he divides his people into two groups then if one is attacked the other might survive (v.8).
10. Jacob and his civilian camp is no match for trained soldiers.
11. The plan is clearly an act of desperation and need we say totally unnecessary.
12. God had just recently checkmated Laban preempting violence.
13. Jacob's antics in this second scene are laughable and pathetic.
14. Nevertheless God's promise of protection holds true.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen32.htm> accessed March 2, 2019.

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Genesis 32:3–5 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of seir, the country of edom. He also commanded them saying, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau; 'Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have sojourned with laban, and stayed until now; and I acquired oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, so that I may find favor in your sight.'"

Genesis 32:6–8 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother esau, and indeed he is coming to meet you and four hundred men are with him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; so he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two camps; vs 8 because he thought, "if Esau comes to the one camp and destroys it, then the other camp will escape." (Ron Snider)

### Summary Genesis 32:3–8 (by Ron Snider)

1. God has ordered Jacob back to the land of Canaan, and after some 20 years with Laban, he was no

<sup>185</sup> Something which R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught over and over again.

### Summary Genesis 32:3–8 (by Ron Snider)

- doubt very happy to comply.
2. Upon concluding matters with Laban, and closing the door on that period of his life, Jacob must deal with the issue of Esau.
  3. If he was to return and reside in Canaan, at some point a meeting with Esau was unavoidable.
  4. If Jacob chose to avoid the inevitable, Esau could always seek him out if he chose to do so.
  5. Jacob knew that Rebekah was to have sent him word as soon as Esau's anger had subsided so he could return to Canaan.
  6. Since he had heard nothing in 20 years, his conclusion was that Esau was likely still in a murderous frame of mind.
  7. Yet he has the direct command of God to return to Canaan, so he must confront this situation whether he desires to or not.
  8. He sends out an envoy to Esau, who has gradually relocated from his father's house to a region known as Seir.
  9. Later this region acquired the name of Edom due to Edom's presence.
  10. It is located in the southern part of the land, extending from the Dead sea to the Red sea.
  11. The original inhabitants were dispossessed by Esau who made this land his. Deut. 2:12
  12. He had figured out over some time that Isaac was not going to relent in the matter of the blessing, so he eventually moved on his way.
  13. Jacob gives these men very specific instructions as to how to approach Esau.
  14. He applies the term servant or slave to himself and the term lord or master to Esau.
  15. This is an obvious reversal of what God had revealed would be the relationship between the boys.
  16. Jacob uses this as a ploy to seek to conciliate Esau, but this is not true and it is not necessary.
  17. It is wise to seek to avoid conflict, but not at the expense of the truth of doctrine.
  18. Jacob is seeking to avoid potential danger, not out of faith but, out of fear.
  19. He acts in an obsequious fashion, fawning to gain Esau's favor.
  20. He then instructs his men to inform Esau that Jacob is not coming back as a pauper, but has a certain amount of wealth.
  21. He is using human viewpoint to impress Esau and make certain that Esau will allow him to return in peace.
  22. God has told him to return to Canaan, what Esau thinks is truly irrelevant.
  23. Jacob is more concerned with Esau than with what he is supposed to be doing.
  24. Jacob did not need Esau's approval of his actions, Esau is negative, who cares what he thinks.
  25. The messengers return much sooner than Jacob had anticipated, since he was several days journey away from Esau.
  26. They inform Jacob that Esau is already aware of his return, and is already on the way to meet him.
  27. Esau apparently did not reveal his intentions to the men Jacob had sent, but appears to want to speak to Jacob himself.
  28. Beyond this they inform Jacob that Esau has an armed force with him of 400 men.
  29. These men, like Esau himself, lived by the sword and were involved with Esau in the conquest of the region of Edom.
  30. With Esau coming with a band of armed men and no word of what he intended to do, Jacob fears the worst.
  31. He panics and succumbs to MA fear in a big way.
  32. Jacob is not merely afraid, he is panic-stricken and assumes that Esau is coming to slaughter him and all those with him.
  33. He assumes that the murderous rage which was kindled so many years ago still burns in Esau.
  34. Jacob forgets all the encouragement he had so recently received from the presence of the angelic
  35. This is precisely what happens when the believer caves in to fear, doctrine is forgotten and panic sets in.
  36. Like Jacob, this produces an emotional reaction, a panic attack.
  37. Jacob loses sight of the fact that God is responsible for his presence here in Canaan, and did not bring him all this way to kill him.
  38. The believer who is walking in obedience to the revealed will of God for his life should have confidence

## Summary Genesis 32:3–8 (by Ron Snider)

- that God is going to take care of him.
39. He should not fear death in any form, since this would merely be a promotion.
  40. Jacob acts on his fear, not BD, and seeks to deliver himself by splitting his group into two camps.
  41. The word for camps or companies is the same word which was used by Jacob himself in vs 2.
  42. Where is his confidence in the angelic camp, and in the Lord of the angels??

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:7–8 Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress. Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps. He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups. He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape.

This represents Jacob's first plan. He will not hold to this plan when he finally meets Esau. He will proudly lead his wives and children to meet Esau, having sent a present ahead to him (with hopes to mollify Esau). There is no explanation given—I will speculate a little about this later on—but Jacob will decide not to try to hide his wives and children upon meeting Esau. No reason will be specifically given for his change in plans. In fact, we do not even read the words, *and Jacob changed his mind and led the camp with his wives and children*. By what happens in Genesis 33, it is clear that is what he did.

As an aside, this is *not* any sort of contradiction—people change their minds about what they are going to do all of the time.

Jacob may appear to be doing the right thing or the smart thing here, but he is not. God did *not* tell him to prepare for an attack by Esau. There has even enough divine contact in this chapter to suggest that, if Jacob needed to be worried, upset, fearful or even circumspect, God would have told him about it. God never even suggested that any such thing was necessary. All of Jacob's plans to save himself and/or part of his family are a waste of time and reveal an excess of worry and stress.

**Application:** There will be times in your life that you experience stress; and like Jacob, you might not be able to sleep the night before some anticipated event. What do you do? Make some hot chocolate and listen to a couple lessons of Bible doctrine.

Some commentaries suggest that Jacob is doing what he needs to do, preparing himself for a possible attack by Esau. Wrong! Jacob is running around like a chicken with its head cut off. He will have a moment of clarity (vv. 9–12), but much of this chapter describes Jacob's fear and his reaction to this fear (vv. 7–8 and 13–23). Let me further suggest that, if Jacob would have just sat down and thought things through logically, he would have realized that he had no reason to fear Esau; and he did not need to do anything in order to prepare for an attack. God had all of this under control.

Jacob, in the text of this verse,, speaks of *two camps*; he is breaking up his people into two camps, so that if Esau attacks one camp, then the other camp could escape. But where have we heard the term *two camps* before? Back in v. 2. Jacob saw the camp of angels and he remarked, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim. (Genesis 32:2b; ESV) What does *Mahanaim* mean? *Two camps!* This is important because, Jacob knows that God is looking out for him. He does not need to do anything creative, fancy, or clever, in order to protect himself from Esau—God already has this under control and God even provided Jacob with the proof that He had it under control—God let Jacob see the camp of angels.

**Incorrect Application:** Some of those reading this will go to war or be in the military. You don't say to your commanding officer, "Listen, we don't need anything clever or fancy to win this fight; I'm here and God is with me!" That may very well be true, but you're at war and the rules of war apply, which include strategy and tactics, and

obedience to authority. God is there, He will protect you; but that does not mean that you should, as a result, act like a complete idiot. God has given specific promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so Jacob can stand on those promises. What direct promises have you received from God about your genealogy? None. You have received no direct promise from God (even those who are Jewish, you are in the Church Age; so the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not apply directly to you).

Jacob has direct promises from God and Jacob has seen the camp of angels there to protect him. So Jacob now needs to be depending upon these promises from God. In the next few verses, Jacob will seem to have it all together. You will look at Jacob and think, "Wow, that man has turned his spiritual life around." And that is true; he did—for about 10 minutes.

Genesis 32:6–8 The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies for he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape." (Jack M. Ballinger)

### Thinking logically and with divine viewpoint—what Jacob should have been doing

1. First and foremost, God has not warned Jacob about any particular threat. God has not told Jacob, "Esau is coming and you need to be afraid!"
2. On the other hand, God spoke to Jacob and told him to return home.
3. God allowed Jacob to see this great encampment of angels, which should have reassured him.
4. Jacob needed to consider the time frame concerning Esau and his 400 men. Whether his servants contacted Esau or not, it should have been clear that Esau did not gather 400 men with the intent of harming Jacob.
5. Furthermore, Esau lived in Seir—not in the Land of Promise (Canaan)—and that appears to be where Esau's roots and future were.
6. Finally, God told Jacob to return to Canaan; and God has made promises for over 100 years that this land of Canaan would be given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How on earth would Jacob be fearful for his children? They are heirs to God's promises.

**Application:** No matter what your circumstance, think logically and apply Bible doctrine to your circumstances. If you are uncertain about the outcome, then use the **faith-rest drill**.

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## Jacob's Great Prayer

Jacob is concerned about meeting up with his brother Esau, whom he did wrong to previously. It appears that Esau is both successful and powerful. Jacob, therefore, is somewhat apprehensive about this meeting. Unfortunately, Jacob is in fear of his brother. But, he goes to God in prayer. So far, so good.

Behind Jacob was a confrontation with Laban, his deceptive, scheming uncle. It was resolved. Both men aired out their differences and then went in opposite directions. Now, a new problem was before Jacob and that was Esau. Without thinking it through, Jacob was afraid; and he could have made many mistakes acting out of fear. But, at some point, he stops himself and speaks to God, in which I believe is the first recorded prayer in Scripture.

Jacob is a wonderful case study of grace because, unlike his grandfather Abraham, Jacob is not so hot. He is given to manipulation—both as the manipulator and the manipulatee. He is given to fear. He is given to making bad decisions. In other words, most of us can better relate to Jacob than we can to Abraham.

Once and awhile, Jacob's star shines bright. His prayer here to God is quite marvelous, and a wonderful testament to God's grace.

Keil and Delitzsch: *He then turned to the Great Helper in every time of need, and with an earnest prayer besought the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, who had directed him to return, that, on the ground of the abundant mercies and truth (cf. Genesis 24:27) He had shown him thus far, He would deliver him out of the hand of his brother, and from the threatening destruction, and so fulfil His promises.*<sup>186</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *So what does a man of faith do when all his options are exhausted and he has no ideas and no escape from his circumstances? What is the last option of every man of God? He prays...Jacob schemed and planned and bargained to get Esau's favor, and now that these efforts have failed, he turns to God and asks God to handle it.*<sup>187</sup>

There are a great man chiasmi in the book of Genesis.

### William Ramey's Chiasm of Genesis 32:9–12

Introduction: Jacob's invocation (9a)

- A God's message to Jacob while in Haran (9b)
- B God's promise of prosperity to Jacob (9c)
- C Jacob's confession (10a)
- D Jacob left Canaan only with a staff (10b)
- X The Jordan River: a place of contrast (10c)
- D' Jacob returns to Canaan with "two camps" (10d)
- C' Jacob's petition (11)
- B' God's promise of prosperity to Jacob (12a)
- A' God's message to Jacob while in Canaan (12b)

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

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I am pretty hard on Jacob throughout the Jacobian narrative, but this is a place where he shines. You think he has not understood a damn thing that God has said, that he keeps rejecting God's plan and implementing his own, to the point where, you don't think that Jacob knows God's plan at all. However, here, Jacob reveals to us that he has been listening to God; he does understand where he is; and now, he believes himself to be at the end of his rope, where there is no hope—and so he turns to God. That is fine! He turns to God and quotes God's Word back to God in this prayer.

We see a great deal of Jacob's life, from birth up to his death. He is a man who has failed many times. However, this prayer is one of the great triumphs of his life. I want you to note that these are just words that he says, but he reveals that he has been listening; he has taken in some doctrine. It is just that, for the greater part of his life, he appears to often reject it in favor of his own plan and ideas.

Nothing is more apropos to a life out of fellowship or a life of human viewpoint than a hopeless situation. Jacob doesn't have anywhere else to turn to. He realizes that his plan is as lame as they come. He realizes that he has

<sup>186</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:8–11.

<sup>187</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

nowhere to run to. He is trapped between Laban and Esau, between the desert and the Mediterranean. If he can't go to his left or right, or forward or backwards, Jacob can only go in one direction and that is up. He goes directly to God, the God who told him to go there.

Perhaps Jacob had this thought: *if God told him to return to his homeland then God must have some idea as to what to do about Esau.* We should know, at least in theory, that God has solved the Esau problem in eternity past.

And so says Jacob, “Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Yehowah the One saying, ‘Return to your land and to your kindred and I will do good to you.’ I have been insignificant from all the gracious acts and from all the faithfulness which You have manufactured to your servant, for in my staff I crossed a Jordan the this; and now I have become two of camps. Deliver me, I pray You, from a hand of my brother, from a hand of Esau, for fearing I him lest he come and strike me, [and] a mother upon sons. And You [even] You said, ‘Doing good I will do good with you and I will set your seed as sand of the sea which cannot be numbered from multitude.’ ”

Genesis  
32:9–12

Jacob then prayed [lit., said], saying, “Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Yehowah, the One [Who] said, ‘Return [now] to your land and to your relatives and I will do good to you.’ I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant. I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff; and now I have become two camps. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear him, that he will come [upon me] and strike me down, [along with] the mothers and their sons. You [emphatically] promised [lit., said], ‘I will definitely do good to [lit., with] you and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for [lit., from] multitude.’ ”

Jacob then prayed, saying, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, ‘Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.’ I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, ‘I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.’ ”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says Jacob, “Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Y<sup>e</sup>howah the One saying, ‘Return to your land and to your kindred and I will do good to you.’ I have been insignificant from all the gracious acts and from all the faithfulness which You have manufactured to your servant, for in my staff I crossed a Jordan the this; and now I have become two of camps. Deliver me, I pray You, from a hand of my brother, from a hand of Esau, for fearing I him lest he come and strike me, [and] a mother upon sons. And You [even] You said, ‘Doing good I will do good with you and I will set your seed as sand of the sea which cannot be numbered from multitude.’ ”

Targum (Onkelos)

And Jakob said, God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Izhak, the Lord, who didst say to me, Return to thy country and to thy native place, and I will do thee good; less are my righteousnesses than all the mercies and all the benefits which Thou hast performed unto Thy servant: for alone I passed this Yarden, and now I have become two bands. Deliver me now from the hand of my brother, from the band of Esau; for I am afraid of him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother

with the children. And Thou hast said, In doing good I will do good with thee, and will make thy sons many as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for number.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan) And Jakob said, God of my father Abraham, Thou, the God of my father Izhak, the Lord, who saidst to me, Return to thy country and to thy kindred, and I wilt do thee good: I am altogether less than any of the (acts of) goodness and truth which Thou hast exercised towards Thy servant: for with my staff, alone, I passed this Jardena, and now I am become two bands.

Deliver me I pray, from the hand of my elder brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him: for he hath been mindful of the glory of his father; lest he come and smite the mother with the children. But Thou hast promised, I Will surely do thee good, and will make thy sons many as the sand of the sea be numbered for that cannot be numbered for Multitude.

Revised Douay-Rheims And Jacob said: O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me: Return to your land and to the place of your birth, and I will do well for you, I am not worthy of the least of all your mercies, and of your truth which you have fulfilled to your servant. With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I return with two companies. Deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am greatly afraid of him: lest perhaps he come, and kill the mother with the children. You did say that you would do well by me, and multiply my seed like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for the multitude.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta Ya'aqub said, "God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Mar-Yah, who said to me, 'Return to your country, and to your relatives, and I will do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses, and of all the truth, which you have shown to your servant; for with just my staff I passed over this Yordan; and now I have become two companies. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and strike me, and the mothers with the children. You said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.'"

Peshitta (Syriac) And Jacob prayed, and said. O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who didst say to me, Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you; I am not worthy of the least of all thy favors, and of all the truth that thou hast shown to thy servant; for alone with my staff I crossed over this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hands of my brother Esau; for I am afraid of him, lest he will come to smite me, and the mothers with their children. And thou didst say, I will surely do you good, and make your descendants numerous as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Septuagint (Greek) And Jacob said, God of my father Abraam, and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, you art he that said to me, Depart quickly to the land of your birth, and I will do you good. Let there be to me a sufficiency of all the justice and all the truth which you have wrought with your servant; for with this my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two camps. Deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him, lest haply he should come and smite me, and the mother upon the children. But you said, I will do you good, and will make your seed as the sand of the sea, which shall not be numbered for multitude.

Significant differences: One targum and the Syriac both have a few extra words. Although a Targum has *native place*; and the Latin has *place of your birth*; rather than *kindred (relatives)*; those are legitimate translations. The Greek combines *your land* with *you relatives* (or, leaves one of those out).

One targum has *less are my righteousneses*; rather than *I am insignificant*. The Greek has *Let there be to me a sufficiency of all*. One targum leaves off the word *staff*. The Latin has *return* rather than *become*.

One targum has *band* rather than *hand*. In the request for deliverance, a few words are missing in the Latin. *I pray you* is also missing in the Greek.

One targum has an additional phrase. So far, this has been the most problematic verse; and, in truth, there are so few problems...and none of them are significant. So much of the Old Testament is narrative, so that a few problems here or there really has no effect on the overall meaning.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, the God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, Go back to your country and your family and I will be good to you: I am less than nothing in comparison with all your mercies and your faith to me your servant; for with only my stick in my hand I went across Jordan, and now I have become two armies. Be my saviour from the hand of Esau, my brother: for my fear is that he will make an attack on me, putting to death mother and child. And you said, Truly, I will be good to you, and make your seed like the sand of the sea which may not be numbered.
Easy English	Then Jacob prayed, 'God of Abraham and God of my father Isaac, Lord, you said to me "Go back to your country. And go to your relatives and I will do good things for you." I am not worth all the kind things that you have done for me. You have stayed with me. And I am not worth this. When I crossed the River Jordan, I only had my stick. But now I can make 2 groups of good things from what I have. I pray that you will save me from my brother Esau. Because I am afraid that he will come and attack me. He may also attack my family. But you have said, "I will give you many good things. I will make your descendants as many as the pieces of sand by the sea. They are so many that they cannot be counted." ' God had said this to Jacob in 28:14.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then Jacob said, "God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! Lord, you told me to come back to my country and to my family. You said that you would do good to me. You have been very kind to me. You did many good things for me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I owned nothing—only my walking stick. But now I own enough things to have two full groups. I ask you to please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid that he will come and kill us all, even the mothers with the children. Lord, you said to me, 'I will be good to you. I will increase your family and make your children as many as the sands of the sea. There will be too many to count.'"
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then Jacob prayed, "God of my grandfather Abraham and God of my father Isaac, hear me! You told me, Lord, to go back to my land and to my relatives, and you would make everything go well for me. I am not worth all the kindness and faithfulness that you have shown me, your servant. I crossed the Jordan with nothing but a walking stick, and now I have come back with these two groups. Save me, I pray, from my brother Esau. I am afraid—afraid that he is coming to attack us and destroy us all, even the women and children. Remember that you promised to make everything go well for me and to give me more descendants than anyone could count, as many as the grains of sand along the seashore."
International Children's B.	Jacob said, "God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! Lord, you told me to return to my country and my family. You said that you would do good to me. I am not worthy of the kindness and continual goodness you have shown me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I had only my walking stick. But now I own

enough to have two camps. Please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid he will come and kill all of us, even the mothers with the children. You said to me, 'I will do good to you. I will make your children as many as the sand of the seashore. There will be too many to count.'"

*The Message*

And then Jacob prayed, "God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, GOD who told me, 'Go back to your parents' homeland and I'll treat you well.' I don't deserve all the love and loyalty you've shown me. When I left here and crossed the Jordan I only had the clothes on my back, and now look at me—two camps! Save me, please, from the violence of my brother, my angry brother! I'm afraid he'll come and attack us all, me, the mothers and the children. You yourself said, 'I will treat you well; I'll make your descendants like the sands of the sea, far too many to count.'"

Names of God Bible

Then Jacob prayed, "**Elohim** of my grandfather Abraham and **Elohim** of my father Isaac! **Yahweh**, you said to me, 'Go back to your land and to your relatives, and I will make you prosperous.' I'm not worthy of all the love and faithfulness you have shown me. I only had a shepherd's staff when I crossed the Jordan River, but now I have two camps. Please save me from my brother Esau, because I'm afraid of him. I'm afraid that he'll come and attack me and the mothers and children too. But you did say, 'I will make sure that you are prosperous and that your descendants will be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. No one will be able to count them because there are so many.'"

NIRV

Then Jacob prayed, "You are the God of my grandfather Abraham. You are the God of my father Isaac. Lord, you are the one who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives. Then I will give you success.' You have been very kind and faithful to me. But I'm not worthy of any of this. When I crossed this Jordan River, all I had was my walking stick. But now I've become two camps. Please save me from the hand of my brother Esau. I'm afraid he'll come and attack me and the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely give you success. I will make your children as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. People will not be able to count them.' "

New Simplified Bible

Then Jacob prayed: »O God of my father Abraham, the God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, you said to me: 'Go back to your country and your family and I will be good to you.' »I am less than nothing in comparison with all your love and your faithfulness to me your servant. I only had a stick in my hand when I traveled across Jordan. Now I have become two armies. »Save me from the hand of Esau, my brother. I fear that he will attack me and kill both mothers and children. »You said, 'I will make sure that you are prosperous and that your descendants will be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. No one will be able to count them because there are so many.'«

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Casual English Bible

Jacob prayed, "Oh God of my grandfather Abraham and of my father Isaac. Oh LORD, you told me, 'Go back to your homeland and your family and I will take good care of you.' I'm not worthy of that, or of the love, kindness, and dependability you have shown me, your humble servant. When I first crossed this Jordan River many years ago, all I had to my name was a walking stick. Look at me now. I own two camps and everything in them. Please protect me from the sword of my brother Esau. I'm terrified of him. I'm afraid he will kill me and my wives and my children. You gave me a promise: 'I will take good care of you and give you more descendants than sand in the sea—too many to count.'"

Common English Bible

Jacob said, "LORD, God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I'll make sure things go well for you,' I don't deserve how loyal and truthful you've been to your servant. I went

away across the Jordan with just my staff, but now I've become two camps. Save me from my brother Esau! I'm afraid he will come and kill me, the mothers, and their children. You were the one who told me, 'I will make sure things go well for you, and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, so many you won't be able to count them.'"

Contemporary English V.

Then Jacob prayed: You, LORD, are the God who was worshiped by my grandfather Abraham and by my father Isaac. You told me to return home to my family, and you promised to be with me and make me successful. I don't deserve all the good things you have done for me, your servant. When I first crossed the Jordan, I had only my walking stick, but now I have two large groups of people and animals. Please rescue me from my brother. I am afraid he will come and attack not only me, but my wives and children as well. But you have promised that I would be a success and that someday it will be as hard to count my descendants as it is to count the stars in the sky.

The Living Bible

Then Jacob prayed, "O God of Abraham my grandfather, and of my father Isaac—O Jehovah who told me to return to the land of my relatives, and said that you would do me good— I am not worthy of the least of all your loving-kindnesses shown me again and again just as you promised me. For when I left home I owned nothing except a walking stick! And now I am two armies! O LORD, please deliver me from destruction at the hand of my brother Esau, for I am frightened—terribly afraid that he is coming to kill me and these mothers and my children. But you promised to do me good, and to multiply my descendants until they become as the sands along the shores—too many to count."

New Berkeley Version

Jacob also prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, Jehovah, who told me, 'Return to your land and to your kindred and I will treat you kindly.' I do not deserve the least of all the kindness and faithfulness Thou hast rendered Thy servant; for with my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps. Save me, I pray, from my brother's hand, from the power of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and slay me, with mother and children. Thou hast said, I will unfailingly deal kindly with you and I will make your descendants like the sea sand that cannot be counted for its numbers."

New Century Version

Then Jacob said, "God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! LORD, you told me to return to my country and my family. You said that you would treat me well. I am not worthy of the kindness and continual goodness you have shown me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I had only my walking stick, but now I own enough to have two camps. Please save me from my brother Esau. I am afraid he will come and kill all of us, even the mothers with the children. You said to me, 'I will treat you well and will make your children as many as the sand of the seashore. There will be too many to count.'"

New Life Version

Then 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 those of your family, and I will bring good to you.' I have not earned any of the loving-kindness and faith which You have shown to your servant. For I had crossed this Jordan with only my walking stick. And now I have become two large groups. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the power of Esau. For I am afraid of him. I am afraid he will come and kill us all, the mothers with the children. But You said, 'I will bring good to you. I will make your children like the sand of the sea. There will be too many to number.' "

New Living Translation

Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac—O Lord, you told me, 'Return to your own land and to your relatives.' And you promised me, 'I will treat you kindly.' I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness you have shown to me, your servant. When I left home and crossed the Jordan River, I owned nothing except a walking stick. Now my household fills two large camps! O Lord, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am

afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children. But you promised me, 'I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore—too many to count.'"

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Jacob [prayed]: 'O God of my father AbraHam and God of my father IsaAc... O Lord; You're the One who told me, <i>Return quickly to the land where you were born, and I will treat you well.</i> So now; [recognize] all the justice and truth that You've brought about through Your servant. 'With this walking stick of mine, I have now crossed the JorDan [River] divided into two camps. So, save me from the hands of my brother – from the hands of Esau – because I'm afraid of him, since [he may] be happy to come and strike me down [along with] the mothers and the children. However, you told me that You will treat me well and make my seed as the sands of the seas... so many that they can't be counted.'
International Standard V	Then Jacob prayed [Lit. <i>said</i> ], "O God of my father Abraham, O God of my father Isaac, O LORD, you who told me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives and I'll cause things to go well for you.' I'm unworthy of all your gracious love, your faithfulness, and everything that you've done for your servant. When I first crossed over this river, I had only my staff. But now I've become two groups. Deliver me from my brother Esau's control, because I'm terrified of him, and I'm afraid that he's coming to attack me, the mothers, and their children. Now, you promised me that 'I'm certainly going to cause things to go well with you, and I'm going to make your offspring [Lit. <i>seed</i> ] as numerous as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"
Revised Knox Bible	And now Jacob said, God of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, you, Lord, who have bidden me return to my own country, the land of my birth, and have offered to bless me, I, your servant, am not worthy of all the mercies you have shewn me, the faithful observance of your promises. I had nothing but this staff with me, when I crossed the Jordan, and now I have come back with two companies behind me. Save me now from the power of my brother Esau; I fear grievously that when he comes he will spare neither women nor children. Have you not promised me your continued favour, and a posterity spread wide as the sand by the sea, that is beyond all counting?
Translation for Translators	Then Jacob prayed, "O Yahweh God, whom my grandfather Abraham worshiped and my father Isaac worships, you said to me, 'Go back to your own land and to your relatives, and I will cause good things happen to/do good things for you.' I am not worthy for you to have acted kindly and faithfully in so many ways toward me, your servant. I had only this walking stick with me when I crossed the Jordan River on my way to Haran, but now I am so wealthy that there are two large groups of my family and possessions. So now I pray that you will rescue me from the power [MTY] of my brother Esau, because I am afraid that he and his men will come and attack and kill me and the children and their mothers. But do not forget that you have said, 'I will certainly enable you to prosper, and I will cause your descendants to be as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore, which are so many that no one can count them.' "

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob was to say: He of mighty ones of my father Abraham, and he of mighty ones of my father Isaac, Jehovah, he saying: Be turning back to your solid grounds, and to your kindred, and it was to be well with you! I have been insignificant, for the honor and credit, that you is to have prepared for your servant, even with my staff, I have crossed over the Jordan with two camps. Be rescuing me, from the hand of
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my brother, from the hand of Esau; I fearing that he was to come, and is to have struck, the mothers even over to the sons. You is to have said: I was to make you gladdened a gladdening, and am to have set your seed as the sands of the sea - were they to be counted in their many?

Conservapedia

Now Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said, 'Return to your land and kindred, and I will do good for you, I don't deserve even the smallest of the kindnesses and faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant. With my walking-stick I have crossed over this river Jordan, and have become two camps. Please rescue me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. I am afraid that he will come and kill me, and the mother with the sons. And you said, 'I will definitely do good for you, and make your descendants like the grains of sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'" The word "good" is repeated for emphasis.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

Jacob also said, " God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord Who said to me ' Return to the land of your birth and I will be good to you.' I am unworthy of all the mercies and of all the support which You have shown to me when I, Your servant, passed over this torrent with my staff, and I am returning as two camps. Grant me a deliverance from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear that he will come and cut off mothers with children. But You have said ' Supporting I will support you, and I will make your race like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted for quantity.' "

God's Truth (Tyndale)

And Jacob said: O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac: Lord, which said unto me, return unto your country and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and truth which you have showed unto your servant. For with my staff came I over this Jordan, and now have I gotten two droves. Deliver me from the hands of my brother Esau: for I fear him: least he will come and smite the mother with the children. You said that you would surely do me good, and would make my seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.

H. C. Leupold

And Jacob said: O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, Thou who didst say unto me, Return to thy land and to thy relation and I will do thee good, I am unworthy of all the acts of kindness and of all the faithfulness which thou hast bestowed upon thy servant; for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him, lest he come and smite me—both mothers and children. Yet thou didst say unto me, I will do only good to thee, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which is too plentiful to count.

Lexham English Bible

Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your family, and I will deal well with you.' {I am not worthy} of all the loyal love and all the faithfulness that you have shown your servant, for with [only] my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Please rescue me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and attack mother and children [alike]. Now you yourself said, 'I will surely deal well with you and make your offspring as the sand of the sea that cannot be counted for abundance.'"

Tree of Life Version

Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, ADONAI, who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives and I will do good with you.' I am unworthy of all the proofs of mercy and of all the dependability that you have shown to your servant. For with only my staff I crossed over this Jordan, and now I've become two camps. Deliver me, please, from my brother's hand, from Esau's hand, for I'm afraid of him that he'll come and strike me—the mothers with the children. You Yourself said, 'I will most certainly do good with you, and will make your seed like the sand of the sea that cannot be counted because of its abundance.'"

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

The Heritage Bible	And Jacob said, Oh God of my father, Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac, Jehovah, who said to me, Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do good with you, I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which you have done to your servant, because I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I am become two armies. Snatch me away, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, because I fear him, lest he come, and strike me - the mother with the children. And you said, being good, I will be good to you, and put your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be tallied up for abundance.
New American Bible (2002)	Then he prayed: "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac! You told me, O LORD, 'Go back to the land of your birth, and I will be good to you.' I am unworthy of all the acts of kindness that you have loyally performed for your servant: although I crossed the Jordan here with nothing but my staff, I have now grown into two companies. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau! Otherwise I fear that when he comes he will strike me down and slay the mothers and children. You yourself said, 'I will be very good to you, and I will make your descendants like the sands of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'"
New American Bible (2011)	Then Jacob prayed: "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac! You, LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your land and your relatives, and I will be good to you [Gn 31:3].' I am unworthy of all the acts of kindness and faithfulness that you have performed for your servant: although I crossed the Jordan here with nothing but my staff, I have now grown into two camps. Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau! Otherwise I fear that he will come and strike me down and the mothers with the children. You yourself said, 'I will be very good to you, and I will make your descendants like the sands of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'" Gn 28:14; 48:16; Ex 32:13; Heb 11:12.
New Jerusalem Bible	Jacob said, 'God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh who told me, "Go back to your native land and I will be good to you," I am unworthy of all the faithful love and constancy you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, and now I have grown into two camps. I implore you, save me from my brother Esau's clutches, for I am afraid that he may come and attack me, mothers and children alike. Yet it was you who said, "I shall be very good to you, and make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which is too numerous to count." '
Revised English Bible	Jacob prayed, "God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, LORD at whose bidding I came back to my own country and to my kindred, and who promised me prosperity, I am not worthy of all the true and steadfast love which you have shown to me your servant. The last time I crossed the Jordan, I owned nothing but the staff in my hand; now I have two camps. Save me, I pray, from my brother Esau, for I am afraid that he may come and destroy me; he will spare neither mother nor child. But you said, 'I shall make you prosper and your descendants will be like the sand of the sea, beyond all counting.'"

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	Then Ya'akov said, "God of my father Avraham and God of my father Yitz'chak, Adonai, who told me, 'Return to your country and your kinsmen, and I will do you good': I'm not worthy of all the love and faithfulness you have shown your servant, since I crossed the Yarden with only my staff. But now I have become two camps. Please! Rescue me from my brother 'Esav! I'm afraid of him, afraid he'll come and attack me, without regard for mothers or children. You said, 'I will certainly do you good and make your descendants as numerous as the grains of sand by the sea, which are so many they can't be counted.'"
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exeGeses companion Bible	<p>And Yaaqov says,  O Elohim of my father Abraham  and Elohim of my father Yischaq,  Yah Veh who says to me,  Return to your land and to your kindred  and I well-please you:  I am less than the least  of all the mercies and of all the truth,  you worked to your servant;  for with my staff I passed over this Yarden;  and now I become two camps:  rescue me, I beseech you,  from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esav:  for I awe him, lest he comes and smites me  and the mother with the sons.  And you - you say,  In well-pleasing, I well-please you  and set your seed as the sand of the sea  which cannot be scribed for abundance.</p>
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	<p>Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, 'Return to your native land and I will deal bountifully with you!' I am unworthy of all the kindness that You have so steadfastly shown Your servant: with my staff alone I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; else, I fear, he may come and strike me down, mothers and children alike. Yet You have said, 'I will deal bountifully with you and make your offspring as the sands of the sea, which are too numerous to count.' "</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p>Jacob prayed: 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac. You Yourself told me, 'Return to the land where you were born, and I will make things go well with you.' [See Genesis 31:3, 31:13.] I am unworthy of all the kindness and faith that You have shown me. [When I left home,] I crossed the Jordan with [only] my staff, and now I have enough for two camps. Rescue me, I pray, from the hand of my brother - from the hand of Esau. I am afraid of him, for he can come and kill us all - mothers and children alike. You once said, 'I will make things go well with you, and make your descendants like the sand grains of the sea, which are too numerous to count.' ' [See Genesis 28:14.]</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<p>And Ya'akov said, O Elohei Avi Avraham, and Elohei Avi Yitzchak, Hashem which saidst unto me, Shuv l'aretzecha and to thy moledet (kindred), and I will deal well with thee;  I am not worthy of the least of all the chasadim, and of all the emes, which Thou hast showed unto Thy eved; for with my makal (rod, staff) I passed over this Yarden; and now I am become two machanot.  Save me, now, from the yad achi, from the yad Esav; for I fear him, lest he will come and attack me, em with banim.  But Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy zera as the chol of the yam, which cannot be numbered for multitude.</p>
The Scriptures 1998	<p>And Ya'aqob said, "O Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Yitshaq, הוהי who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives, and I do good to you,' "I do not deserve the least of all the kind acts and all the truth which You have shown Your servant, for I passed over this Yardēn with my staff, and now I have become two groups. "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Ēsaw, for I fear him, lest he come and shall smite me and the mother with the children. "For You said, 'I shall certainly do good to you, and shall make your seed as the sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.' "</p>

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:***The Amplified Bible*

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 people, and I will make you prosper,' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness *and* compassion and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant. With only my staff [long ago] I crossed over this Jordan, and now I have become [blessed and increased into these] two groups [of people]. Save me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. And You [Lord] said, 'I will certainly make you prosper and make your descendants as [numerous as] the sand of the sea, which is too great to be counted.'"

## The Expanded Bible

Then Jacob said, "God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! Lord, you told [did you not tell...?] me to return to my country and my family. You said that you would treat me well. I am not worthy of the kindness [loyalty; covenant love] and continual goodness [faithfulness] you have shown me [-your servant]. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I had only my walking stick, but now I own enough to have two camps. Please save [rescue; deliver] me from [-the hand of] my brother Esau. I am afraid he will come and kill [strike; attack] all of us, even the mothers with the children. You said to me, 'I will treat you well and will make your children [-seed] as many as the sand of the seashore [22:17]. There will be too many to count.'"

## Kretzmann's Commentary

**Verses 9-12**

## Jacob's Prayer

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: 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. This was the proper reaction from the abject fear and panic with which Jacob had been suffering, carrying the matter to the true God in humble prayer. His prayer had the proper form, for he reminded God of His promises, at the same time declaring his own unworthiness so far as all the mercies and all the truth of the Lord were concerned, for his entire possessions twenty years before, when he crossed the Jordan near this point, had consisted of a staff, and now there were two bands of animals and of servants whom he was taking back to his home country. 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, literally, upon the children, since a mother will protect her children against the enemy with her body. The situation was so serious in the eyes of Jacob that he utterly despaired of all human help. 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. Because an attack such as was now threatening him would tend to defeat the divine promise in the patriarchal blessing, therefore Jacob once more reminded the Lord of this promise, Genesis 28:14. Faith clings to the divine promises, and he that prays properly always refers the Lord to His own Word with its many assurances of mercy, blessing, help, and assistance.

## NET Bible®

Then Jacob prayed [*Heb* "said."], "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, you said [*Heb* "the one who said."] to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives and I will make you prosper [*Heb* "I will cause good" or "I will treat well [or "favorably"]."]' I am not worthy of all the faithful love [*Heb* "the loving deeds and faithfulness" (see 24:27, 49).] you have shown [*Heb* "you have done with."] your servant. With only my walking stick [*Heb* "for with my staff."] I crossed the Jordan [*Heb* "this Jordan."], but now I have become two camps. Rescue me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau [*Heb* "from the hand of my brother, from the hand of

## The Pulpit Commentary

Esau.”], for I am afraid he will come [Heb “for I am afraid of him, lest he come.”] and attack me, as well as the mothers with their children [Heb “me, [the] mother upon [the] sons.”]. But you [Heb “But you, you said.” One of the occurrences of the pronoun “you” has been left untranslated for stylistic reasons.] said, ‘I will certainly make you prosper [Or “will certainly deal well with you.”] and will make your descendants like the sand on the seashore, too numerous to count [Heb “which cannot be counted because of abundance.”].’”

And Jacob said,—the combined beauty and power, humility and boldness, simplicity and sublimity, brevity and comprehensiveness of this prayer, of which Kalisch somewhat hypercritically complains that it ought to have been offered before resorting to the preceding precautions, has been universally recognized—O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord—Jacob’s invocation is addressed not to Deity in general, but to the living personal Elohim who had taken his fathers Abraham and Isaac into covenant, i.e. to Jehovah who had enriched them with promises of which he was the heir, and who had specially appeared unto himself (cf. Genesis 28:13; Genesis 31:3, Genesis 31:13)—which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:—here was a clear indication that Jacob had in faith both obeyed the command and embraced the promise made known to him in Haran—I am not worthy of the least of (literally, I am less than) all the mercies, and (of) all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant;—the profound humility which these words breathe is a sure indication that the character of Jacob had either undergone a great inward transformation, if that was not experienced twenty years before at Bethel, or had shaken off the moral and spiritual lethargy under which he too manifestly labored while in the service of Laban—for with my staff (i.e. possessing nothing but my staff) I passed over this Jordan (the Jabbok was situated near, indeed is a tributary of the Jordan); and now I am become two bands (or Macha—noth). Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau (thus passing from thanksgiving to direct petition, brief, explicit, and fervent): for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me (i.e. my whole clan, as Ishmael, Israel, Edom signify not individuals, but races), and the mother with the children. Literally, mother upon the children, a proverbial expression for unsparing cruelty (Rosenmüller, Keil), or complete extirpation (Kalisch), taken from the idea of destroying a bird while sitting upon its young (cf. Hosea 10:14). And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good,—literally, doing good, I will do good to thee (vide Genesis 28:13). Jacob here pleads the Divine promises at Bethel (Genesis 28:13–15) and at Haran (Genesis 31:3), as an argument why Jehovah should extend to him protection against Esau—conduct at which Tuch is scandalized as “somewhat inaptly reminding God of his commands and promises, and calling upon him to keep his word; but just this is what God expects his people to do (Isaiah 43:26), and according to Scripture the Divine promise is always the petitioner’s best warrant—and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,—this was the sense, without the ipsissima verb? of the Bethel promise, which likened Jacob’s descendants to the dust upon the ground, as Abraham’s seed had previously been compared to the dust of the earth (Genesis 13:16), the stars of heaven (Genesis 15:5), and the sand upon the sea-shore (Genesis 22:17)—which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Then Jacob prayed.

**Jacob:** O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Eternal One who said to me, “You must now return to the land of your ancestors and to your own family. I will make good things happen for you.” I know I am not worthy of even a little of all of the loyal love and faithfulness You have shown to me, Your servant. You have already blessed me because I left home and crossed the Jordan with nothing except my staff. Now I have grown into two large camps. Rescue me now, please, from the hand of my brother, from the grip of Esau. I am afraid that he may

## The Voice

come and crush us all, the children alongside their mothers. *Remember* You told me, "I will make good things happen for you and make your descendants as many as the *grains of sand on the shores, which are too numerous to count.*"

Jacob has come to the end of himself. He has struggled with his brother and the rest of his family for his entire life. He was born a "heel-catcher," a deceiver, and he lived the part well. But he can't go on like this any longer. With Esau on his way, by this time tomorrow he could well be dead and his family killed or captured. He desperately needs God's blessing and protection, so he grieves and agonizes through the night. Through stabbing pain Jacob demands a blessing from his unknown assailant, but he cannot receive it until he confesses his name. Once he does, his name is changed. No longer is he known as Jacob; from now on he is "Israel," he who wrestles with God. This is the turning point in Jacob's life. He lays aside his former self and takes up a new name, a new identity. If Jacob is to be the one to carry on God's covenant and the source of universal blessing, he has to change.

This is an odd place to put this comment, as the wrestling match occurs later in this chapter.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> said, the powers of my father Avraham <sup>[Father lifted]</sup> , the powers of my father Yits'hhaq <sup>[He laughs]</sup> , YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> is the one saying to me, turn back to your land and to your kindred and I will make it do well with you, I am small from all the kindnesses and from all the truth which you did to your servant given that with my rod I crossed over this Yarden <sup>[Descender]</sup> and now I exist as two campsites, please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau <sup>[Doing]</sup> given that I am fearing him otherwise he will come and he will hit me, mother upon sons, and you said, I will surely make it do well with you and I set your seed in place like the sand of the sea which cannot be counted out of the abundance,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Jacob, "Elohim of my forefather Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac, Yahweh Who said to me, `Return to your land and to your kindred and I will do good to you.. Smaller am I than all the kindnesses and than all the truth which You do to Your servant, for with my stick I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Rescue me, pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he comes and smites me, and the mother with the sons. And you said, `Good, yea, good will I do to you, and I make your seed as the sand of the sea, which is not being numbered for multitude.
Context Group Version	And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O YHWH, who said to me, Return to your country, and to your family, and I will do you good: I am not worthy of the least of all the family allegiances, and of all the truth, which you have shown to your slave; for with my stick I passed over this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I beg of you, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him. Or else, he will come and strike me, from mother to sons. And you said, I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which shall be too many to count.
English Standard Version	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,' 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. 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. 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.'"

Modern KJV

And 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 relatives, and I will prosper you,' I am not worthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant. For with my staff I crossed over this Jordan, and now I have become two encampments. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. For I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too many to be counted.' "

NASB

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 relatives, and I will prosper you,' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff *only* I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.' "

New King James Version

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': 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. 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. 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.' "

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob says, "God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Jehovah who says unto me, Turn back to your land, and to your kindred, and I do good with you.' I have been unworthy of all the kind acts, and of all the truth which You have done with your servant—for, with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I am fearing him, lest he come and have struck me—mother beside sons. And You—You have said, 'I certainly do good with You, and I have set your seed as the sand of the sea, which is not numbered because of the multitude.' "

**The gist of this passage:**

Jacob prays to God for deliverance; recognizing that he is unworthy of God's grace. He recalls two promises and indicates his fearfulness when it comes to their imminent meeting.

This prayer is going to seem rather amazing. I found myself, on several occasions, thinking, *this is Jacob?*

Also, is this the first recorded prayer in the Bible (apart from Job)?

The next four verses are a prayer to God.

Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.' I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' "

## Genesis 32:9–12: Jacob's prayer (various commentators)

Benson suggests: *[Jacob] addressed himself to God as the God of his fathers, not presuming to call him his own God, because of the sense he had of his unworthiness.*<sup>188</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *In this distress he does not consult the teraphim Rachel had taken from her father; nor does he call upon the hosts of angels that had just appeared to him, to help, protect, and guard him; but to God only, the God of his fathers, who had promised great things to them, and had done great things for them; who was their God in covenant, as he was his also, though he makes no mention of it, and who was heir of the promises made to them, the birthright and blessing being entailed upon him.*<sup>189</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *This is the first recorded example of prayer in the Bible. It is short, earnest, and bearing directly on the occasion. The appeal is made to God, as standing in a covenant relation to his family, just as we ought to put our hopes of acceptance with God in Christ. It pleads the special promise made to him of a safe return; and after a most humble and affecting confession of unworthiness, it breathes an earnest desire for deliverance from the impending danger. It was the prayer of a kind husband, an affectionate father, a firm believer in the promises.*<sup>190</sup>

I don't know that this is the first prayer in Scripture, but I cannot think of a counter-example.

When Jacob left the land of promise, he made a vow. Gen. 28:20–22 **Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that You give me I will give a full tenth to You."** (ESV; capitalized)

Dr. Peter Pett: *This prayer is a pattern prayer. It begins with a sense of humility and unworthiness, it continues with a reminder of the promises and faithfulness of God and it seeks help on the basis of those promises. We too must ever remember that our prayers must be in accordance with the will and purposes of God. Then, and then only, can we confidently claim His faithfulness. The prayer is a sublimely personal and private prayer. There is nothing cultic about it. It is spontaneous and heartfelt.*<sup>191</sup>

Skinner: *[Jacob's great prayer consisted] of "an invocation (Genesis 32:10), thanksgiving (Genesis 32:11), petition (Genesis 32:12), and appeal to the divine faithfulness (Genesis 32:12), a classic model of O.T. devotion.*<sup>192</sup>

Some examples of prayers: 2Chronicles 20:6, 12 32:20 Psalm 34:4–6 50:15 91:15 Philip. 4:6–7.<sup>193</sup>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

9-12

### Genesis 32:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>188</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:9.

<sup>189</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:9.

<sup>190</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>191</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>192</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Check this page for further citation.

<sup>193</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:9.

Genesis 32:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Ya'āqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ġuh-KOH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'āb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
'Ab <sup>e</sup> râhâm (אֲבִרָאם) [pronounced ahb <sup>ve</sup> -raw-HAWM]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'āb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
Yis <sup>e</sup> châq (יִשְׁחַק) [pronounced yih <sup>s</sup> -KHAWK]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850

**Translation:** Jacob then prayed [lit., said], saying, “Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—...

Jacob is saying a prayer here, and the prayer is directed to the God of his father Isaac, the God of his grandfather Abraham (the word for *father* can refer to both).

So far, we have not seen anything in Jacob's life nearly as spiritual as we observed in Abraham's. Jacob has had some visions; but there is very little that he says which ties him to the Revealed God. So many times, people have studied Jacob and wondered, *what is he doing in the line of promise?* However, here, he is in a jam; and here he appeals to God. We will finally see Jacob's recognition of God and God's grace and his own failings.

Some have made note that Jacob nowhere confesses his sins.<sup>194</sup> However, even in my own prayers, I tend to silently confess my sins; but say my prayers aloud.

**Application:** In the spiritual life, you always keep short accounts; always confess your sins. You don't have to do this aloud, with your eyes closed or before a priest. If you keep short accounts, confession of sin might take 5 seconds. If you are about to listen to doctrine, pray or exercise your spiritual gift, then you need to **rebound** (name your sins) first.

Genesis 32:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly y <sup>h</sup> oh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>the one saying, one speaking, the person saying [to oneself], who is thinking</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
shûwb (שוב) [pronounced shoob <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>return, turn, turn back, reminisce, restore something, bring back something, revive, recover something, make restitution</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'erets (ארץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #776 BDB #75
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
môwl <sup>e</sup> deth (תולדות) [pronounced moh <sup>l</sup> - DETH]	<i>birth, origin, native; kindred, family; progeny, [female] offspring, children; circumstances of birth</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4138 BDB #409

**Translation:** ...Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the One [Who] said, 'Return [now] to your land and to your relatives...

This is the right thing to do. Jacob is doing what God told him to do; and he throws that right up in God's face from the get-go. "Look, you told me to return here. I am here because you told me to return." In a way, Jacob is

<sup>194</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:9.

saying, "I am here because I have obeyed You; I am in Your geographical will; so, if I cannot solve this problem, then You must."

In just the previous chapter, God said this to Jacob. Gen. 31:3 **Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."** (ESV)

When God makes a promise, it is okay to call Him on that promise. It is okay to say, "I am standing on Your Word right here." Now, the only catch is, you need to know what you are talking about. For instance, you cannot say, "Here are all these people in Acts speaking in tongues; I am standing on Your Word right now and I expect to talk in tongues." That does not work. You cannot imitate some historical incident and consider that fulfilling a promise from God. If you found yourself in Iraq, say stationed there by the United States; then you would not suddenly say, "I need to go to Canaan because that is what Abraham did."

Jacob's prayer is remarkable in all that he says. He did return to Canaan, as God commanded; and, therefore, he can make certain demands of God.

**Application:** In the Christian life, you can make certain demands of God.

Genesis 32:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâṭab (יָטַב) [pronounced <i>yaw-TA<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>to do well, to cause to do well, to do rightly, to do good, to make merry, to make glad, to rejoice; to make fit, to adjust</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with the cohortative hê	Strong's #3190 BDB #405
The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with <i>let</i> or <i>may</i> ; in the plural, this can be <i>let us</i> . The cohortative is designed for the 1 <sup>st</sup> person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Generally there is the hê suffix to indicate this. This might be called <i>apocopated</i> in Owen's <i>Analytical Keys to the Old Testament</i> .			
The NET Bible: <i>The idea includes more than prosperity, though that is its essential meaning. Here the form is subordinated to the preceding imperative and indicates purpose or result. Jacob is reminding God of his promise in the hope that God will honor his word.</i> <sup>195</sup>			
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** ...and I will do good to you.'

God *loves* this! If God has made a promise to Him, then you quote that promise back to Him (and the Bible is filled with promises for believers). "God, this is Your Word, this is what You promised me, and I am demanding that You stand by Your Word!" This is why God gives us His Word; this is so we know what He will and will not do.

Here is what Jacob previously heard. Gen. 31:3 **Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."** And Gen. 31:11–13 **Then the angel of God said to me in the dream,**

<sup>195</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'" So, if those were God's words, Jacob has not mentioned them before. However, when God says, "I will be with you" that does imply that God will do good to Jacob.

If we are in the will of God, then what God has planned is for our good.

Now Jacob prays. He is essentially repeating what God has told him. What Jacob needs to do is believe this.

Genesis 32:9 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.'

### Genesis 32:9c: God's promises and provisions to Jacob (various commentators)

Trapp: *Promises must be prayed over. God loves to be burdened with, and to be importuned in His own words...He can as little deny them as deny Himself.*<sup>196</sup>

Trapp continues: *And it is no arrogancy nor presumption, to burden God, as it were, with his promise; and of duty to claim and challenge his aid, help, and assistance, in all perils.*<sup>197</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *[Jacob] now also aligns himself particularly closely with the covenant in relation to the family tribe and reminds God of the particular promise made to him on his leaving Paddan-aram (Genesis 31:3). As He has watched over him with regard to Laban, let Him now watch over him in the face of the new threat.*<sup>198</sup>

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Genesis 32:9 Jacob then prayed [lit., *said*], saying, "Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Yehowah, the One [Who] said, 'Return [now] to your land and to your relatives and I will do good to you.' (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qâṭōn (קטן) [pronounced kaw-TOHN]	<i>to be small, to be little, to be insignificant, to be of little worth</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6994 BDB #881
min (מן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כּוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

<sup>196</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9 (suggestive comments).

<sup>197</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:9.

<sup>198</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

## Genesis 32:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Literally, they mean <i>from all...</i> However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> (1Samuel 23:23); <i>over all, more than all, above all</i> (Genesis 3:14).			
chăçâdıym (חֲצַדִּיִּם) [pronounced kuh-saw-DEEM]	<i>gracious acts, gracious promises, acts of kindness (benevolence, mercy); graciousness, benevolence, mercies, kindnesses</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #2617 BDB #338
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, they mean <i>from all...</i> However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> (1Samuel 23:23); <i>over all, more than all, above all</i> (Genesis 3:14).			
'êmeth (אֱמֶת) [pronounced EH-meth]	<i>firmness, faithfulness, truth, certainty, stability, perpetuity, fidelity, reliable, stable, dependable</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #571 BDB #54
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ĞE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

**Translation:** I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant.

In Jacob's prayer to God, he evaluates himself. He recognizes that he deserves nothing; and that God has demonstrated great grace and truth to him over the years. This is very accurate. Sometimes, you wonder if a person is very self-aware, and then Jacob says stuff like this, which indicates that he knows where he is at, what he is doing, and what God requires of him. Maybe not perfectly, but reasonably well.

The faithfulness of God is found here: Genesis 24:27 28:15 Psalm 61:7 85:10 Micah 7:20.<sup>199</sup>

Genesis 32:9–10a Jacob then prayed, saying, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, ‘Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.’ I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant.

Jacob offers up his own unworthiness as reason for God to bless him.

### Genesis 32:10a: Jacob’s unworthiness before God (various commentators)

Dr. John Gill: *[Jacob saw himself as] not worthy of the least mercy and favour that had been bestowed upon him; not even of any temporal mercy, and much less of any spiritual one, and therefore did not expect any from the hands of God, on account of any merit of his own.*

Gill continues: *[Jacob has enjoyed undeserved] grace, mercy, and goodness [from a gracious God. These] are seen making promises, and truth and faithfulness in the performance of them; Jacob had had a rich experience of both, and was deeply affected therewith, and which made him humble before God.*<sup>200</sup>

H. C. Leupold, D. D.: *It is hard to understand how men can claim that "the element of confession is significantly absent" in Jacob's prayer. True, a specific confession of sin is not made in these words. But what does, "I am unworthy," imply? Why is he unworthy? There is only one thing that renders us unworthy of God's mercies and that is our sin. Must this simple piece of insight be denied Jacob? It is so elementary in itself as to be among the rudiments of spiritual insight.*<sup>201</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *This man now appeals to God and cries out to Him on the basis that He is the God of his father Abraham and the God of his father Isaac. I begin now to detect a little change in Jacob's life. This is the first time I have ever heard him say, "I am not worthy of the least of Your mercies." For the first time, he is acknowledging that he might be a sinner in God's sight. Do you know that there are a great many "Christians" who do not acknowledge that they are sinners? For years I knew a man who was incensed that I would indicate that he was a sinner. He told me all that he had done and that he had been saved and now was not a sinner. My friend, he is a sinner. We are all sinners, saved by grace. As long as we are in this life, we have that old nature that isn't even fit to go to heaven. And do you know that God is not going to let it go to heaven? Vernon McGee cannot go there. That is the reason God had to give me a new nature; the old one wasn't even fit to repair. This fellow Jacob is beginning now to say that he is not worthy. When any man begins to move toward God on that basis, he will find that God will communicate with him.*<sup>202</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *The impact on his life of his experiences now comes out in a new humility. As he considers all he has received at God's hand (with a little help from himself) he is profoundly grateful. He recognises that he is not worthy of it.*<sup>203</sup>

John Wesley: *He addresses himself to God as the God of his fathers: such was the sense he had of his own unworthiness, that he did not call God his own God, but a God in covenant with his ancestors. O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac.*<sup>204</sup>

Benson: *I am not worthy* — *It is a surprising plea. One would think he should have pleaded that what was now in danger was his own against all the world, and that he had earned it dear enough; no, he pleads, Lord, I am not worthy of it. Of the least of all Your mercies.*<sup>205</sup>

<sup>199</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:10.

<sup>200</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:10.

<sup>201</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiii.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>202</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32) (slightly edited).

<sup>203</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>204</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 32:9 (slightly edited).

<sup>205</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:10 (slightly edited).

**Genesis 32:10a: Jacob's unworthiness before God (various commentators)**

Trapp: *[W]e should acknowledge ourselves [as unworthy] of the least mercies we enjoy.*<sup>206</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *Abraham's life was mostly a testimony to faithfulness. He was willing to take risks and shoulder the burdens God gave. And except for a few times when he succumbed to impatience, he walked a straight line with God.*

Verse-by-verse Ministry continues: *Isaac's life was long but largely uneventful. Apart from sharing some of Abraham's impatience, he maintained the testimony his father established. His notable weakness was in favoring the wrong child for all the wrong reasons.*

Verse-by-verse Ministry continues: *Jacob is easily the most complex patriarch in the record of Genesis. Probably because of his father's favoritism for his brother, Jacob developed a strong sense of self-determination. And as a result, Jacob's life is filled with trials and struggles, both against men and God.*<sup>207</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob states in the prayer, "I am unworthy," which is an acknowledgement on his part that he merits nothing with God and that all He has been promised and has received from God is a gift of His sovereign grace and is casting himself upon God's mercy and compassion.*

Wenstrom continues: *His use of this expression expresses his humility and that he has finally come to realize that all the prophecies about him and the all the blessings were based not upon his merits but upon God's grace.*<sup>208</sup>

E. W. Bullinger: *[This is a] [f]igure of speech [an] Heterosis (of Tense),... = I have been and am unworthy.*<sup>209</sup>

The Bible gives us many instances of the unworthiness of individual men: Genesis 18:27 2Samuel 7:18 Job 42:5–6 Psalm 16:2 Isaiah 6:5 63:7 Dan. 9:8–9 Luke 5:8 17:10 2Corinthians 12:11 1Timothy 1:12–15 1Peter 5:5.<sup>210</sup>

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**Genesis 32:10b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
maqêl (מַקֵּל) [pronounced mah-KAYL]	<i>rod, staff</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #4731 BDB #596

<sup>206</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:10.

<sup>207</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>208</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>209</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:10.

<sup>210</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:10.

## Genesis 32:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
The NET Bible: <i>The Hebrew word מַקֵּל (maqel), traditionally translated “staff,” has been rendered as “walking stick” because a “staff” in contemporary English refers typically to the support personnel in an organization.</i> <sup>211</sup>			
‘âbar (אַבַּר) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yâr <sup>e</sup> dên (יַרְדֵּן) [pronounced <i>yar<sup>e</sup>-DAYN</i> ]	<i>descender; flowing downward; the watering place; transliterated Jordan</i>	proper noun with the definite article	Strong's #3383 BDB #434
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

**Translation:** I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff;...

Jacob calls God on this—God told Jacob to return to the land of Canaan; and Jacob says, “Look, I don’t deserve anything; but I have crossed over the Jordan River, as you told me to.”

Jacob is actually making a point here—when he had to get out of Canaan, all he had was his staff. That was his only actual possession.

Genesis 32:9–10 Jacob then prayed, saying, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, ‘Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.’ I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps.

### Genesis 32:10b: Jacob about to cross over the Jordan River (commentators)

Matthew Poole: *I passed over this Jordan;...being at this time upon a high hill; or which my mind is set upon, as that river which I am going to repass, that I may go to my father, and to that good land which You have given to me and mine for ever.*<sup>212</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *As he speaks he is looking at the river in front of him. This river is probably the one which is later called the River Jabbok (Deut. 2:37; Deut. 3:16; Joshua 12:2) but it is possible that as a tributary of the Jordan it was in Jacob’s time known only as the Jordan. Jabbok is here the name of a particular ford over the river (Genesis 32:22), the name which later became attached to the river.*<sup>213</sup>

<sup>211</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

<sup>212</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:10 (slightly edited).

<sup>213</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

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## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

When Jacob crossed over the River, all he had was his staff, by way of possessions. It appears that, based upon other passages, he was traveling with his mother's personal maid. The idea is, Jacob had no money or possessions to speak of, no wife, no nothing.

Genesis 32:9–10 Jacob then prayed, saying, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, ‘Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.’ I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps.

### Genesis 32:10b: Jacob has nothing but his staff (various commentators)

Bullinger says that Jacob has nothing (but this staff) and deserves nothing (by his own admission).<sup>214</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *All he permanently possessed which was his own when he left Canaan was his staff. The servants were not his. The goods and presents were not his. Only the staff he carried was his.*<sup>215</sup>

The Geneva Bible called Jacob *poor and without all provision*.<sup>216</sup>

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

### Genesis 32:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘attâh (אתָּ) [pronounced <i>gah-t-AWH</i> ]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w <sup>e</sup> + the adverb ‘attâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore, now then</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
sh <sup>e</sup> nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>n-Ā</i> ]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040

<sup>214</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:10 (paraphrased).

<sup>215</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>216</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 32:10.

## Genesis 32:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
machāneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

**Translation:** ...and now I have become two camps.

Jacob continues. "I have crossed over the Jordan River as You asked me to. I owned but a staff when I left Canaan, and now I have so many people and possessions, I am able to separate them into two camps."

You see what Jacob has done. He observed the other camp of angels, and called that place, Mahanaim (*two camps*). Now, he has broken up his own family into two camps.

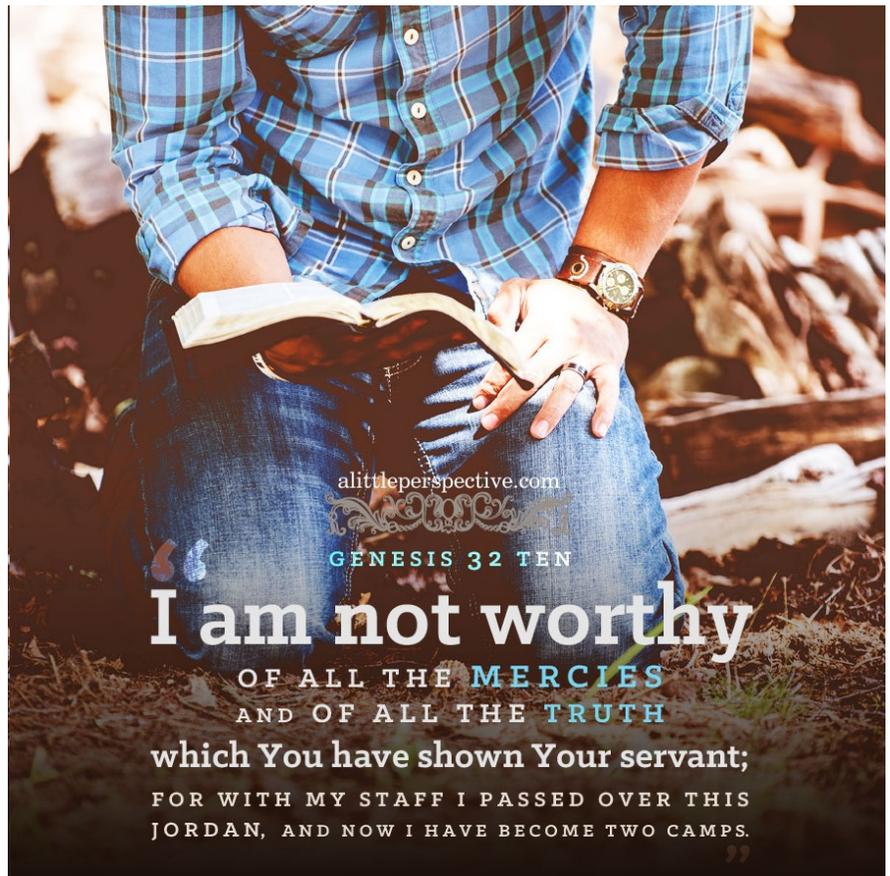
Part of the meaning here might be, even in Israel, there will always be two camps of Israelites: those who believe in the Revealed God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and those who do not.

In any case, Jacob recognizes how he appears before God, not worthy of the least of God's mercies. This is a good start. We understand this to be grace orientation.

**Genesis 32 TEN** (a graphic); from **A Little Perspective**; accessed March 7, 2019.

This is Jacob's second prayer, the first being, *If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.* (Genesis 28:20-22 NIV) This second prayer actually reveals some spiritual growth.

So far, this is what we have: Jacob then prayed [lit., *said*], saying, "Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Yehowah, the One [Who] said, 'Return [now] to your land and to your relatives and I will do good to you.' I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant. I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff; and now I have become two camps.



By this, Jacob is recognizing how God has blessed him. He crossed over the Jordan to leave the land, and he had virtually nothing with him, apart from his staff. However, now he has so much that he can divide up his family and possessions into two significant camps. The Message gives a good rendering of this: [The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I owned nothing—only my walking stick. But now I own enough things to have two full groups.](#)

Jacob, when he ran from Esau originally, had nothing. God prospered him to the point to where he could actually split into two reasonably large camps. Obviously he did not have 400 men, but to be able to divide into two camps, he must have had approximately 40–50 men and an incredible number of cattle (that is an educated guess on my part). We picture Jacob traipsing through this desert with his wives and children and a servant or two, but this verse, along with several others, indicates that he had a goodly number of servants.

This hopeless situation—it is a hopeless situation in Jacob's eyes—is causing Jacob to think about things spiritual. He has operated primarily on human viewpoint for the bulk of his life and now, in this hopeless situation, begins to reflect. It is not unlike a person's life flashing before him.

I recall in my Christian youth hearing about God's multifarious blessings and about the prosperity test and I often mused about either being given a great deal of prosperity or facing the prosperity test. Thieme had me convinced that if I stayed with God's Word, that I would be given prosperity (although it might not be material prosperity). I stayed with His Word, forgot about those things, and suddenly, one day, looked around me, and found that I had become much more successful than I had ever planned and had the material things that I desired without realizing it. I gained a great deal of appreciation for the grace that God gave me, even though when I was being blessed, I was not even cognizant of it.

**Application:** Part of being able to appreciate the blessings which God has given you is being able to recognize the blessings which He has given you.

Jacob is looking over his life. He left the land of Canaan on the run from Esau with only his staff and now he has enough people working for him to where he can split into two companies; he has 11 sons, a beautiful wife, a second wife and 2 mistresses. He has finally come to the place where he realizes that he has been blessed beyond his wildest dreams and he realizes that it is a matter of grace—he does not deserve what God has given him.

In his mind, Jacob needs to integrate the promises of God with the blessings that he has received with the geographical will of God; and then understand, God has him in the right place at the right time.

The Bible continually looks into the future and gives us a glance at what will be. Jacob, as representing the nation Israel, crossed over the Jordan (which is how the Jews will enter the land to take it), and eventually, they divided themselves into two nations. Jacob here is simply foreshadowing this.

If you have been a believer for, say, 5 years, and you have spent that time growing spiritually, taking in the Word of God each and every day, you should be able to look around and recognize that God has greatly blessed you. Now, you won't be the richest person on your street or in your neighborhood, but that God has blessed you in one way or another, that will be certain. But, part of it is being able to recognize how you have been blessed.

Personally, I came out of a rather turbulent past, wherein I have things in my background that I won't ever speak of. However, soon after I believed in Jesus Christ, I began taking in Bible doctrine. You cannot even begin to compare my trajectory prior to faith in Christ with my life after. And don't misunderstand me; I have been anything but a perfect Christian, but my life has done nothing but get better each and every year—and I guarantee you that none of this is deserved. I think it took me perhaps 10 or 15 years, and I suddenly looked around and realized just how much God had blessed me. Had I a lick of sense, I would have recognized it long before that.

Genesis 32:10b-c [I crossed over this Jordan \[River\] with my staff; and now I have become two camps.](#)

## Genesis 32:10c: God marvelously has blessed Jacob (various commentators)

Bush: *That is, having nothing but a staff when I passed over this Jordan, I am now become so prosperous as to be able to divide my people, and my flocks and herds into these two large and imposing bands.*<sup>217</sup>

Benson: *For with my staff I passed over this Jordan — Poor and desolate, like a forlorn and despised pilgrim; having no guides, no companions, no attendants. And now I am become two bands — Now I am surrounded with a numerous retinue of children and servants. Those whose latter end doth greatly increase, ought with humility and thankfulness to remember how small their beginning was.*<sup>218</sup>

I believe that Jacob crossed over with his nursemaid/godmother, Deborah. She will be mentioned by name in a future chapter (Genesis 35:8). The implication in that passage is, Deborah has been with Jacob all of this time.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob's statement, "for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies" is an acknowledgement that God has fulfilled His promises to prosper him while in exile.*<sup>219</sup>

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob acknowledges that he was bankrupt when he arrived in Paddan Aram but now as he enters the land of Canaan he acknowledges God has prospered him beyond all that he could have ever asked for and this is indicated in the statement "for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies."*<sup>220</sup>

God's many blessings passed on to us in grace: Genesis 32:5, 7 30:43 Deut. 8:18 Psalm 18:35 84:7 Job 17:9 Proverbs 4:18.<sup>221</sup>

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Genesis 32:10 I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant. I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff; and now I have become two camps. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>snatch away, deliver, rescue, snatch out of danger, preserve, recover</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative; with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
The NET Bible: <i>The imperative has the force of a prayer here, not a command.</i> <sup>222</sup>			
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

<sup>217</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:10 (suggestive comments).

<sup>218</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:10 (slightly edited).

<sup>219</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>220</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>221</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:10.

<sup>222</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

## Genesis 32:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Genesis 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Genesis 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Genesis 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
The NET Bible: <i>The "hand" here is a metonymy for "power."</i> <sup>223</sup>			
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i> ]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
'Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796

**Translation:** Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau,...

In the Hebrew, *from a hand of* is repeated twice. I left the second one out; but both are there to show great emphasis and a great fear on the part of Jacob.

Passages where deliverance is requested: 1Samuel 12:10 24:15 Psalm 16:1 25:20 31:2 43:1 59:1–2 119:134 142:6 Proverbs 18:19 Dan. 3:17.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>223</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

<sup>224</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:11.

## Genesis 32:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yârê' (יָרֵא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAY</i> ]	<i>fearing, being afraid; having fear-respect, showing reverence, having a reverential respect</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>him, it; he; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
pen (פֶּן) [pronounced <i>pen</i> ]	<i>lest, peradventure, or else, in order to prevent, or, so that [plus a negative]</i>	conjunction	Strong's #6435 BDB #814
I wonder if this might be:			
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i> ]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
bôw' (בֹּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong #5221 BDB #645
The NET Bible: <i>The first person pronoun "me" probably means here "me and mine," as the following clause suggests.</i> <sup>225</sup>			
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i> ]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #517 BDB #51
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

<sup>225</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

## Genesis 32:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bânîym (בְּנֵי־אִם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** ...for I fear him, that he will come [upon me] and strike me down, [along with] the mothers and their sons.

Where I have *that*, there is actually a *lest*. If you go back to the first part of this sentence, it makes sense: *Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, ...lest he come upon me and strike me down [and] mothers upon their sons.* The *for I fear him* throws off the rhythm to some degree.

In any case, obviously Jacob is worried for his life and the lives of his wives and children. He is concerned that Esau will not just harm him but wipe out his family as well.

At least one commentator has remarked that Jacob did not confess his sin (s) in this prayer. Previously, in the narrative, Jacob has admitted fear (a mental attitude sin) and here, he admits to being afraid. That could be considered a confession of sin.

The Cambridge Bible notes: *Jacob in his prayer makes no reference to the possible cause of Esau's anger, and expresses no consciousness of, nor sorrow for, his own wrong-doing towards either Esau or Isaac.*<sup>226</sup> Jacob's sins against Esau were a long time ago. It is very likely that, at some time within the previous 20 years, Jacob already confessed those sins. Since he confessed them, they do not need to be repeated.

Jacob recognizes that he is undeserving of what he has. He still appeals to God to deliver him, recognizing that God is the only One Who can deliver him. This is more than "God help me and I will do anything to repay you." That is a joke. Some people get themselves into the worst jam possible and then cry out to god for help. Once they are delivered, regardless of the promises and the vows that they made, they go back to the same old behavior problems and God is long forgotten once the pressure is off.

Jacob's actions often cause us to wonder whether he is advancing spiritually at all. However, what he prays to God his is quite spectacular. Vv. 9, 10 and 12 tell us that Jacob is doing more than simply crying to God for help. In v. 9, he tells God that it was He who send Jacob back to his land of birth; in v. 10, he recognizes his lack of worth; in v. 12, he calls God on His promises. In other words, Jacob is doing a lot more than just crying to God for help. He is actually apply Bible doctrine to his circumstances!

And notice one thing which is extremely important: Jacob is not bargaining with God—You do this for me and I will begin tithing or I'll go to church more often or I'll say ten nice things about Esau every single day and tell him I love him when I see him. We don't trade off with God. There is nothing that we have which even begins to be a reasonable trade-off for His grace, protection and direction. We are totally undeserving and we have no capital with which to bargain. That is total arrogance on our part to think that God can be tempted by us throwing a measly 10% into his coffers, or by our lame promise to go visit the sick more often or to try to be nicer people. God is not a man that He should be tempted by this nonsense. God is not stupid, so He does not fall for our vows and promises. When He delivers us, we do not deserve it and we will never deserve it. God deals with us in grace and He deals with believers in the New and the Old Testament in grace. The sooner we come to realize that He has got everything under control and that God does not owe us anything, then we can live a much more relaxed life. We don't have to scheme, we don't have to promise, we don't have to do anything. If we have a desire to

<sup>226</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:11.

function in His plan in some form or another, then we need to immerse ourselves in His Word and God will direct our paths. If we choose not to, that's fine—we just need to be prepared for a lot of divine discipline to the point that we will beg for it to stop hurting.

Jacob prays to God; but it will be clear that God, in eternity past, solved this problem that Jacob faces. The same thing is true of us and all of our problems.

Genesis 32:9–11 Jacob then prayed, saying, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, ‘Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.’ I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children.

### Genesis 32:11b: Jacob expresses fear in his prayer (various commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *[Jacob] expresses the fear of what Esau intends to do to him. He thinks that he intends to slay Jacob and all his family. (This will be necessary so that Esau can get back his inheritance). And he points out that this would be contrary to what God had promised about the multitude of his descendants.*<sup>227</sup>

Donald S. Fortner: *Poor Jacob, though he was a believer, though he had experienced so much grace, when he was fleeing from Laban and heard that Esau was coming after him, he was distressed and full of fear, yet the Lord was with him (Genesis 35:3). Thank God, he does not leave his people because of their fears. If he did, we would have all been castaways long ago.*<sup>228</sup>

Dr. John Gill gives a rational reason for Jacob's fear: *For though his brother, it was his brother Esau, that had formerly vowed revenge upon him, and had determined to kill him, Genesis 27:41, and he knew not but that he was still of the same mind; and now having an opportunity, and in his power to do it, being accompanied with four hundred men, he feared he would attempt it.*<sup>229</sup>

Gill makes the most sense here. Esau did not gather up these 400 men to go after Jacob; but, they certainly give him the means by which he could destroy Jacob and his family.

Gill also suggests that Jacob had a very low opinion of Esau, believing him to have a *savage disposition*.

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *Jacob is at odds with his brother because he schemed against him. But that scheming was itself a product of Jacob's unwillingness to depend on God, to take matters into his own hands.*<sup>230</sup>

Proverbs 3:5–6 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Wenstrom later writes: *Fear is not sin but becomes sin when we do not turn to God in prayer to overcome that fear and do not claim the promise of divine protection. Jacob met his fear and anxiety with prayer and claiming the promises that God had made to him in the past of the divine presence, protection and prosperity.*<sup>231</sup>

<sup>227</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>228</sup> From *Discovering Christ In Genesis*: © Copyright 2007, Donald S. Fortner (by e-sword) Genesis 32.

<sup>229</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 9:11.

<sup>230</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>231</sup> From *Grace Notes*; (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

Many excellent Bible teachers believe that Jacob's fear is reasonable, and one says, because he does not know what Esau is going to do.<sup>232</sup> What Esau plans to do or ends up doing is not the issue; the issue is what God has promised and what God does. Now, if someone wants to say, from a human viewpoint stance, Jacob is right to be afraid of Esau, then that is a reasonable observation.

Evaluating what Jacob does or says does not mean that, I, his evaluator, in the same situation, would have done better. It simply means, putting Jacob up to divine standards, how does he measure up? His fear aside, this is still a remarkable prayer, and even more remarkable, knowing that this is Jacob's prayer. This is one of the few times that we can really apprehend what is in Jacob's soul related to the plan of God.

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Genesis 32:9–11 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.' I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children.

### Genesis 32:11b: Jacob looks to God to deliver him from Esau (commentators)

L. M. Grant: *But he has nowhere else to turn, and he earnestly entreats the Lord to deliver him from Esau, his brother (v.11), for he admits he is afraid of Esau, that he might kill him and his wife and children. "For you said," he adds, "I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea" etc. He was virtually saying to God, "You said this, but now Esau might kill me, and what will happen to your promise?" Did he need to plead with God to keep His promise?*<sup>233</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: Jacob acknowledges his fear of Esau in this prayer to God, and which fear is not sin but rather faith in God since Jacob demonstrates His confidence in God by going to Him in prayer to meet this fear of Esau and asking God to deliver him from Esau and his men.

Wenstrom continues: *The acknowledgment of fear in one's life is not sin but becomes sin when we don't go to God to meet the fear and trust Him to handle the situation. Jacob's fear would have become sin if he attempted to deal with this problem with Esau solely by means of his own devices and leave God out of the situation.*

Wenstrom continues: *The fact that Jacob prayed and did not attempt to deal with this problem with Esau by means of his own power and schemes demonstrates that he is no longer self-confident but rather confident in God. The twenty years with Laban has broken Jacob of relying upon himself to deal with his problems and has taught him to turn to God to solve his problems.*<sup>234</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob...deals with his fear of Esau by first acknowledging his fear to God and then petitions God to deliver him from Esau in order to deal with the fear...The believer must deal with his fear in adversity by first acknowledging the fear to God and then petitioning God to deliver him from the adversity in order to deal with the fear.*<sup>235</sup>

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Wenstrom then offers a number of Scriptures that the fearful person might cling to:

<sup>232</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>233</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>234</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>235</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

Philippians 4:6, ...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1 Peter 5:7 ...casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Psalm 56:3–4 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?

Psalm 31:2 Incline Your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!

Psalm 34:17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

Psalm 143:9 Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD! I have fled to You for refuge. (ESV; capitalized)

Now, consider vv. 10–11: “I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant. I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff; and now I have become two camps. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear him, that he will come [upon me] and strike me down, [along with] the mothers and their sons.” Whether Jacob realizes this or not, he is connecting his unworthiness to his remaining fear of Esau. He does not deserve that grace which God has given him thus far; and, on top of that, he is afraid of Esau and what harm he might do. We have discussed this is Esau has not gathered 400 men for the purpose of coming to Jacob; those men were already with him. Therefore, logically, Jacob should not be afraid simply because Esau is traveling with so many men. On top of that, given all that God has done for him, he ought not be afraid.

Nevertheless, Jacob prays to be delivered from Esau and from any harm he might do. When you are afraid, that is certainly a legitimate prayer.

Genesis 32:11 Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear him, that he will come [upon me] and strike me down, [along with] the mothers and their sons. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i> ]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
yâṭab (בָּטַי) [pronounced <i>yaw-TA<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>to do well, to cause to do well, to do rightly, to do good, to make merry, to make glad, to rejoice; to make fit, to adjust</i>	Hiphil infinitive absolute	Strong's #3190 BDB #405
yâṭab (בָּטַי) [pronounced <i>yaw-TA<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>to do well, to cause to do well, to do rightly, to do good, to make merry, to make glad, to rejoice; to make fit, to adjust</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3190 BDB #405

The NET Bible: *The infinitive absolute appears before the imperfect, underscoring God's promise to bless. The statement is more emphatic than in v. 9.*<sup>236</sup>

<sup>236</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

## Genesis 32:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** You [emphatically] promised [lit., said], 'I will definitely do good to [lit., with] you...

With what Jacob says here, it is clear that God has promised, at some point, that He would have said, "I will do good to you." Jacob is emphatic here. He uses an additional pronoun *you*, which is not necessary, and he doubles the verb. Both of these things indicate great emphasis. Now, when you pray to God, you cannot simply make up stuff and say, "And You said You would do this!" So, obviously, Jacob is basing this upon a promise that God made to Abraham or a promise which God made to Jacob and was not recorded. A second interpretation is, God essentially made this guarantee by promising that He would increase the number of those descended from Jacob to an uncountable number. A third possibility is, God, by the things which He has promised Jacob, has implied that He would do good to Jacob (which I believe is the correct understanding here). The doubling of the verb is emphatic, which suggests that God said this and that His words can be so interpreted.

I believe that Abraham recorded everything that was important to record about his interactions with God. However, Jacob is not quite the man that Abraham is. Jacob is not nearly as spiritual as Abraham. He spends more time out of fellowship and he tends to trust God less. But there can be no doubt that either God said these exact words or said something which leads to this understanding.

Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.' I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' "

### Genesis 32:12a: Jacob rests on a promise from God (various commentators)

Trapp: "I will be with you": {Genesis 28:15} which, indeed, has in it whatsoever heart can wish, or need require. This promise was so sweet to the patriarch, that he repeats and ruminates it, rolling it as sugar in his mouth, and hiding it under his tongue.<sup>237</sup>

Dr. John Gill suggests that Jacob took God's promises to be with him and followed that to its logical conclusion: [T]he promise of God's presence [Genesis 28:15 31:3] includes and secures all needful good to his people; and from this general promise Jacob draws an argument for a special and particular good, the preservation of him and his family, he was now pleading for; and the rather he might hope to succeed, since the following promise was also made him.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>237</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:12 (slightly edited).

<sup>238</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:12.

## Genesis 32:12a: Jacob rests on a promise from God (various commentators)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob...claims the promise that God would protect and prosper him in order to deal with the fear of Esau.*<sup>239</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them and is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.*

Wenstrom continues: *The principle of faith operates quite simply: (1) God speaks and we hear His Word. (2) We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be.*

Wenstrom concludes: *The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.*<sup>240</sup>

The NET Bible: *Some commentators have thought this final verse of the prayer redundant, but it actually follows the predominant form of a lament in which God is motivated to act. The primary motivation Jacob can offer to God is God's promise, and so he falls back on that at the end of the prayer.*<sup>241</sup>

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### Genesis 32:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sîym (שׂיַם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
<p>All of the BDB meanings: <i>to put, set, lay, put or lay upon, lay (violent) hands on; to set, direct, direct toward; to extend (compassion) (figuratively); to set, ordain, establish, found, appoint, constitute, make, determine, fix; to set, station, put, set in place, plant, fix; to make, make for, transform into, constitute, fashion, work, bring to pass, appoint, give.</i> Gesenius adds: <i>to direct, to turn [in any direction]; to make, to prepare.</i> I have used the translation <i>to designate, to designate.</i></p>			
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The form is the perfect tense with a vav (ו) consecutive, carrying the nuance of the preceding verb forward.</i><sup>242</sup></p>			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
zera' (זֶרַע) [pronounced ZEH-rahg']	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #2233 BDB #282

<sup>239</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>240</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

<sup>241</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

<sup>242</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

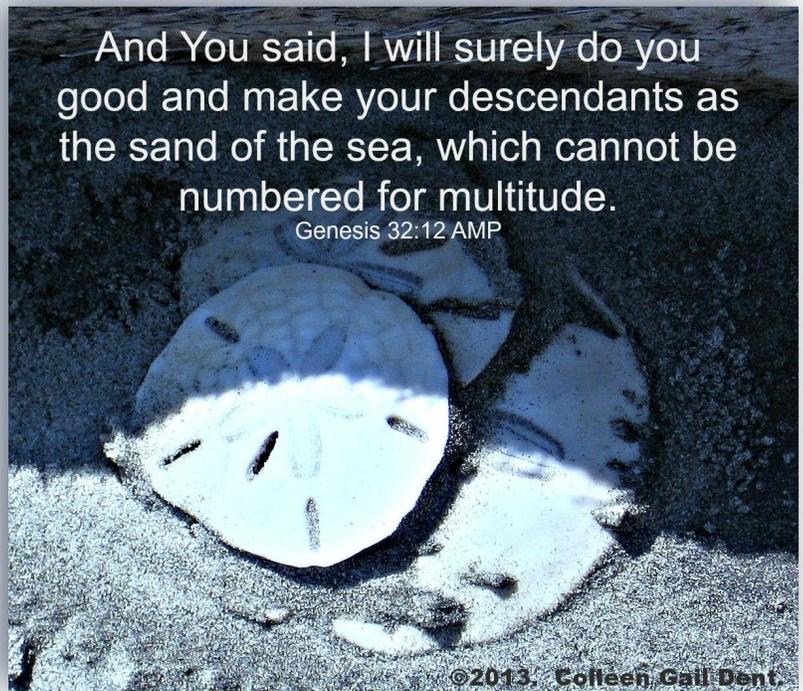
Genesis 32:12b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
chôwl (חול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sand</i>	masculine singular noun, used as a collective noun; construct form	Strong's #2344 BDB #297
yâm (ים) [pronounced yawm]	<i>sea, lake, river, seaward, west, westward</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3220 BDB #410
'ăsher (אשר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
çâphar (סָפַר) [pronounced saw-FAHR]	<i>to be counted, to be numbered; to be considered</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5608 BDB #707
The NET Bible: <i>The imperfect verbal form indicates potential here.</i> <sup>243</sup>			
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
rôb (רַב) [pronounced roh <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>multitude, abundance, greatness</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7230 BDB #913

<sup>243</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

**Translation:** ...and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for [lit., from] multitude.' "

Here we see Jacob at his absolute best. God has made him several specific promises and Jacob clings to those promises. He calls God on His promises. He expects God to deliver him because God made these promises and God cannot keep these promises unless He delivers Jacob. God is glorified when we call Him on one of His promises; when we cite the Word (however, the passages we cite should not taken out of context, because in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all things be verified).<sup>244</sup>

Our lives and God's workings in our lives is what resolves the Angelic Conflict. Angels are watching us and through our interactions with God's Word, they understand and confirm God's character and essence.



**Genesis 32:12 (The Amplified Bible)** (a graphic from Colleen Dent); from [Pinterest](#); accessed March 8, 2019.

The reason that this promise is so important is, Jacob is worried about his wives and children being destroyed; but if they are the basis for the fulfillment of God's promises, then God cannot allow them to be destroyed.

Also this tells us that Jacob did not have to divide himself into two camps. That was unnecessary.

God made this specific promise to Jacob: Gen. 28:13–15 **And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."** (ESV; capitalized)

<sup>244</sup> This brings me to a personal theory. It is obvious that God has allowed His Word to become corrupted, albeit to a limited degree. God has allowed some men through incredible arrogance to add to His Word and others with equal arrogance to remove some words. There have been errors which have crept in due to the text not being updated regularly during the ancient world due to man's indifference. There have been errors by Scribes who have been out of fellowship (or unbelievers) as they copied the text, and thereby allowed errors to creep in. God has also raised up men with phenomenal dedication and spiritual gifts in the area of textual criticism, archeology, ancient languages, etc. who have given their entire lives to bring us the most accurate text possible. These are men who are incredible unsung heroes of the faith who will receive great reward in heaven. However, God has seen to it that every doctrine in Scripture—every passage that would affect our daily walk—can be found in two or three other places in God's Word, so that by two or three witnesses, all may be confirmed.

## Gen. 32:12b: Jacob stands on promises given to him and his ancestors (comments)

Clarke: *[Jacob's faith] gained strong confirmation in a promise which he knew could not fail, and which he found was made over to him, as it had been to his father and grandfather.*<sup>245</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[God's promise to] **make your seed as the sand of the sea**, which cannot be numbered for multitude; which could not be fulfilled, if he and his family were cut off at once, as he feared; but God is faithful who has promised.*<sup>246</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that Jacob reminds God of this promise indicates his concern for his family and posterity and not just himself. The fact that Jacob reminds God of His promise that his descendants would be as the sand of the sea, demonstrates that he is operating in faith in this situation with Esau since he is claiming the promises of God or in other words, he is resting on God's Word.*

Wenstrom continues: *The fact that Jacob is claiming the promise that his descendants would be as the sand of the sea indicates Jacob's desire to see that God's Word is fulfilled, which would ultimately result in the glorification of God since it would demonstrate God's faithfulness and veracity. Therefore, Jacob's prayer is not selfish since he desires to see God's Word fulfilled in his life, which leads to the glorification of God.*<sup>247</sup>

Do not neglect that fact that Jacob *knows* these promises and quotes them back to God.

God's faithfulness:

2Tim. 2:12–13 **if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful— for He cannot deny himself.**

Heb. 6:17–18 **So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.** (ESV; capitalized)

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Jacob quotes God's Word right back to Him, which is what God wants us to do. We are to know God's Word and expect God to keep to His Word. Jacob is saying, "You promised this; I am holding You to Your promise."

We are given God's Word and we are to stand upon it. We are given God's promises and we are to claim them.

Genesis 32:12 **You [emphatically] promised [lit., said], 'I will definitely do good to [lit., with] you and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for [lit., from] multitude.'** " (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:9–12 **Jacob then prayed [lit., said], saying, "Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Yehowah, the One [Who] said, 'Return [now] to your land and to your relatives and I will do good to you.'** I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant. I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff; and now I have become two camps. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear him, that he will come [upon me] and strike me down, [along with] the mothers and their sons. **You [emphatically] promised [lit., said], 'I will definitely do good to [lit., with] you and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for [lit., from] multitude.'** " (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:9–12 **Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.'** I am a

<sup>245</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:12.

<sup>246</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:12.

<sup>247</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 3, 2019.

man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' " (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.' I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' "

### Gen. 32:12b: It is best for the believer to stand upon God's promises (comments)

Benson: *God's promises, as they are the surest guide of our desires in prayer, and furnish us with the best petitions; so they are the firmest ground of our hopes, and furnish us with the best pleas.*<sup>248</sup>

Henry M. Morris: *If Esau had been victorious here, all of God's plans and promises would have been defeated, and the world would never have had a Savior.*<sup>249</sup>

When we are able to take a promise of God's from the Bible and correctly apply it to our present circumstances, then we know that we are standing on solid ground.

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It would be even better if Jacob believed this and acted upon his belief. It will become apparent that, even though Jacob is praying this prayer, he is still going to do things his way.

All of Jacob's descendants are right there, along with his wives and mistresses. If God allows Esau to kill Jacob and the rest, then God cannot fulfill His promises to Jacob. God also promised that if Jacob returned to the land that God would prosper him. God cannot prosper Jacob if Jacob is killed the moment he sets foot in the land. So by God's promises, Jacob has nothing to worry about. So he calls God on these promises and that is a real spiritual step forward.

This is a promise made to Abraham on several occasions and, if memory serves, to Jacob as well.

Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.' I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' "

<sup>248</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:11–12.

<sup>249</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional citation there.

## A Summary of Jacob's Prayer (T. H. Leale)

1. He appeals to God as the Covenant God and Father (Genesis 32:9).
2. He pleads God's gracious promise to himself. "The Lord which saidst unto me, "Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee."
3. He confesses his own unworthiness, and God's goodness and faithfulness (Genesis 32:10).
4. He presents his special petition expressing his present want (Genesis 32:11). He prays to be delivered from his brother's anger, the possible consequences of which were fearful to contemplate.
5. He cleaves to God's word of promise (Genesis 32:12). God had promised to do him good, and to make his seed as the sand of the sea for multitude. And Jacob pleads as if he said, how could this promise be fulfilled if himself and his family were slain? This prayer shows the kind husband, the tender father, the man of faith and piety.

*The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:3–9.

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Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.' I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' "

## Genesis 32:9–12: Other Summaries of Jacob's Prayer (various commentators)

Clarke:

This prayer is remarkable for its simplicity and energy; and it is a model too for prayer, of which it contains the essential constituents: -

1. Deep self-abasement.
2. Magnification of God's mercy.
3. Deprecation of the evil to which he was exposed.
4. Pleading the promises that God had made to him. And,
5. Taking encouragement from what God had already wrought.<sup>250</sup>

Whedon:

In this fervent prayer we note with interest the following: 1) He appeals to the God of his fathers. 2) He makes use of the covenant name Jehovah. 3) He pleads the promises. 4) He humbly acknowledges the mercies of God. 5) God's truth or fidelity is honoured as against the untruthfulness of Jacob. 6) He acknowledges his great temporal prosperity as a blessing of God. 7) He prays for deliverance from Esau. 8) He confesses his fear. 9) He pleads for the mothers and children. 10) He pleads, in conclusion, the promises again.<sup>251</sup>

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**Jacob's Prayer** (a graphic); from [Slide Player](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>250</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:9.

<sup>251</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:9.

I really liked the way that the Voice translated this prayer: **Jacob:** O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Eternal One who said to me, “*You must now return to the land of your ancestors and to your own family. I will make good things happen for you.*” I know I am not worthy of *even a little* of all of the loyal love and faithfulness You have shown to me, Your servant. *You have already blessed me because I left home and crossed the Jordan with nothing except my staff. Now I have grown into two large camps. Rescue me now, please, from the hand of my brother, from the grip of Esau. I am afraid that he may come and crush us all, the children alongside their mothers. Remember* You told me, “I will make good things happen for you and make your descendants as many as the *grains of sand on the shores, which are too numerous to count.*”

## Jacob's Prayer

- ▶ **God's covenant - Genesis 32:9a**
- ▶ **God's command - Genesis 32:9b**
- ▶ **God's care - Genesis 32:10**
- ▶ **God's purposes - Genesis 32:11**
  - Jacob wasn't thinking only of himself, but he had his family and God's great plan in mind as well
    - ▶ Through Jacob's sons God would bring blessing to all people
    - ▶ The Savior would come from the tribe of Judah and die for the sins of the world
    - ▶ Paul would come from the tribe of Benjamin and carry the Gospel to the Gentiles
  - God will not allow His eternal purpose to fail!

The Voice commentary on Jacob at this point in his life: *Jacob has come to the end of himself. He has struggled with his brother and the rest of his family for his entire life. He was born a “heel-catcher,” a deceiver, and he lived the part well. But he can't go on like this any longer. With Esau on his way, by this time tomorrow he could well be dead and his family killed or captured. He desperately needs God's blessing and protection, so he grieves and agonizes through the night. Through stabbing pain Jacob demands a blessing from his unknown assailant, but he cannot receive it until he confesses his name. Once he does, his name is changed. No longer is he known as Jacob; from now on he is “Israel,” he who wrestles with God. This is the turning point in Jacob's life. He lays aside his former self and takes up a new name, a new identity. If Jacob is to be the one to carry on God's covenant and the source of universal blessing, he has to change.*<sup>252</sup>

Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob then prayed, saying, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, ‘Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.’ I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps. Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children. You emphatically promised, ‘I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.’ ”

This is certainly one of the most amazing prayers in Scripture, as well as evidence that hard-headed, rebellious Jacob is learning some Bible doctrine and he is able to apply it. He is far from being mature, at this point, but he is at least going in the right direction.

Genesis 32:9–12 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 relatives, and I will prosper you,' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children. "For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered. (Jack M. Ballinger)

<sup>252</sup> From <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32&version=VOICE> accessed November 7, 2016.

## Genesis 32:9–12 Jacob's Prayer (Jack M. Ballinger)

1. His next action was to do the right thing—he prayed for protection.
2. The content of his intercessory prayer is simply introduced by, "Jacob said..."
3. By invoking the names of his grandfather and father in connection with God Jacob is recalls all that God has done on their behalf to further the covenant promises of land and descendants in perpetuity.
4. Next he reminds God that the situation he is now in is the direct result of his obedience to the divine summons to exit Haran and return to the land of promise (v.9b).
5. This appeal is an almost exact quote from 31:3.
6. Jacob interprets "I will be with you" to mean "I will prosper you" or literally, "I will do well for you" (Hiphil of yatab).
7. Thus far the prayer has made two claims on the integrity of God.
8. The first is the family claim made implicitly and second is the claim directive will claim which is made explicitly (e.g. "I am only doing what You told me to do.").
9. The third claim has to do with the principle of divine precedence (v. 10a).
10. This claim focuses on Jacob's past blessings.
11. God has been there for him over the years even though he was strictly "unworthy of the least of all the loyalty and faithfulness" that has brought him thus far.
12. He pleads that those acts of kindness and faithfulness apply to the present crisis.
13. His fourth and final appeal is found in v. 10b: "**for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now have become two companies.**"
14. This appeal is an appeal to mercy for one who is totally outmatched by a four hundred man army headed by a vengeful brother.
15. Jacob is basically saying I am unarmed and he seems to be saying that I have done something stupid by dividing my people.
16. In v. 11 Jacob makes his specific prayer petition known to God.
17. He prays simply "Deliver me from the hand of my brother."
18. In so doing he admits that he is under fear and that fear has to do with his personal safety as well as that of his family members who like him are totally exposed.
19. For him for God to allow such a slaughter would be incompatible with God's promises and actions on his behalf to date.
20. In other words it would be a miscarriage of divine integrity!
21. Not to mention that it would be inconsistent with all the divine dealings with him to date.
22. His prayer ends with a second appeal to the promises associated with his person as the third link in the chain started with Abraham (v. 12).
23. One of the two main pillars of that covenant is the promise of innumerable descendants.
24. An indispensable aspect of Jacob's personal blessing in time is prospering with his own contribution to the innumerable descendants clause of the Abrahamic Covenant.
25. Disaster at this juncture would constitute a divine breach of fidelity of the first order.
26. The words "For you said..." puts the character of God on the line come what may.
27. God had in fact said these words to Jacob for the first time at Bethel.
28. This is all Jacob has and it is all Jacob needs in his defense.
29. God has promised and in Jacob's excited state of mind all is on the line and God must step up and deliver his servant.
30. Jacob's prayer is right on and is in contrast to his survival antics both before and after this intense and strong intercession.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen32.htm> accessed March 2, 2019.

Genesis 32:9–12 Then 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 relatives, and I will produce good with you.' I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which you have shown to your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; because I am afraid of him, lest he come and destroy me, as well as the mothers and children. For you said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" (Ron Snider)

### Summary Genesis 32:9–12 (by Ron Snider)

1. This incident in the life of Jacob is quite instructive in understanding how believers relate to tests in their life.
2. We observed that Jacob first caved in to the MAS of fear and made his plans to deliver himself.
3. Afterwards, he resorts to God in prayer, since his own efforts have not removed the pressure he felt.
4. As we will observe in vs 13ff he resorts back to human viewpoint activity in order to deliver himself.
5. It is very easy to say now that he should have just prayed about it and left in God's hands and not worried.
6. Yet when confronted with tests, are we not just like Jacob, vacillating back and forth between faith and doubt, between trust in God and reliance on our own abilities to deliver ourselves.
7. It would be great if believers would apply perfectly under testing, but this is just not the reality.
8. Jacob's prayer is a model of doctrinal viewpoint, demonstrating that he had indeed grown spiritually.
9. Even though he is on the verge of maturity, he waffles under the pressure of his testing.
10. It should not be overlooked that this test which produced such fear in him did not exist in reality, but only in his imagination.
11. It is very easy to get caught up in groundless assumptions about what the future holds and put unnecessary pressure on yourself.
12. When we are fretting about something, the first thing that we should do is make certain that we are functioning based on factual reality, and not merely on some scenario which we have concocted in our own mind.
13. Jacob, like us, acts first and prays later, which is just the opposite of what we should do.
14. He begins his prayer by addressing God in terms of his ancestors, Abraham and Isaac.
15. This means several things:
  - a. It demonstrates Jacob's understanding of the fact that he was related to the Abrahamic covenant.
  - b. It calls to mind both men, who had STA's and failures, yet God had delivered them repeatedly.
  - c. It calls into view God's faithfulness to these men.
16. He is not implying that God is not his God, but on the contrary that he stands in a similar position with God as his ancestors.
17. The first thing that Jacob points out is that he is not in Canaan at merely his own desire.
18. He is in the geographic will, and that at God's command.
19. So he reminds God of His command to return to Canaan and His promise to prosper Jacob.
20. He next moves to his own sense of personal unworthiness of the blessings of God, which he has received.
21. This demonstrates grace orientation, recognizing that we never become worthy of the least of God's goodness to us.
22. When all is said and done and you review the life you have lived, you will be overwhelmed at the goodness and grace which God has bestowed upon you.
23. That God loves his children and constantly performs marvelous acts of grace based on His love should lead to a realization of one's own lack.
24. The very fact that we need grace and mercy draws attention to our need.
25. Our need, like Jacob's, comes about due to the STA and the fact that we so readily obey its dictates.
26. This confession of unworthiness recognizes our consistent failure in terms of sin, as compared to the perfect righteousness of God.
27. The second term draws attention to the fact that God is consistent toward us, no matter how we are toward Him.

### Summary Genesis 32:9–12 (by Ron Snider)

28. He is always faithful to His word, our failures and inconsistencies notwithstanding.
29. The temporal prospering of Jacob over the 20 years with Laban is cited as proof of God's mercy and faithfulness.
30. Jacob was basically destitute when he left Canaan, and now he returns a wealthy man, with a large family.
31. The very act of dividing his camp has graphically demonstrated the degree to which he has come under the blessing of God.
32. His request is straightforward and simple, he wants to be delivered from his brother, whom he thinks is coming to kill him.
33. He admits that he is afraid of Esau now, as he was 20 years earlier when he left Canaan.
34. His confession of sin in vs 10 is general, his confession here is specific.
35. He points out that he is not merely concerned with his own personal safety, but with the safety of his family.
36. I'm sure that he was concerned with the safety of his family, but this is designed to put further pressure on God, if you will.
37. He next cites the only thing which the believer can truly rely on at any time, the Word of God.
38. The promises of God are given for us to believe and appropriate as we will.
39. This type of prayer does not offend God, it demonstrates that Jacob has been paying attention, and knows the Word of God very well.
40. This boldness is characteristic of the adjusted believer, just as the true humility is characteristic of the adjusted believer.
41. We are commanded to come with confidence before God in our times of testing and need. Heb. 4:16
42. Not because we are anything, but because we are related to God through the work of our Great High Priest. Heb. 4:14ff
43. Effective prayer is related to doctrine in the brain computer, without which the believer does not know what to ask for. Jn. 15:1-7
44. As we know, the Abrahamic covenant had several seeds in view, under the term, "seed".
45. The physical seed, the Jews, is to become like the sand of the sea, which is so numerous as to be uncountable.
46. Jacob demonstrates that he clearly understood the aspect of the seed as he cites the physical descendants which must still be future in order to fulfill the promise of SG3 to Abraham.
47. While Jacob has his problems and we have been observing them in the previous chapters, this prayer demonstrates a depth of growth and understanding which very few attain.
48. This is a positive believer who has an STA and failures galore, yet his ultimate confidence is not in himself, but in his God.
49. This prayer contains the following key elements:
  - a. Recognition of the unchanging God, the God of Abraham is the God of Jacob and the God of Grace Bible Church. vs 9
  - b. Grace orientation and humility. vs 10
  - c. Recognition of God's blessing. vs 10b
  - d. Boldness and confidence with God. vs 9b, 12
  - e. Petition. vs 11
  - f. Claiming the promises of God's Word. vs 12

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

**Genesis 32:1–12: Jacob Fears Esau** (Summary on a Slide); from [Slide Serve](#) (slide #11); accessed March 9, 2019.



## Jacob Fears Esau Genesis 32:1-12

- **Jacob** meets the “**angels of God**”. He says it’s “**God’s camp**” and calls it Mahanaim (“**two camps**”). **Only here** and in **Jacob’s dream** at **Bethel** does the O.T. mention the “angels of God”, **both times with Jacob**.
- **God shows** Jacob that **His protection is there**, even when not apparent.
- How will Jacob be received by **Esau**, who **threatened to kill him**?
- **Jacob sends messengers** ahead. The messengers tell Esau that Jacob has come with animals and servants, **asking to find favor in Esau’s sight**.
- The messengers tell Jacob that **Esau** is coming with **400 men**.
- **Jacob splits all** into two camps, hoping one will escape the attack. Jacob prays.
- *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.’”*
- **Jacob prays** to God **by name** (for the **first time**), includes **God’s directions**, shows **humility**, makes his **request**, is **honest** about his **feelings**, and **prays God’s word** back to him. **Jacob’s faith is maturing!**

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### Jacob's First Human Viewpoint Solution: a Present, Designed to Placate Esau

The popular saying, *God helps those who help themselves*, did not come from the Bible, but this exact wording is first attributable to Algernon Sidney, but popularized by Benjamin Franklin (the saying actually **goes back quite a ways**). This can be tricky to apply. God does not expect us, when we need money for rent or to buy food, to go and sit on a park bench and wait for God to drop those things in our laps. We gain those things by means of hard work (for most people, hard work). At other times, there will be situations over which we have no control, and we simply have to sit back and observe, *now, how is God going to get us out of this one?* This is where Jacob’s thinking needs to be, but it is not. He has just prayed a marvelous prayer to God; but now, he is going to solve the situation with the application of human viewpoint. Unfortunately, Jacob, having thought doctrine for a short period of time, will almost immediately return to human viewpoint.

Quite frankly, this is a judgment call for the expositor. A present would be in order and an apology for previous wrongs. Did Jacob go over the top here? Does he appear to trust in God in vv. 9–12, but then decide, “Let me try this...” Or does Jacob trust in God *and* he believes that it is right for him to lavish his brother with this massive gift?

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Genesis 32:13-21 presents to us the record of Jacob sending gifts to Esau to restore stealing the blessing of the birthright and thus pacifying him in case Esau has hostile intentions towards him.*<sup>253</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *So what does a man of faith do after having prayed for God to intervene and resolve his situation? Well, if you're Jacob, you go back to scheming.*<sup>254</sup>

**Narrative in the Bible:** One of the most fascinating things about the Bible is, it is filled with narrative. Huge portions of both testaments are narrative, which is why minor problems with the text really do not impact our understanding of the story being told.

One writer estimates that 40% of the Bible is narrative, citing the fact that these books in particular are narrative driven: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah, Haggai, some of the Prophetic writings, the Gospels, Acts.<sup>255</sup> No doubt, when considering literary genres, this is the dominant genre of Scripture.

This also supports the concept that the world is a stage upon which human history plays out, observed constantly and with great interest by angels—like the most grand morality play imaginable. God is not right there with you, explaining to a group of angels, “This means this; and this is how you interpret the actions of Charley Brown right now.” On occasion, God calls together a great convocation of angels, and explains specific things to them and draws their attention to this person or that (as per Job 1–2); but, it seems reasonable that God allows angels a great deal of time and freedom to watch human history unfold before their very eyes. The reason for this is, Who and What God is, is explained by our actions as guided by the Word of God (or by our actions when we are in rebellion against God).

By the recorded narrative in Scripture, we also get to stand back and observe the lives of ancient saints as well. And we find that in these narratives, God does not always tell us what we should think about this or that person, or about this or that event. Ideally speaking, as we study these narratives, they enter into our thinking, and, sometimes, we may have them in our consciousness for many years (off and on). God gives us time to ponder these events; God gives us time to think about these people. Jacob and his actions and motivations make for one of the most interesting narratives in Scripture. I have thought about Jacob, off and on, for 20 or 30 years. He has so many things to teach us, despite his many and spectacular failures.

As we study each narrative section, we consider these questions: *What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about God's plan? What does this tell us about God's character? What does this tell us about man?*

The unbeliever often objects to the concept of *glorifying God*. The skeptic often understands the glorification of God to be the way that we placate God's massive ego (they take their own desire for recognition and extrapolate it to apply to God).

The Angelic Conflict is all about the character of God. When we as believers glorify God, this simply means that, we by our words and actions, reveal to others Who God is. Can God create beings and then condemn them to the Lake of Fire? Is this consistent with God's character? Are we not, by virtue of how God created us and where

<sup>253</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>254</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>255</sup> From [Prepare International.org](#); accessed February 18, 2019.

God placed us, victims of the very volition which He has given us? This is one of the key issues of life (and death) that human history resolves.

When we glorify God, we reveal to others (and to angels) Who God is. We reveal His character. We reveal His essence. We reveal His motivations.

How God is revealed in us and by us is how other people are often saved. Our lives and how they play out often reveals to observers what God is like. Or, we reveal by our lives, what is it like when a person has a relationship with God. As Henry David Thoreau said, *[most] men lead lives of quiet desperation.*<sup>256</sup> The believer informs the world, *there is another way to live your life.*

We ourselves as believers begin to understand this information based upon our own study of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Joseph. (By *our own study*, I mean by hearing the teaching of a well-qualified pastor-teacher about these men.<sup>257</sup> The person who simply reads his Bible in a 1 or 2 year program will understand very little about these men without professional guidance.) We observe their lives in Scripture, their relationship with God, and develop an understanding of God and man, and even our purpose in life, in the process.

**And so he lodges there in a night the that and so he takes from the ones coming in his hand a present for Esau his brother: she-goats 200 and he-goats 20; ewes 200 and rams 20; camels nursing and their sons 30; cows 40 and bulls 10; she-asses 20 and he-asses 10. And so he gives in a hand of his servants a flock a flock to him and so he says unto his servants, "Pass over to my faces and a space place between a flock and between a flock."**

Genesis  
32:13–16

**He lodged there that night and then took from the [animals] coming with him [lit., *in his hand*] [as] a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 [in all]; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male-donkeys. He placed [each] herd [of animals] into the care of his servants, saying to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put [some] space in between [each] herd."**

**He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys. He placed each herd of animals under the care of his servants, saying to them, "Pass over before me, and move along so that there is some space between each herd."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he lodges there in a night the that and so he takes from the ones coming in his hand a present for Esau his brother: she-goats 200 and he-goats 20; ewes 200 and rams 20; camels nursing and their sons 30; cows 40 and bulls 10; she-asses 20 and he-asses 10. And so he gives in a hand of his servants a flock a flock to him and so he says unto his servants, "Pass over to my faces and a space place between a flock and between a flock."

Targum (Onkelos)

And he housed there that night, and took of that which came to his hand, an offering for Esau his brother; goats two hundred, rams twenty, ewes two hundred, and rams twenty, camels giving milk and their young ones thirty, cows forty, and bulls ten, she asses twenty, and colts ten. And he gave them into the hand of his servants, herd

<sup>256</sup> From [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry\\_David\\_Thoreau](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Henry_David_Thoreau) accessed February 18, 2019.

<sup>257</sup> R. B. Thieme, Jr. has a study entitled *1963 Dispensations* about these men which I remember to this day. Bob did 5 lessons on Joseph (lessons 30–35), portions of which I remember today, even though I heard those lessons over 40 years ago.

by herd separately, and said to his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space between herd and herd.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan) And he abode there that night; and he took what was ready at his hand a present for Esau his brother: she goats two hundred, and he goats twenty; ewes two hundred and rams twenty: milch camels with their young ones thirty; cows forty, and bulls ten, small colts ten..[Jerusalem. Arid small colts ten.] And he made them ready by the hand of his servants in flocks apart, and said to his servants, Pass over before me, and put much (room) between flock and flock.

Revised Douay-Rheims And when he had slept there that night, he set apart, of the things which he had, presents for his brother Esau. Two hundred she goats, twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and twenty bulls, twenty she asses, and ten of their foals. And he sent them by the hands of his servants, every drove by itself, and he said to his servants: Go before me, and let there be a space between drove and drove.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta He lodged there that night, and took from that which he had with him, a present for Esau, his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels and their colts, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. He delivered them into the hands of his servants, every herd by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put a space between herd and herd."

Peshitta (Syriac) And he spent that night there; and took of that which he had with him as a present for his brother Esau; Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty cows, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. And he entrusted them to his servants, every drove by itself; and said to his servants, Pass over before me, and keep a distance between drove and drove.

Septuagint (Greek) And he slept there that night, and took of the gifts which he carried with him, and sent out to Esau his brother, two hundred she-goats, twenty he-goats, two hundred sheep, twenty rams, milch camels, and their foals, thirty, forty kine, ten bulls, twenty asses, and ten colts. And he gave them to his servants each drove apart; and he said to his servants, Go on before me, and put a space between drove and drove.

Significant differences: The Hebrew has 10 bulls, the Latin has 20. One targum is missing the 20 she-asses.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English Then he put up his tent there for the night; and from among his goods he took, as an offering for his brother Esau, Two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred females and twenty males from the sheep, Thirty camels with their young ones, forty cows, ten oxen, twenty asses, and ten young asses. These he gave to his servants, every herd by itself, and he said to his servants, Go on before me, and let there be a space between one herd and another.

Easy English Jacob stayed the night in that place. He chose a gift for Esau from everything that he had. He chose 200 female goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep. Also he chose 30 female camels, with their young ones, 40 cows and 10 male cows and 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. He told his servants to care for them. He separated each group of animals from the other groups. Jacob said to his servants 'Go before me. Keep some space between each group of animals.'

Good News Bible (TEV) After spending the night there, Jacob chose from his livestock as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 males, 200 female sheep and 20 males, 30 milk camels with their young, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 males. He divided them into herds and put one of his servants in charge of each

herd. He said to them, "Go ahead of me, and leave a space between each herd and the one behind it."

*The Message*

He slept the night there. Then he prepared a present for his brother Esau from his possessions: two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty camels with their nursing young, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He put a servant in charge of each herd and said, "Go ahead of me and keep a healthy space between each herd."

NIRV

Jacob spent the night there. He chose a gift for his brother Esau from what he had with him. He chose 200 female goats and 20 male goats. He chose 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep. He chose 30 female camels with their little ones. He chose 40 cows and ten bulls. And he chose 20 female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He put each herd by itself. Then he put his servants in charge of them. He said to his servants, "Go on ahead of me. Keep some space between the herds."

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Casual English Bible

Jacob camped there for the night. He selected gifts to send ahead to his brother Esau. Goats: 200 female, 20 male. Sheep: 200 female, 20 rams. Camel: 30 female with their young. Cattle: 40 cows, 10 bulls. Donkeys: 20 female, 10 male. He divided the livestock into three herds. He put three teams of herders in charge of them. He told his herders, "Go on ahead of us and keep some distance between each of the herds as you travel."

Common English Bible

Jacob spent that night there. From what he had acquired, he set aside a gift for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty nursing camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He separated these herds and gave them to his servants. He said to them, "Go ahead of me and put some distance between each of the herds."

Contemporary English V.

After Jacob had spent the night there, he chose some animals as gifts for Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty males, two hundred female sheep and twenty males, thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten males. Jacob put servants in charge of each herd and told them, "Go ahead of me and keep a space between each herd."

The Living Bible

Jacob stayed where he was for the night, and prepared a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels, with their colts, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, 10 male donkeys. He instructed his servants to drive them on ahead, each group of animals by itself, separated by a distance between.

New Life Version

So Jacob stayed there that night. Then he chose a gift from what he had for his brother Esau: Two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred female sheep, twenty rams, thirty milk camels and their young ones, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He put them into the care of his servants, every group of animals by itself. Then he said to his servants, "Go in front of me. And keep the groups of animals apart."

New Living Translation

Jacob stayed where he was for the night. Then he selected these gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 female camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. He divided these animals into herds and assigned each to different servants. Then he told his servants, "Go ahead of me with the animals, but keep some distance between the herds."

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	Well, he slept there that night, [then he selected] gifts to be carried to his brother Esau. [There were] two hundred nanny goats, twenty billy goats, two hundred sheep, twenty rams, thirty milk camels and their foals, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty burros, and ten colts. Then he gave them to his servants and told them: 'Go ahead of me... and put a space between each of the herds.'
International Standard V	Jacob spent the night there. Out of everything that he had brought with him, he chose a gift for his brother Esau— 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milking camels with their young, 40 cows with ten bulls, and 20 female donkeys with ten male donkeys. He entrusted them into the care of his servants, one herd at a time [Lit. herd by herd]. Then he told his servants, "Go in front of me, making sure there's plenty of space between herds."
Revised Knox Bible	When he had slept the night there, he chose out of all his possessions a present for his brother Esau, two hundred she-goats and twenty buck-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty camels in milk with their colts, forty cows and twenty bulls, and twenty she-asses with ten colts. All these he sent on, with their drivers; Go on in front of me, he told his men, and leave a space between one herd and the next.
Translation for Translators	He slept there that night. The next morning he selected some animals to give to his brother Esau. He selected 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep, 30 female camels and their offspring, 40 cows and ten bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. He divided them into small herds, and put each herd into the care of one of his servants. He said to his servants, "Go ahead of me, one group at a time, and keep some space between each herd."

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to lodge there that night. He was to take of that coming into his hand, a gift for Esau, his brother: a hundred she-goats, twenty he-goats, a hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty nursing camels and thirty of their young, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten young asses. He was to give into the hand of his servants, the flocks. He was to say to his slave: Be passing over, turned from before me, and be putting space between the flocks, even among the flocks.
Conservapedia	He lodged there that very night, and took whatever was ready to hand as a present for his brother Esau: 200 nanny goats and 20 billy goats; 200 ewes and 20 rams; 30 milk camels with their colts, forty heifers and ten bulls, twenty jenny donkeys and ten colts. He entrusted these to his servants, every drove separately, and told his servants, "Pass ahead of me, and put some distance between one drove and the next."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	So he rested there that night. Then he took presents in his hand ; — presents for his brother Esau : A hundred goats, and twenty he-goats ; a hundred sheep, and twenty rams ; thirty suckling camels with their foals ; forty cows and ten bulls ; twenty she-asses and ten asses ; and he put them under the hands of servants separately, troop by troop, and said to his servants, " Go before me, and spread a space between troop and troop."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he tarried there that same night, and took of that which came to hand, a present, unto Esau his brother: Two hundred she goats and twenty he goats: two hundred sheep and twenty rams: thirty milk camels with their colts: forty kine and ten bulls: twenty she asses and ten foals and delivered them unto his servants, every drove by themselves, and said unto them: go forth before me and put a space between every drove.
HCSB	He spent the night there and took part of what he had brought with him as a gift for his brother Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. He entrusted them to his slaves as separate herds and said to them, "Go on ahead of me, and leave some distance between the herds."

H. C. Leupold	And he spent that night there; and he took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau, his brother: two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals; and entrusted them to the care of his servants, each herd for itself, and he said to his servants: Pass along ahead of me, and leave intervals between the herds.
Tree of Life Version	So he stayed overnight there. Then from all that had come into his possession he took an offering for Esau his brother: 200 female goats, 20 billy goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milking camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. He put them in the hands of his servants, each herd by itself, and he said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put a gap between each of the herds."

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And he lodged there that night, and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother: Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows, and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten foals. And he gave them into the hand of his servants, every drove separate, and said to his servants, Cross over before my face, and put a space between drove and drove.
New American Bible (2002)	After passing the night there, Jacob selected from what he had with him the following presents for his brother Esau: two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams; thirty milch camels and their young; forty cows and ten bulls; twenty she-asses and ten he-asses. He put these animals in charge of his servants, in separate droves, and he told the servants, "Go on ahead of me, but keep a space between one drove and the next."
Revised English Bible	After spending the night there Jacob chose a gift for his brother Esau from the herds he had with him: two hundred she-goats, twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milch-camels with their young, forty cows and ten young bulls, twenty she-donkeys and ten donkeys. He put each drove into the charge of a servant and said, "Go on ahead of me, and leave gaps between one drove and the next."

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	<i>(ii)</i> He stayed there that night; then he chose from among his possessions the following as a present for 'Esav his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty males, two hundred female sheep and twenty males, thirty milk-camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten colts. He turned them over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Cross over in front of me, and keep a space between each drove and the next one."
exeGesés companion Bible	And he stays there overnight that same night; and takes of what comes to his hand - an offering for Esav his brother: two hundred she goats and twenty he goats two hundred ewes and twenty rams thirty suckling camels with their sons forty heifer and ten bullocks twenty she burros and ten foals: and he gives them into the hand of his servants, drove by drove; and says to his servants, Pass over from my face and put a respiration

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	<p>between drove and between drove.</p> <p>After spending the night there, he selected from what was at hand these presents for his brother Esau: 200 she-goats and 20 he-goats; 200 ewes and 20 rams; 30 milch camels with their colts; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 she-asses and 10 he-asses. These he put in the charge of his servants, drove by drove, and he told his servants, "Go on ahead, and keep a distance between droves."</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p>After spending the night there, he selected a tribute for his brother Esau from what he had with him. [The tribute consisted of] 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 nursing camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. These he gave to his servants, each herd by itself. He said to his servants, 'Go on ahead of me. Keep a space between one herd and the next.'</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<p>And he spent there that same night; and took of that which came to his yad a minchah for Esav achiv; Two hundred female goats, and twenty male goats, two hundred rechemim (ewes), and twenty eilim (rams), Thirty nursing gemalim with their colts, forty parot (cows), and ten parim (bulls), twenty female donkeys, and ten male donkeys. And he delivered them into the yad of his avadim, every herd by itself; and said unto his avadim, Pass over before me, and keep a space between herd and herd.</p>

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	<p>So Jacob spent the night there. Then he selected a present for his brother Esau from the livestock he had acquired: two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, thirty milking camels with their colts, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten [donkey] colts. He put them into the care of his servants, every herd by itself, and said to his servants, "Go on ahead of me, and put an interval [of space] between the <i>individual</i> herds."</p>
The Expanded Bible	<p>Jacob stayed there for the night and prepared a gift [or tribute] for Esau from what he had with him: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred female sheep [ewes] and twenty male sheep [rams], thirty female camels and their young, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten male donkeys. Jacob gave each separate flock of animals to one of his servants and said to them, "Go [Pass] ahead of me and keep some space between each herd."</p>
Kretzmann's Commentary	<p><b>Verses 13-23</b> The Presents to Esau And he lodged there that same night, he encamped in that place for the night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau, his brother; two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels with their colts, forty-nine, and ten bulls, twenty she-asses, and ten foals. The prayer had calmed the excited mind of Jacob to such an extent that he now took measures, not to flee, but to meet Esau, and to overcome him with love. The selection and the apportionment of the animals showed Jacob's experience in cattle-raising, just as the arrangement of each small caravan indicated his wisdom, for he placed the smallest and least valuable animals first, and the more valuable in the rear. And he delivered them in to 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. There was literally a breathing space between the various small bands as they traveled along, just enough room to make a new impression every time, and thus to increase the force, the effect of the offered present.</p>
NET Bible®	<p>Jacob [<i>Heb</i> "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] stayed there that night. Then he sent [<i>Heb</i> "and he took from that which was going into his hand," meaning that he took some of what belonged to him.] as a</p>

gift<sup>30</sup> to his brother Esau two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He entrusted them to [*Heb* “and he put them in the hand of.”] his servants, who divided them into herds [*Heb* “a herd, a herd, by itself,” or “each herd by itself.” The distributive sense is expressed by repetition.]. He told his servants, “Pass over before me, and keep some distance between one herd and the next.”

The Pulpit Commentary

And he lodged there that same night; and took—not by random, but after careful selection; separavit (Vulgate)—of that which came to his hand—not of those things which were in his hand...but of such things as had come into his hand, i.e. as he had acquired (Keil, Alford, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Inglis)—a present (Minchah; used in Genesis 4:3, Genesis 4:4, Genesis 4:5, as a sacrifice to Jehovah, q.v.) for Esau his brother. Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milch camels (specially valuable in the East on account of their milk, which was peculiarly sweet and wholesome) with their colts, forty kine, and ten hulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. The selection was in harmony with the general possessions of nomads (cf. Job 1:3; Job 42:12), and the proportion of male to female animals was arranged according to what the experience of the best ancient authorities has shown to be necessary for the purposes of breeding (Rosenmóller, Keil, Kalisch). And he delivered them into the Band of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Passover (the river Jabbok) before me, and put a space (literally, a breathing-place) betwixt drove and drove—as is still the manner with Oriental shepherds.

The Voice

*And Jacob prayed on.* He spent the night there, and from his possessions he prepared a gift for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 rams, 30 milk camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. *When he had rounded them up,* he made *various* servants responsible for driving each herd. He gave them instructions.

**Jacob:** Travel on ahead of me, and put some distance between each herd.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and he stayed the night there in that night and he took from the one coming in his hand a donation for Esau <sup>[Doing]</sup> his brother, two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty strong ones, thirty nurse camels and their sons, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-donkeys, ten colts, and he gave a drove in the hand of his servants, a drove by himself and he said to the servants, cross over to my face and you will set a wind in place between a drove and a drove,...

*Emphasized Bible*

And he tarried there that night, and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother: She-goats, two hundred; And he-goats, twenty; Ewes, two hundred; And rams, twenty; Milch camels, with their colts, thirty; Cows, forty; And bulls, ten; She-asses, twenty; And And he gave them into the hand of his Servants, each drove by itself, and said unto his servants—Pass over before me, and, a breathing-space, shall ye put betwixt drove and drove.

NASB

So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass on before me, and put a space between drives.”

New King James Version

So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. 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 drives."  
 And he lodged there that same night, and took from that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother: two hundred shegoats and twenty hegoats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty sheasses and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said unto his servants, "Pass over before me, and put a space between drove and drove."  
 And he lodges there during that night, and takes from that which is coming into his hand, a present for Esau his brother: she-goats two hundred, and he-goats twenty, ewes two hundred, and rams twenty, suckling camels and their young ones thirty, cows forty, and bullocks ten, she-asses twenty, and foals ten. And he gives into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and says unto his servants, "Pass over before me, and a space ye do put between drove and drove."

Third Millennium Bible

Young's Updated LT

**The gist of this passage:** After his wonderful prayer to God, Jacob puts together a present of livestock for his brother Esau.

13-16

Genesis 32:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lûwn (ול) [pronounced loon]	<i>to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night, to lodge for the night, to abide</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3885 BDB #533
shâm (שם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
lay <sup>e</sup> lâh (הליל) [pronounced LAY-law]	<i>night; nightly, at night, in the night, during the night</i>	masculine singular noun; this word can take on adverbial qualities	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** He lodged there that night...

More than likely, Jacob determined roughly when his brother Esau might come upon them (recall that he has sent men out ahead of them, and they have already reported back to him). He knows that he has some time; and the entire night, he worries and thinks about this. I am assuming that he is worrying; the Scripture does not tell us.

Now, Jacob did pray about this—and if he is in fellowship and understands the power of God, he is sleeping well. My guess is, he is not. On several occasions in this chapter, there has been mention of Jacob's fear. Now, God is going to overrule all of this—but it seems reasonable that Jacob has a restless night because of his fear.

So, instead of leaving this problem in the Lord's hands, Jacob decides to continue to try out his own plan.

Jacob will do two things: he will prepare a massive present for his older brother Esau, and send it out ahead, in hopes of calming Esau's anger towards him (Jacob is assuming that Esau is still angry). Secondly, Jacob will divide his people into two camps, with the second one sort of hidden and out of the way, to protect his wives and children. It is very possible separating his people into two camps was his first plan; but then, sending the present was his second plan.

Here is one explanation which might fit all the Scriptures: Jacob divides his people into two camps. In the foremost camp is all his servants and much of his livestock. Then he thinks about this and decides that a present, coming from the first camp is the *better approach*. He realizes that Jacob, with his 400 men, upon finding no children or wives might ferret them out, and so the division into two camps to protect his children and wives would not work. Now, I am inserting these thoughts into the Scripture, because they are not there. We only know that (1) Jacob divided his people into two camps and (2) he sent a present ahead of him to mollify his brother. (3) Also, at the end, his present went out ahead of him, then he came followed by his wives and children (Genesis 33).

His reconsideration of the two camp approach is where I have inserted motive and action. Another idea is, after he wrestles with Jesus Christ throughout the night, this causes him to bring in second camp in behind the first, with him leading the second camp. That makes perfect sense, inasmuch as, we would expect that a wrestling match with the Lord would result in a change of behavior. If Jacob does not make any changes in his plan, then why does Jesus wrestle with him in the first place? That Jacob reconfigures his encampments when the morning comes makes sense, as, in Genesis 33, it will appear the Jacob meets face to face with Esau, and then, immediately after, Jacob presents his wives and sons to Esau.

Genesis 32:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bôw' (אָבַח) [pronounced boh]	<i>the one entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; he who enters [goes, comes (in)]</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

## Genesis 32:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> means <i>in his hand; in his power, under his control; with him; through him, by him, by means of him; at his hand</i> [i.e., <i>before him, in his sight</i> ].			
Clarke: <i>[That is,] what, in the course of God's providence, came under his power.</i> <sup>258</sup>			
Dr. John Gill: <i>[This] phrase signifies what he was possessed of, or was in his power.</i> <sup>259</sup>			
Matthew Poole: <i>Either that which was in his hand and power; or rather, that which was nearest at hand, and most ready for him.</i> <sup>260</sup>			
min <sup>e</sup> châh (מִנְחָה) [pronounced <i>min-HAWH</i> ]	<i>tribute offering, gift, present; sacrifice, bloodless offering; [a general term for] offering</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4503 BDB #585
The NET Bible: <i>The Hebrew noun translated gift can in some contexts refer to the tribute paid by a subject to his lord. Such a nuance is possible here, because Jacob refers to Esau as his lord and to himself as Esau's servant (v. 4).</i> <sup>261</sup>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i> ]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

**Translation:** ...and then took from the [animals] coming with him [lit., *in his hand*] [as] a present for his brother Esau:...

As far as Jacob is concerned, all is lost, or nearly all is lost. So, his plan is to confront Esau with a great present, with much of what he owns. Now, this is not all of it, which ought to indicate to you just how large the herds and flocks of Jacob's are.

Anyway, Jacob figures, *I am going to fill a huge space with a present for Esau; maybe this will mollify his anger.* In other words, Jacob is going to try to manipulate Esau through bribery.

The problem is this: Jacob has just prayed this marvelous prayer to God, where he appears to want to hold God to His promises (Jacob wants to stand upon God's promises to him)—and then he decides, "Let me try bribing my brother as well."

Genesis 32:13a-b **He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau:...**

<sup>258</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:13.

<sup>259</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:13.

<sup>260</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:13.

<sup>261</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 7, 2016.

## Genesis 32:13b: Jacob's present to Esau (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob hopes that a substantial present will turn away the resentment of his brother.*<sup>262</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob hopes by the arrival of a succession of gifts to break down Esau's bitter grudge against him.*<sup>263</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob's ability to give Esau 580 animals proves that God had made him enormously wealthy.*<sup>264</sup>

The Geneva Bible does not look at this as harshly as I do: *Not distrusting God's assistance, but using such means as God had given him.*<sup>265</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[Jacob prepares] a present for Esau his brother: in order to pacify him, gain his good will, and avert his wrath and displeasure.*<sup>266</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[Jacob] hoped the present would produce the desired effect; that it would turn away his wrath from him, and pacify him; and then he should be able to appear before him.*<sup>267</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *The giving of a gift to honour someone important was a regular custom of the time (compare Genesis 43:11) and its acceptance would indicate a willingness to treat peacefully.*<sup>268</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Although hoping for aid and safety from the Lord alone, Jacob neglected no means of doing what might help to appease his brother. Having taken up his quarters for the night in the place where he received the tidings of Esau's approach, he selected from his flocks ("of that which came to his hand," i.e., which he had acquired) a very respectable present of 550 head of cattle, and sent them in different detachments to meet Esau.*<sup>269</sup>

Trapp: *[Jacob] spares no cost, that he may buy his peace, and enjoy his birthright. Heaven, he knew (whereof Canaan was a type and pledge), would pay for all.*<sup>270</sup>

Prov. 18:16 **A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before the great.**

Jacob will reveal his thinking later on: Gen. 32:20b **For he [Jacob] thought, "I may appease him [Esau] with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me."**

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines**

In all, Jacob will give 580<sup>271</sup> domesticated animals to Esau.

Interestingly enough, this is not the only present which Jacob will prepare in the Bible. When his sons are about to face the prime minister of Egypt, and it appears that they had not paid for the grain that they receive, Jacob insisted that, when they return, they must take enough money to pay for that grain and a present. Gen. 43:11

<sup>262</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:13.

<sup>263</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:14.

<sup>264</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>265</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 32:13.

<sup>266</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:13.

<sup>267</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:20.

<sup>268</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:13–15 (slightly edited).

<sup>269</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:14–22.

<sup>270</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:14.

<sup>271</sup> Two others count 550 animals.

Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags, and carry a present down to the man, a little balm and a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. (ESV)

Genesis 32:13 He lodged there that night and then took from the [animals] coming with him [lit., in his hand] [as] a present for his brother Esau:.. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:14			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿêz (עֵז) [pronounced ʿayz]	<i>she-goat; in the plural, it can mean goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
mâ'thayim (מֵאֵתַיִם) [pronounced maw-thah-YIM]	<i>two hundred</i>	feminine dual numeral (not certain about the spelling)	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
tayish (טֵישׁ) [pronounced TAH-yeesh]	<i>he-goat</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #8495 BDB #1066
ʿes <sup>e</sup> rîym (עֶשְׂרִים) [pronounced ʿes <sup>e</sup> -REEM]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797
râchêl (רְחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewes</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #7353 BDB #932
mâ'thayim (מֵאֵתַיִם) [pronounced maw-thah-YIM]	<i>two hundred</i>	feminine dual numeral (not certain about the spelling)	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ayil (אֵייל) [pronounced AH-yil]	<i>ram; ram (as food; as a sacrifice); a ram's skin (skin dyed red, for tabernacle)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #352 BDB #17
ʿes <sup>e</sup> rîym (עֶשְׂרִים) [pronounced ʿes <sup>e</sup> -REEM]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797

**Translation:** ...200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams;...

We learn several things from this list. We understand how all of these Hebrew words match up, and which animals go with which animals. From this, I would guess, so identifications may have been made over the years.

Quite obviously, the provision of many females for a limited number of males is common. The females bear more young; the males impregnate them. The males, for the most part, are the ones which are eaten.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Goats were domesticated as early as 3000 B.C. and their milk, butter, cheese and meat provided sustenance. Goat hair and hides were useful in making clothing and containers for liquids.*<sup>272</sup>

This is very likely a large portion of Jacob's wealth; and he is carefully designing the numbers here, so that this is a very large present for Esau. The way the present will come to Esau will make it seem even more grand.

The Cambridge Bible: *The numbers here given enable us to form some idea of the great size of Jacob's caravan. The animals are apparently mentioned in the order of their value, beginning with the least valuable.*<sup>273</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[I]t seems this proportion of one he goat to ten she goats, and of one ram to ten ewes, is a proper one, and what has been so judged in other times and countries.*<sup>274</sup>

This proportion would be maintained by eating the male animals.

Genesis 32:14 ...200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams;... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
gâmâl (גָּמָל) [pronounced gaw-MAWL]	camel (this is obviously a transliteration)	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1581 BDB #168
yânaq (יָנֵק) [pronounced yaw-NAHK]	nursing, nursing woman, nurse; nanny (root word means to suck)	feminine plural, Hiphil participle	Strong's #3243 BDB #413
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
sh <sup>e</sup> lôshîym (שְׁלֹשִׁים) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> low-SHEEM]	thirty	masculine plural numeral	Strong's #7970 BDB #1026

**Translation:** ...nursing camels and their colts—30 [in all];...

We are given just one number for the camels and their colts (lit., *their sons*). There is an oddity here: we have the masculine plural suffix rather than the feminine plural suffix with *sons*. I would assume that there is a male camel or camels somewhere here (besides the sons).

The 30 seems to apply to all the camels.

<sup>272</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>273</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:14.

<sup>274</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:14. He cites Varro de rustica, l. 2. c. 3. apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 43. col. 439. &c. 53. col. 648.

Genesis 32:13–15 He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys.

### Genesis 32:15a: Jacob's present of camels to Esau (various commentators)

Clarke: *The thirty milch camels were particularly valuable, for milch camels among the Arabs constitute a principal part of their riches, the creature being every way so serviceable that the providence of God appears peculiarly kind and wise in providing such a beast for those countries where no other animal could be of equal service.*<sup>275</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *Milch camels were in great esteem in the eastern countries; their milk being, as Aristotle and Pliny say, the sweetest of all milk.*<sup>276</sup>

History Nature: *The she-camel gives milk continually, not ceasing till great with young; the milk of which," as Pliny has remarked, "when mixed with three parts of water, affords the most pleasant and wholesome beverage.*<sup>277</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *It is noteworthy that of the camels and donkeys Jacob does not provide males (except possibly as colts and foals). This may indicate that he had few of them, and those for breeding. This is evidence of the accuracy and genuineness of the narrative.*<sup>278</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *The "thirty milch camels" were particularly valuable; for among the Arabs they constitute a principal part of their riches; being every way so serviceable, that the providence of God appears peculiarly kind and wise in providing such animals for those countries, where no other animal could be of equal service. The she-camel gives milk continually, not ceasing even when with young; the milk of which, when mixed with three parts of water, affords the most pleasant and wholesome beverage.*<sup>279</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The camel was a prime beast of burden and a prime measure of wealth in the ancient Near East, owing both to its ability to store water and to survive on desert and steppe scrub. With the camel's domestication, overland trade routes to the remote spice regions of the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula were opened to the rest of the ancient Near Eastern economic sphere.*

Wenstrom continues: *Camels were used for milk and hides and their skins were used for sandals. The Israelites were prohibited from eating the meat of camels (Lev. 11:4; Deut. 14:7). However, camel meat is a common part of the diet of Arabic peoples today and was also part of the diet of many biblical peoples.*

Wenstrom concludes: *The possession of many camels implied that the owner was engaged in caravanning. The camel was used for riding and as a beast of burden and for recreational purposes such as racing.*<sup>280</sup>

In any case, this is an incredible present.

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<sup>275</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:14.

<sup>276</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:15. He offers additional references.

<sup>277</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:14. Clarke gives this reference: *Hist. Nat.*, lib. 11., chap. 41.

<sup>278</sup> Dr. Peter Pett, *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:13–15 (slightly edited).

<sup>279</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:14.

<sup>280</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced paw-RAW]	heifer, cow	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6510 BDB #831
This is the first time this word is found in Scripture, apart from the book of Job.			
ʿarᵇbâʿîym (מֵיעֲבָרָא) [pronounced arᵇ-BAW-GEEM]	forty	undeclinable plural noun	Strong's #705 BDB #917
wᵉ (or vᵉ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
par (פָּרִים) [pronounced pahr]	bull, [especially a] young bull, steer	masculine plural noun	Strong's #6499 BDB #830
This is the first time this word is found in Scripture, apart from the book of Job.			
ʿasârâh (עָשָׂרָה) [pronounced gh-saw-RAW]	ten	feminine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796
Clarke: <i>The Syriac and Vulgate have twenty; but ten is a sufficient proportion to the forty kine.</i> <sup>281</sup>			
ʾâthôwn (אוֹתָן) [pronounced aw-THOHN]	ass, she-ass, donkey	feminine plural noun	Strong's #860 BDB #87
ʿesᵉrîym (עֲשֵׂרִים) [pronounced gesᵉ-REEM]	twenty	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797
wᵉ (or vᵉ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿayir (רֵיעִים) [pronounced GH-yir]	male ass, male donkey (young and vigorous)	masculine plural noun	Strong's #5895 BDB #747
ʿasârâh (עָשָׂרָה) [pronounced gh-saw-RAW]	ten	feminine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796

**Translation:** ...40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male-donkeys.

There were also cows, bulls and donkeys. Cows and bulls are mentioned here for the first time in Scripture.

Dr. John Gill: *[There is] one bull to ten cows; the same proportion as in the goats and rams.*<sup>282</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *[C]ows and...bulls...were valuable for transportation, milk and leather. The females are especially prized for breeding and thus herd expansion and milking, thus Jacob sends more females than he does males.*<sup>283</sup>

<sup>281</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:15.

<sup>282</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:15.

<sup>283</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

Wenstrom on the donkeys: *Donkeys were domesticated early and were comparatively plentiful.*<sup>284</sup>

This starts out innocently enough. Jacob has chiseled Esau in the past; he has not seen his brother in twenty years and they left on bad terms. Therefore, a gift of some sort is reasonable. There is no problem with Jacob doing this. However, then he goes overboard. Whereas a gift for his brother, even an extravagant gift, is called for in the course of human protocol, Jacob loses sight of God and God's promise to him. He does not have to do anything to win Esau's approval. God has made him enough promises that he does not have to fear Esau. For all he knows, Esau may be bringing 400 men because he fears Jacob. He might be concerned that Jacob has returned to take his inheritance by force (this is *not* why these men are with Esau; but I am simply giving you another thing that Jacob could have thought instead).

The number of animals that Jacob is willing to part with strikes me as being quite excessive, but then he is using human viewpoint to bribe Esau into not killing him. It seems that, in a matter of moments, he has totally forgotten about the promise of God and the protection of the angels. A gift of half that much would have been sufficient. However, what we do learn here is the extent of Jacob's wealth. We do not know how much he kept back, but he was able to spare this amount of livestock in order to appease one man, so we know that Jacob was rich, by ancient standards, almost beyond his wildest dreams.

Jacob, in looking back, recognizes that he has made some great mistakes in his dealings with Esau. He does not have a better solution in his own mind apart from a huge present—or bribe, if you will.

It is reasonable to assume that this does not represent all of his wealth (# of animals = wealth in the time of Jacob). However, this is probably a significant portion of what Jacob has. This might even be as much as half of his own livestock.

Genesis 32:13–15 He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys.

### Genesis 32:15a: Jacobs motivation for his massive gift to Esau (a discussion)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *This gift was very generous and gracious and was Jacob's attempt to reconcile with Esau and offer restitution for his deceiving his blind father Isaac into bestowing the blessings of the birthright upon him rather than Esau.*

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob sends the gifts in increments in order to offer restitution to Esau in case he is still offended by Jacob's past conduct in relation to the blessing of the birthright. The animals were sent as free gifts to compensate the wrong Jacob had done to Esau when he deceived his father Isaac into bestowing upon him the blessing of the birthright rather than to Esau.*<sup>285</sup>

This is quite a massive gift. One wonders if Jacob was willing, at this point, to concede all to his brother Esau, including the preeminence and the land? Wenstrom suggests<sup>286</sup> this; however, we must bear in mind that Jacob, in his prayer, specified promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and now, Jacob (v. 12). It might be difficult to make a strict determination because, in vv. 9–12, Jacob appears to be putting all of this in God's hands; but, in vv. 13–21, Jacob seems to want to take care of this himself.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *This gift was "not" a bribe on Jacob's part but rather it was to express that his intentions towards Esau were peaceful and conciliatory and deferential.*<sup>287</sup>

<sup>284</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>285</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>286</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019. He quote Bruce Waltke.

<sup>287</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:15a: Jacobs motivation for his massive gift to Esau (a discussion)

Wenstrom disagrees that this gift is Jacob choosing to act in place of God, despite his marvelous prayer. He writes: *Also, this gift was “not” an attempt on Jacob’s part to help God out here and therefore an act of unbelief. If you recall, Jacob prayed to God for deliverance from Esau in Genesis 32:9-12. This gift should be “not” construed that Jacob was now forgetting about his prayer to God for deliverance and thinking that he could deliver himself with this gift or help God out with this gift. Rather, Jacob was doing what was required of him under these circumstances since he had cheated and had been deceitful with Esau in the past and was offering restitution for his past conduct with Esau.*<sup>288</sup>

Personally, I lean toward Jacob beginning to do and think the right thing (vv. 9–12), but then being unable to follow through and let God take care of it. My reasoning is this: at this end of this chapter, Jacob is wrestling with God and God damages his leg. If vv. 13–21 represented Jacob as doing the right thing, then why would God wrestle with him at the end of this chapter? I believe the idea is, Jacob appears to be doing okay; and then he starts working at cross-purposes with God.

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This brings up the question, *what would have been Jacob’s right approach?* In my opinion, Jacob should meet Esau and tell him what he has done to him was wrong, and that, if necessary, to make things right, he will give up however many animals and of whatever type Esau wants. Or, approach Esau in the same way, with the gift; with the expressed purpose, “I am looking to undo the wrong that I did with this present.”

Don’t misunderstand me on this point. When we sin, we sin against God and confession to God is all that is necessary. However, this was a set of sins which set these brothers against one another; and a set of sins concerning which, both brothers were aware. So, if Jacob wanted to apologize directly to Esau for his past misdeeds, he could do that.

**Application:** When confessing sins that you have committed against another person, the purpose is never to make you feel better or get that weight off your shoulders. So, if this is a sin which you committed, but the other party is unaware of it, then there is no need to dredge this up from the past. As R. B. Thieme, Jr. often warned, such public confessions often result in others getting out of fellowship.

**Application:** If, in your best judgment, you owe Charley Brown an apology; or, let’s say you did wrong to him, but what you did was never proven; it may even be right to apologize for such a sin (I am thinking of someone who possibly stole from someone else).

**Application:** On the other hand, there may be a sin in the long dark past that an old acquaintance either never knew about or it was long since forgotten. There is nothing in the Bible which requires you to dredge up some wrongdoing from the past. As the saying goes, *let sleeping dogs lie*.

I would think that, this situation between Jacob and Esau would be a good time for Jacob to apologize for his wrongdoing. Based upon what happens in Genesis 33, it appears that Esau would have been very forgiving. If Jacob sees his gift as restitution, then he ought to say as much.

Genesis 32:15 ...nursing camels and their colts—30 [in all]; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male-donkeys. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:13–15 He lodged there that night and then took from the [animals] coming with him [lit., in his hand] [as] a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 [in all]; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male-donkeys. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

<sup>288</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
bê (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> literally means <i>in a hand of, in [the] hand of</i> ; and can be rendered <i>into the hand [s] of; by the hand of; in [under] the power [control] of; by the power of; with; through, by, by means of; before, in the sight of</i> .			
‘ebed (עֲבָד) [pronounced GE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
‘êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced GAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5739 BDB #727
‘êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced GAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5739 BDB #727
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** He placed [each] herd [of animals] into the care of his servants,...

You can, on the one hand, think that Jacob is putting his servants between himself and Esau. However, there will be no escaping Esau and his 400 men. Jacob reasonably assumes two things (1) best for Esau to receive a large gift from Jacob first before seeing Jacob and (2) best for Esau to see other people first before he sees Jacob. These are reasonable thoughts for a man to have.

I once managed a rental for a friend of mine, as he was out of state for a year or two; and when he returned, his house was certainly not perfect (it never is after tenants); but he made a significant amount of money. If memory serves, I simply handed him a check. I think that he would have better appreciated how well he did had I brought him a large stack on hundred dollar bills. Sometimes, it is all in the presentation.

## Genesis 32:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 32:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'ebed (עֲבָד) [pronounced ĞE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
'abar (אָבַר) [pronounced ğaw <sup>B</sup> -VAHR]	<i>pass over, pass through, pass on, pass, go over [beyond], cross, cross over; go away, depart; violate [a law]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
lāmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pānîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Literally, this would be translated <i>to faces of me, to my faces</i> . Together, these words mean <i>before me, before my face, in my presence, in my sight, in front of me; before me (in the sense of, before my time), prior to my being here</i> .			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
revach (רֵוַח) [pronounced REH-vahkh]	<i>space, interval; respite, relief</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7305 BDB #926
This word only occurs in Genesis 32:16 and Esther 4:14.			
sîym (שִׂים) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sūwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
'êder (אֵדָר) [pronounced ĞAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5739 BDB #727
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

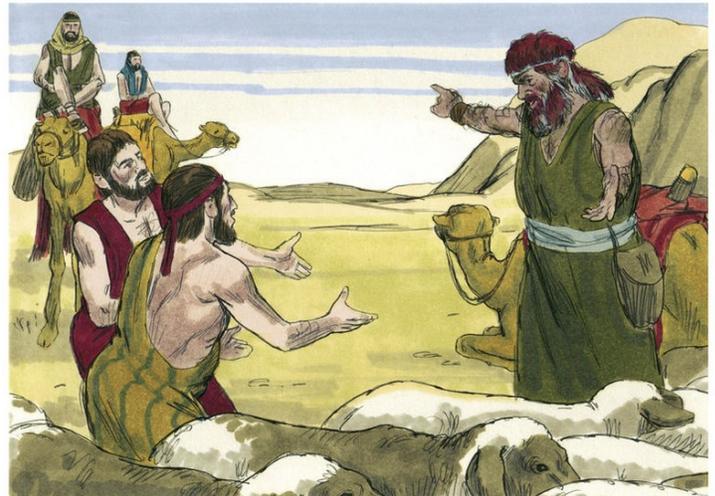
## Genesis 32:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bēyn (בֵּינַי) [pronounced bane]	<i>in the midst of, between, among;</i> when found twice, it means <i>between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
‘ēder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced GAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5739 BDB #727

**Translation:** ...saying to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put [some] space in between [each] herd.”

He tells his servants, “You all go first, and when you move toward Esau, make certain that there is some space in between each herd of animals.” The idea is, to make this gift seem even greater.

Dr. John Gill: *and he said to his servants, pass over before me: over the brook Jabbok, Genesis 32:22, a day’s journey or less before him, as Jarchi observes, or rather a night’s journey, as seems by the context; for these were sent out at evening, and Jacob stayed behind all night.*<sup>289</sup>



**Jacob Oversees the Preparation of Esau’s Present** (an illustration by Jim Padgett); from [Wikimedia](#); accessed March 8, 2019.

Genesis 32:16 He placed [each] herd [of animals] into the care of his servants, saying to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put [some] space in between [each] herd.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:13–16 He lodged there that night and then took from the [animals] coming with him [lit., *in his hand*] [as] a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 [in all]; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male-donkeys. He placed [each] herd [of animals] into the care of his servants, saying to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put [some] space in between [each] herd.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:13–16 He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys. He placed each herd of animals under the care of his servants, saying to them, “Pass over before me, and move along so that there is some space between each herd.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:13–16 He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys. He placed each herd of animals under the care of his servants, saying to them, “Pass over before me, and move along so that there is some space between each herd.”

<sup>289</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:16.

## Genesis 32:16b: Putting a space between the droves (various commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *every drove by themselves* — *There was great prudence in this arrangement; for the present would thus have a more imposing appearance; Esau's passion would have time to cool as he passed each successive company; and if the first was refused, the others would hasten back to convey a timely warning.*<sup>290</sup>

Then Gill adds: *and put a space between drove and drove*; his meaning is, that they should not follow each other closely; but that there should be a considerable distance between them, and which he would have them careful to keep: his view in this was, partly to prolong time, Esau stopping, as he supposed he would, at each drove, and asking questions of the men; and partly that he might the better and more distinctly observe the largeness of his present, and his munificence in it, and so, both by the present, and by the frequent repetition of his submission to him as his servant, his wrath, if he came out in it, would be gradually abated, and before he came to him he would be in a disposition to receive him with some marks of affection and kindness, as he did.<sup>291</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *This is Jacob's tactic. He will send out a drove, a very rich gift, for his brother, and when that first drove arrives, Esau will say, "What is this?" The servants will reply, "We are bringing you a gift from your brother Jacob." Esau will receive that gift and then ride on a little farther to meet another drove of the same size. He will ask the servants, "Where are you going?" They will say, "We're going to meet Esau with a gift from his brother Jacob." And he will say, "I am Esau." Believe me, by the time Esau gets down where Jacob and the family are, he will be softened.*<sup>292</sup>

I hope that it is obvious that Jacob is hoping to manipulate Esau with this gift.

Matthew Poole: *[Jacob's purpose here was that] his gift might be represented to Esau with most advantage, and his mind might by little and little be sweetened towards him.*<sup>293</sup>

John Trapp: *Every drove by themselves.] That Esau, having occasion of viewing the present, questioning the servants, and hearing Jacob's submission, might be somewhat mollified, and his anger abated.*<sup>294</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob told his servants to keep a good distance between each drove of animals so that as a result Esau would receive five separate gifts at different times. Jacob instructed his servants in command of each drove to inform Esau that each drove of animals was a gift from Jacob who would be following behind them.*<sup>295</sup>

Jacob continues in such a way as to manipulate his brother. Other commentators speak of Jacob has having discretion.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

To make it seem as if he has a lot to present to Esau, each group of animals is to be kept separate, so that there is group after group after group which come to him.

<sup>290</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:16.

<sup>291</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:16.

<sup>292</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>293</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:16.

<sup>294</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:16.

<sup>295</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

Genesis 32:13–16 He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys. He placed each herd of animals under the care of his servants, saying to them, “Pass over before me, and move along so that there is some space between each herd.”

### Genesis 32:16: The number and arrangement of livestock (various commentators)

Bush: *The sum total of cattle selected for this purpose was five hundred and fifty; a most magnificent present for one in his circumstances. It was a striking proof of his high estimation of the covenant promise, that he was willing for its sake to forego so large a part of his possessions. Jacob here voluntarily subjects himself to so immense a loss, that he may purchase a secure return to the land of his inheritance.*<sup>296</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[T]here seems to have been three droves, see Genesis 32:19; very probably the two hundred and twenty goats, male and female, were in the first drove; and the two hundred and twenty sheep, ewes, and rams, were in the second drove; and the thirty camels, with their colts, and the fifty cows and bulls, with the twenty she asses and ten foals, which made in all one hundred and forty, were in the third drove: though Aben Ezra thinks there were five droves; nor is it improbable, the goats in one drove, the sheep in another, the camels and colts in a third, and the kine and bulls might make a fourth, and the asses with their foals a fifth.*<sup>297</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob divided the animals into five different droves: first the goats (200 female and 20 male), then the sheep (20 male and 200 female), then camels (30) and their young, then the cattle (40 cows and 10 bulls) and then the donkeys (20 female and 10 male).*<sup>298</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob’s tactic was simple. A munificent present received in sections so as to build up goodwill and conciliation. First Esau would receive the goats, then the sheep, then the camels which would greatly impress him for they were comparatively rare, then the cattle and then finally the valuable donkeys. And each time when Esau questioned the servants they would inform him that the gifts were for him from Jacob and that Jacob followed after.*<sup>299</sup>

There is probably more excessive detail here than we truly need.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:13–16 He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys. He placed each herd of animals under the care of his servants, saying to them, “Pass over before me, and move along so that there is some space between each herd.”

J. Vernon McGee: *Jacob has prayed to God and has reminded the Lord, "You told me to return to my country. You said You would protect me." But does he believe God? No. He goes right ahead and makes these arrangements, which reveals that he isn't trusting God at all. I am afraid that we are often in the same position. Many of us take our burdens to the Lord in prayer. We just spread them out before Him — I do that. Then when we get through praying, we get right up and put each little burden right back on our back and start out again with them. We don't really believe Him, do we? We don't really trust Him as we should.*<sup>300</sup>

<sup>296</sup> *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:13–16 (suggestive comments).

<sup>297</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:16.

<sup>298</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>299</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:16–21.

<sup>300</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

It is quite fascinating to me the sorts of details which God preserves over the long period of time. However, as you have seen, this has provided us with insight into Jacob's thinking and motivation. Again and again, Jacob makes changes to the configuration of his encampments and how he will meet Esau; and all of this helps us to understand what is going on inside his head.

And so he commands the first, to say, "When meets you Esau my brother and he has asked you, to say, 'To whom you?' And, 'Where [are] you going?' And, 'To whom [are] these to your faces?' And so you have said, 'To your servant Jacob. A present [are] these being sent to my adonai Esau. And behold, he [is] behind us.'" And so he command also the second also the third also all the ones following after the herds, to say, "As the word the this you [all] will speak unto Esau in your meeting him. And you have said, 'Also, behold, your servant Jacob behind us.'" For he had said, "I might appease his faces in the present—the [present] going to my faces and following after—I will see his faces perhaps he will lift up my faces."

Genesis  
32:17–20

He instructed the chief [of Jacob's servants], saying, "When Esau my brother meets you, he will ask you, 'To whom [do] you belong?' And, 'Where [are] you going?' And, 'To whom [belong] these [herds of animals which are] before you?' And you will say to him, '[I belong] to your servant Jacob. These [animals are] a present being sent to my adonai Esau. Look, he [is] behind us.'" He also instructed the second and the third and all those following after the herds, saying, "You will say [exactly] these words to Esau when you meet him. You will say, 'Furthermore, listen, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he thought, "I might appease Esau [lit., his face] with [this] present—the [present] which goes before me and follows after me—[then] I will see him [and] he might lift up my countenance."

Jacob instructed his head servant as follows: "When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, 'Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?' You will say to him, 'I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau. Also, my master Jacob is behind us.'" Jacob gave the same instructions to the second man, the third man, and to all those who followed after, saying, "Listen, say these words exactly to Esau when you meet him: 'Besides this, your servant Jacob is following behind us. He thought that he might make things right with this present to you—all that you see before me and following after me, in hopes that you will see it and be reconciled.'" "

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he commands the first, to say, "Where meets you Esau my brother and he has asked you, to say, 'To whom you?' And, 'Where [are] you going?' And, 'To whom [are] these to your faces?' And so you have said, 'To your servant Jacob. A present [are] these being sent to my adonai Esau. And behold, he [is] behind us.'" And so he command also the second also the third also all the ones following after the herds, to say, "As the word the this you [all] will speak unto Esau in your meeting him. And you have said, 'Also, behold, your servant Jacob behind us.'" For he had said, "I might appease his faces in the present—the [present] going to my faces and following after—I will see his faces perhaps he will lift up my faces."

##### Targum (Onkelos)

And he commanded the foremost, saying, If Esau my brother meet thee, and ask thee, saying, Whose art thou? and, Where goest thou? and, Whose are these that are before thee? thou shalt say, They are an offering of thy servant Jakob, which he hath sent to my lord, to Esau; and, behold, he also cometh after us. And he instructed also the second and the third, and all of them who followed the herds, saying, According to this word you shall speak with Esau, when you find him; and

say also, Behold, thy servant Jakob cometh after. For he said, I will quiet his anger by the offering that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan) And he instructed the first, Saying, When Esau my brother shall meet thee, and ask of thee, saying, Whose art thou, and where art thou journeying and whose are these before thee? Thou halt and sayth it is a gift of thy servant Jakob, which he sends to my lord Esau, and, behold, he also cometh after us. And so he instructed the second, and the third, and all them who followed the flock, saying According to these words You must speak with Esau when you find him, and say, And, behold, thy servant Jakob also cometh after us. For he said, I will make his countenance friendly by the gift which goeth before me, and afterward will see his face: peradventure he may accept me.

Revised Douay-Rheims And he commanded the first, saying: If you meet my brother Esau, and he ask you: Whose are you? or where go you? or whose are these before you? You shall answer: your servant Jacob's: he has sent them as a present to my lord Esau: and he comes after us. In like manner he commanded the second and the third, and all that followed with the droves, saying: Speak ye the same words to Esau, when ye find him. And ye shall add: your servant Jacob himself also follows after us: for he said: I will appease him with the presents that go before, and afterwards I will see him, perhaps he will be gracious to me.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta He commanded the foremost, saying, "When Esau, my brother, meets you, and asks you, saying, 'Whose are you? Where are you going? Whose are these before you?' Then you shall say, 'They are your servant, Ya'aqub's. It is a present sent to my lord, Esau. Behold, he also is behind us.'" He commanded also the second, and the third, and all that followed the herds, saying, "This is how you shall speak to Esau, when you find him. You shall say, 'Not only that, but behold, your servant, Ya'aqub, 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."

Peshitta (Syriac) And he commanded the leader of the first drove, and said to him, When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, saying, Who are you? and where are you going? and whose are these that are before you? Then you shall say to him, They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present which he has sent to my lord Esau; and, behold, also he is coming behind us. And so he commanded the second and the third and all who followed with the droves, saying. In this manner you shall speak to Esau, when you find him. And you shall say to him, moreover, Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us. For he said, I may appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; and perhaps he will accept me.

Septuagint (Greek) And he charged the first, saying, If Esau my brother meets you, and he asks you, saying, Whose are you? and where would you go, and whose are these possessions advancing before you? You shall say, Your servant Jacob's; he hath sent gifts to my lord Esau, and lo! he is behind us. And he charged the first and the second and the third, and all that went before him after these flocks, saying, Thus shall you speak to Esau when you find him; and you shall say, Behold your servant Jacob comes after us. For he said, I will propitiate his countenance with the gifts going before his presence, and afterwards I will behold his face, for perhaps, he will accept me.

Significant differences: There are some additional words added to the Syriac text (these may have been added to the English translation). The targums combine the two responses into one.

The Greek adds the text *the first and*.

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:****Bible in Basic English**

And he gave orders to the first, saying, When my brother Esau comes to you and says, Whose servant are you, and where are you going, and whose are these herds? Then say to him, These are your servant Jacob's; they are an offering for my lord, for Esau; and he himself is coming after us. And he gave the same orders to the second and the third and to all those who were with the herds, saying, This is what you are to say to Esau when you see him; And you are to say further, Jacob, your servant, is coming after us. For he said to himself, I will take away his wrath by the offering which I have sent on, and then I will come before him: it may be that I will have grace in his eyes.

**Easy English**

He told the servant at the front, 'When my brother Esau meets you and asks, "Who do you belong to? Where are you going? Who do all these animals belong to?" You must say, "They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift that he has sent to my lord Esau. And Jacob is coming behind us."' Jacob also told the other servants who followed a group of animals 'You are to say the same thing to Esau, when you meet him. And you must say "Your servant Jacob is coming behind us."' Jacob thought 'Esau will be pleased with my gifts. Then he will not hurt me.'

Jacob prays in verses 9-12 for God to keep him safe from Esau. But perhaps he does not trust God to keep him safe. Maybe he makes plans to please Esau with gifts so that Esau will not hurt him. He does this even when God has promised to give him too many descendants to count. But perhaps he does not completely trust God.

**God's Word™**

He placed servants in charge of each herd. Then he said to his servants, "Go ahead of me, and keep a distance between the herds." He commanded the first servant, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and whose animals are these ahead of you?' then say, 'Sir, they belong to your servant Jacob. This is a gift sent to you. Jacob is right behind us.'" He also commanded the second servant, the third, and all the others who followed the herds. He said, "Say the same thing to Esau when you find him. And be sure to add, 'Jacob is right behind us, sir.'" He thought, "I'll make peace with him by giving him this gift that I'm sending ahead of me. After that I will see him, and he'll welcome me back." V. 16 (17) is included for context.

**International Children's B.**

Jacob gave them their orders. To the servant with the first group of animals he said, "My brother Esau will come to you. He will ask you, 'Whose servant are you? Where are you going? Whose animals are these?' Then you will answer, 'These animals belong to your servant Jacob. He sent them as a gift to you my master, Esau. And Jacob also is coming behind us.'"

Jacob ordered the second servant, the third servant and all the other servants to do the same thing. He said, "Say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. Say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.'" Jacob thought, "If I send this gift ahead of me, maybe Esau will forgive me. Then when I see him, perhaps he will accept me."

**The Message**

Then he instructed the first one out: "When my brother Esau comes close and asks, 'Who is your master? Where are you going? Who owns these?'—answer him like this, 'Your servant Jacob. They are a gift to my master Esau. He's on his way.'"

He gave the same instructions to the second servant and to the third—to each in turn as they set out with their herds: "Say 'Your servant Jacob is on his way behind us.'" He thought, "I will soften him up with the succession of gifts. Then when he sees me face-to-face, maybe he'll be glad to welcome me."

**NIRV**

Jacob spoke to his servant who was leading the way. He said, "My brother Esau will meet you. He'll ask, 'Who is your master? Where are you going? And who owns all these animals in front of you?' Then say to Esau, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift to you from him. And Jacob is coming behind us.'"

He also spoke to the second and third servants. He told them and all the others who followed the herds what to do. He said, "Say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. Make sure you say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.' " Jacob was thinking, "I'll make peace with him with these gifts I'm sending on ahead. When I see him later, maybe he'll welcome me."

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	To men leading the first herd Jacob said, "When you reach my brother Esau and he asks, 'Who you are? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?' Tell him, 'These animals used to belong to your devoted servant Jacob. But they now belong to you, my master Esau, as a present from him. He is following behind us.'" Jacob gave the same instructions to men leading the other two herds. He told them, "Address Esau this way when you meet him. Say, 'Your servant Jacob is following behind us.' I'm hoping he will like these gifts and that by the time we meet, he will welcome me home."
Common English Bible	He ordered the first group, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, 'Who are you with? Where are you going? And whose herds are these in front of you?' say, 'They are your servant Jacob's, a gift sent to my master Esau. And Jacob is actually right behind us.'" He also ordered the second group, the third group, and everybody following the herds, "Say exactly the same thing to Esau when you find him. Say also, 'Your servant Jacob is right behind us.'" Jacob thought, I may be able to pacify Esau with the gift I'm sending ahead. When I meet him, perhaps he will be kind to me.
Contemporary English V.	Then he said to the servant in charge of the first herd, "When Esau meets you, he will ask whose servant you are. He will want to know where you are going and who owns those animals in front of you. So tell him, 'They belong to your servant Jacob, who is coming this way. He is sending them as a gift to his master Esau.'" Jacob also told the men in charge of the second and third herds and those who followed to say the same thing when they met Esau. And Jacob told them to be sure to say that he was right behind them. Jacob hoped the gifts would make Esau friendly, so Esau would be glad to see him when they met.
The Living Bible	He told the men driving the first group that when they met Esau and he asked, "Where are you going? Whose servants are you? Whose animals are these?"— they should reply: "These belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present for his master Esau! He is coming right behind us!" Jacob gave the same instructions to each driver, with the same message. Jacob's strategy was to appease Esau with the presents before meeting him face-to-face! "Perhaps," Jacob hoped, "he will be friendly to us."
New Berkeley Version	To the first driver he gave orders, "When my brother Esau meets you and he asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? Whose is this drove?' then you reply, 'These are your servant Jacob's; it is a present sent to my master Esau and he also is behind us.'" he so ordered the second, the third and all the successive drove herders; he said, "You give the same message to Esau, and be sure to add, 'Your servant also is behind us.'" For he reasoned, "I will appease him with the gift that precedes me; then when I meet him personally, he may accept my presence." He not only showed what he had gained, but that he was voluntarily handing Esau the riches to which Esau had by birth been entitled.
New Living Translation	He gave these instructions to the men leading the first group: "When my brother, Esau, meets you, he will ask, 'Whose servants are you? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?' You must reply, 'They belong to your servant Jacob, but they are a gift for his master Esau. Look, he is coming right behind us.'"

Jacob gave the same instructions to the second and third herdsmen and to all who followed behind the herds: “You must say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. And be sure to say, ‘Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.’”

Jacob thought, “I will try to appease him by sending gifts ahead of me. When I see him in person, perhaps he will be friendly to me.”

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

- American English Bible He told the first group: ‘If you meet my brother Esau, and he asks, *Who sent you, where are you headed, and whose animals are [being herded] in front of you?* you should say, *[We were sent by] your servant Jacob, and he is sending these as gifts to his lord Esau... {Look!} he's [traveling] behind us.*’  
And the same instructions that he gave to the first [group], he gave to the second and the third... to everyone who traveled ahead of him (following the herds), he said, ‘This is what you should tell Esau when you find him... *Look! Your servant Jacob is following behind us.*’ [For Jacob said]: ‘I want to [sooth Esau’s feelings] with the gifts that [are being carried] ahead of me; then I can look him in the face and hope that he will accept me.’
- Beck’s American Translation He ordered the first man: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, ‘Whose man are you? Where are you going? And whose animals are these ahead of you?’ then say, ‘Your servant Jacob’s. They are a present sent to my lord Esau, and he himself is behind us.’” he gave the same orders to the second man, the third, and all the others who followed their droves. “Tell Esau that,” he said, “when you meet him. And say also, ‘Your servant Jacob is behind us.’” he thought “I’ll make him friendly by giving him a present that goes ahead of me, and then I’ll see his face—maybe he’ll welcome me.”
- International Standard V To the first group he said, “When you meet my brother Esau, if he asks, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And to whom do these herds [The Heb. lacks *herds*] belong?’ then you are to reply, ‘We’re from [Lit. *To*] your servant Jacob. The herds [Lit. *They*] are a gift. He’s sending them to my master, Esau. Look! There he is, coming along behind us.”  
He issued similar instructions to the second and third group, as well as to all the others who drove the herds that followed: “This is how you are to speak to Esau when you find him. You are to tell him, ‘Look! Your servant Jacob is coming along behind us.’”  
Jacob was thinking, “I’ll pacify him with the presents that are being sent ahead of me. Then, when I meet him [Lit. *I see his face*], perhaps he’ll accept me [Lit. *he’ll lift my face*].”
- New Advent (Knox) Bible And to the first of these, his directions were, If thou shouldst encounter my brother Esau, and he should ask, Whose man art thou? or Where goest thou? or Whose are these beasts thou tendest? thy answer is to be, They belong to thy servant Jacob, who is sending them as a present to my lord Esau; and he himself follows behind us. Then he bade the second do the like, and the third, and all the drovers in turn; these same words you are to use, he said, when you fall in with Esau, and be sure to add, Thy servant Jacob follows on behind us. I will not see him, he thought, until I have disarmed his anger with the gifts I have sent before me; then perhaps he will be well disposed towards me! It is not clear, either in the Hebrew or in the Latin, whether the sentence beginning ‘I will not see him’ is part of the message which Jacob’s servant was to deliver or not.
- Revised Knox Bible And to the first of these, his directions were, If you should encounter my brother Esau, and he should ask, Whose man are you? or Where go you? or Whose are these beasts you tend? your answer is to be, They belong to your servant Jacob, who is sending them as a present to my lord Esau; and he himself follows behind us. Then he bade the second do the like, and the third, and all the drovers in turn;

these same words you are to use, he said, when you fall in with Esau, and be sure to add, your servant Jacob follows on behind us. I will not see him, he thought, until I have disarmed his anger with the gifts I have sent before me; then perhaps he will be well disposed towards me!

## Translation for Translators

He said to the servant who was going with the first group, "When my brother Esau meets you, and he asks you, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?' tell him, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. He has sent them to you as a gift, sir. And he is coming behind us.'"

He also said the same thing to the servants who were taking care of the second and third groups, and to the other herdsmen. He said to them, "When you meet Esau, I want you to say to him the same thing that I told the first servant. And be sure to say 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.'" Jacob told them to say that because he was thinking, "Perhaps these gifts that I am sending ahead of me will cause him to act peacefully toward/stop being angry with me. Later, when I see him, perhaps he will act kindly toward me."

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

## Awful Scroll Bible

He was to give charge to they first, to the intent: Who was to encounter Esau, my brother, and he is to have asked, to the intent: Was you to come turned before me? - You is to have said: We are the servants of Jacob; this is a gift being sent out to my lord Esau, after you. Moreover, he was to lay charge to the second, third, and they coming after the flocks, to the intent: This concern was you to speak to Esau, as you is to come upon him. You is to have said: Indeed your servant Jacob is to be behind us. For he is to have said: I was to cover over, turned before him, with these gifts, they going turned before me and after me, I was to show them to his face, even was he to lift up my face!

## Conservapedia

He instructed the lead drovers, saying, "When my brother Esau encounters you, and asks you, 'Whom do you serve, where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong,...' Then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob; and are a present sent to my lord Esau, and in fact he's behind us.'" He furthermore instructed the second, third, and each following drover team, saying, "Give this message to Esau when you find him. And make sure you say, 'Jacob is behind us.'" He said to himself, "I will propitiate him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see him face-to-face, and perhaps he'll be friendly to me."

## Ferrar-Fenton Bible

He also ordered the foremost, saying, " If you meet Esau, my brother, and he asks you ' Who are you ? and where are you going? and whose are these before you ? ' you shall reply, ' From your servant, from Jacob, a present he sends to my Lord, to Esau. And look also he is behind us ! ' "

He ordered the second also, with the third, with all the servants who followed after them, repeating, "You shall say the same words to Esau if he meets with you, and you shall also say to him, ' See, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he remarked, " I will pacify him first by that I send to him, and afterwards I will see by his face whether or no I can stand before him."

## God's Truth (Tyndale)

And he commanded the foremost, saying:

When Esau my brother meets you and asks you saying: whose servant are you and where goes you, and whose are these that go before you: you shall say, they be your servant Jacobs, and are a present sent unto my lord Esau, and behold, he himself comes after us. And so commanded he the second, and even so the third, and likewise all that followed the droves saying, of this manner see that you speak unto Esau when you meet him, and say moreover. Behold your servant Jacob

- Jubilee Bible 2000 comes after us, for he said. I will please his wrath with the present that goes before me and afterward I will see him myself, so peradventure he will receive me to grace. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau, my brother, meets thee and asks thee, saying, Whose art thou? And where goest thou? And for whom are these before thee? Then thou shalt say, They are thy slave Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and, behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second and the third and all that followed those droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau when ye find him. And ye shall also say, Behold, thy slave Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will reconcile his wrath with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept me
- H. C. Leupold And he gave orders to the first one saying: If Esau, my brother, meet thee and ask thee: To whom dost thou belong, and where art thou going, and whose are these animals before thee? then thou shalt say: They belong to thy servant, to Jacob, and are a present sent to my master, to Esau, and, see, he himself is coming along after us. And he gave the same orders to the second fellow, and to the third, and to all that followed their herds, telling them: Speak exactly these words to Esau when ye meet him, and ye shall say: And see, thy servant Jacob is right behind us. For, he thought, I will conciliate him by the gift that goes on before me; afterwards I can see by his face whether he will receive me kindly.
- Tree of Life Version Then he commanded the first one saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do all these before you belong?' then you are to say, 'To your servant, to Jacob—it's an offering sent to my lord, to Esau. And look, he's also behind us.'" And he also commanded the second one, the third one, and all those who were going behind the flocks, saying, "Say the same exact thing to Esau when you find him. Then you are to say, 'Look, your servant Jacob is also behind us.'" For he thought, "Let me appease him with the offering that goes ahead of me, and afterward see his face, perhaps he'll lift up my face."
- Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**
- Christian Community (1988) He instructed the leader, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do you belong? And where are you going? Who is the owner of the animals you are driving?' Then you shall say: They belong to your servant Jacob. It is a present he is sending to my lord Esau. He himself is coming along behind us!" Jacob ordered the second and third servants and all who were following the herds in the same way, "That is what you shall say to Esau when you meet him: Your servant Jacob is following!" For he thought to himself, "I may pacify him with the present I sent ahead, so that when I meet him face to face, he may perhaps receive me kindly."
- The Heritage Bible And he commanded those first in line, saying, When Esau, my brother, meets you, and asks you, saying, Whose are you? And to where are you walking? And whose are these before your face? Then you shall say, They are your servant Jacob's, a present sent to my lord Esau, and lo, also he is behind us. And also he commanded the second, and the third, and all who walked behind the droves, saying, You shall speak this same word to Esau wherever he comes forth. And you shall say also, Lo, your servant Jacob is behind us. Because he said, I will cover his face [See Gen 20:16 The meaning is to appease him or cover the anger of his face, so that Esau approves Jacob.] by the present that walks before my face, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept my face.
- New American Bible (2011) He put these animals in the care of his servants, in separate herds, and he told the servants, "Go on ahead of me, but keep some space between the herds." He ordered the servant in the lead, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? To whom do these animals ahead of you belong?' tell him, 'To your servant Jacob, but they have been sent as a gift to

my lord Esau. Jacob himself is right behind us.” He also ordered the second servant and the third and all the others who followed behind the herds: “Thus and so you shall say to Esau, when you reach him; and also tell him, ‘Your servant Jacob is right behind us.’” For Jacob reasoned, “If I first appease him with a gift that precedes me, then later, when I face him, perhaps he will forgive me.” V. 16 (17) is included for context.

New Jerusalem Bible

He gave the leading man this order: 'When my brother Esau meets you and asks, "Whose man are you? Where are you going? Whose are those animals that you are driving?" you will answer, "Your servant Jacob's. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau. And Jacob himself is just behind us."' He gave the same order to the second and the third, and to all who were following the droves. 'That is what you must say to Esau when you find him. And you must add, "Your servant Jacob himself is just behind us." ' For he thought, 'If I conciliate him by sending a gift in advance, perhaps he will be well inclined towards me when I face him.'

Revised English Bible

To the first servant he gave these instructions: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks who your master is and where you are going and who owns these animals you are driving, you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob, who sends them as a gift to my lord Esau; he himself is coming behind us.’” He gave the same instructions to the second, to the third, and to all the drovers, telling each to say the same thing to Esau when they met him. And they were to add, “Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.” Jacob thought, “I shall appease him with the gift that I have sent on ahead, and afterwards, when we come face to face, perhaps he will receive me kindly.”

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

He instructed the servant in front, “When ‘Esav my brother meets you and asks you, ‘Whose servant are you? Where are you going? And whose animals are these?’ then you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Ya‘akov, and they are a present he has sent to my lord ‘Esav; and Ya‘akov himself is just behind us.’” He also instructed the second servant, and the third, and all that followed the droves, “When you encounter ‘Esav, you are to speak to him in the same way, and you are to add, ‘And there, just behind us, is your servant Ya‘akov.’” For he said, “I will appease him first with the present that goes ahead of me; then, after that, I will see him myself — and maybe he will be friendly toward me.”

exeGeses companion Bible

And he misvahs the first, saying,  
When Esav my brother meets you and asks you,  
saying, Whose are you? And where go you?  
And whose are these at your face?  
Then you say, Of your servant Yaaqov  
- an offering sent to my adoni Esav:  
and behold, he also is behind us.  
And thus he misvahs the second and the third  
and all who come after the droves, saying,  
Word this word to Esav, when you find him:  
and also say,  
Behold, your servant Yaaqov is behind us:  
for he says,  
I kapar/atone at his face  
with the offering that goes at my face  
and afterward, I see his face:  
perhaps he lifts at my face.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

He instructed the one in front as follows, “When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, ‘Whose man are you? Where are you going? And whose [animals] are

these ahead of you?' 19you shall answer, 'Your servant Jacob's; they are a gift sent to my lord Esau; and [Jacob] himself is right behind us.' " 20He gave similar instructions to the second one, and the third, and all the others who followed the droves, namely, "Thus and so shall you say to Esau when you reach him. 21And you shall add, 'And your servant Jacob himself is right behind us.' " For he reasoned, "If I propitiate him with presents in advance, and then face him, perhaps he will show me favor."

Kaplan Translation

He gave the first group instructions: 'When my brother Esau encounters you, he will ask, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? Who owns all this that is with you?' You must reply, 'It belongs to your servant Jacob. It is a tribute to my master Esau. [Jacob] himself is right behind us.' ' He gave similar instructions to the second group, to the third, and to all who went after the herd. 'You must [all] say the same thing to Esau when you meet him,' he said. 'You must also say, 'Your servant Jacob is right behind us.' '

[Jacob] said [to himself], 'I will win him over with the gifts that are being sent ahead, and then I will face him. Hopefully, he will forgive me.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And he commanded the rishon, saying, When Esav achi meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? And to where goest thou? And whose are these [animals] before thee?

Then thou shalt say, They are of thy eved Ya'akov; it is a minchah sent unto adoni Esav; and, hinei, also he is behind us.

And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the adarim (herds), saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esav, when ye find him.

And say ye moreover, Hinei, thy eved Ya'akov is behind us. For he said, Akhapperah (I will appease, pacify) his face with the minchah that goeth ahead of me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

Then he commanded the one in front, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks to whom you belong, and where you are going, and whose are the *animals* in front of you? then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's; they are a gift sent to my lord Esau. And he also is behind us.'" And so Jacob commanded the second and the third as well, and all that followed the herds, saying, "This is what you shall say to Esau when you meet him; and you shall say, 'Look, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he said [to himself], "I will try to appease him with the gift that is going ahead of me. Then afterward I will see him; perhaps he will accept *and* forgive me."

The Expanded Bible

To the servant with the first group of animals he said, "My brother Esau will come to you and ask, 'Whose servant are you [<sup>L</sup>To whom do you belong]? Where are you going and whose animals are these [<sup>L</sup>are these ahead of you]?' Then you will answer, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. He sent them as a gift [or tribute] to you, my master [lord] Esau, and he also is coming behind us.' "

Jacob ordered the second servant, the third servant, and all the other servants [<sup>L</sup>others who followed the droves of animals] to do the same thing. He said, "Say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. Say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.' " Jacob thought, "If I send these gifts [or this tribute] ahead of me, maybe Esau will forgive me [<sup>L</sup>I will appease/propitiate him]. Then when I see him [<sup>L</sup>his face], perhaps he will accept me."

Kretzmann's Commentary

And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau, my brother, meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? And where goest thou? And whose are these before thee? 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. The careful instruction of each servant as to the form of homage which he was to show to Esau, the

repetition of the formula which called Jacob a servant and Esau lord, together with the offering of the presents all these were calculated to overcome Esau's anger gradually. 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. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. It was the cumulative effect of the atoning presents that Jacob counted on to make the impression on Esau, the humble mention of the servant Jacob being very effective as the climax. 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. Jacob called his presents gifts of atonement, for they were intended to cover the face of Esau so that he would no longer see the offense which Jacob had committed against him. Esau's mind being taken up by the presents, he would no longer think of Jacob's guilt, but would lift up his face in kindness and receive him with his favor.

NET Bible®

He instructed the servant leading the first herd [*Heb* “the first”; this has been specified as “the servant leading the first herd” in the translation for clarity.], “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘To whom do you belong [*Heb* “to whom are you?”]? Where are you going? Whose herds are you driving [*Heb* “and to whom are these before you?”]?’ then you must say,<sup>36</sup> ‘They belong [The words “they belong” have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.] to your servant Jacob [*Heb* “to your servant, to Jacob.”]. They have been sent as a gift to my lord Esau [*Heb* “to my lord, to Esau.”]. In fact Jacob himself is behind us [*Heb* “and look, also he [is] behind us.” The referent of the pronoun “he” (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.]”

He also gave these instructions to the second and third servants, as well as all those who were following the herds, saying, “You must say the same thing to Esau when you meet him [*Heb* “And he commanded also the second, also the third, also all the ones going after the herds, saying: ‘According to this word you will speak when you find him.’”]. You must also say, ‘In fact your servant Jacob is behind us [*Heb* “and look, your servant Jacob [is] behind us.”].” Jacob thought [*Heb* “for he said.” The referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], “I will first appease him [*Heb* “I will appease his face.”] by sending a gift ahead of me [*Heb* “with a gift going before me.”]. After that I will meet him [*Heb* “I will see his face.”]. Perhaps he will accept me [*Heb* “Perhaps he will lift up my face.” In this context the idiom refers to acceptance.]”

The Pulpit Commentary

And he delivered them into the Band of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Passover (the river Jabbok) before me, and put a space (literally, a breathing-place) betwixt drove and drove—as is still the manner with Oriental shepherds. And he commanded the foremost, saying (with admirable tact and prudence), When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and where goest thou? and whose are these before thee! then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he (Jacob) is behind us. 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—literally, in your finding of him. And say ye (literally, and ye shall say) moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is Behind us” for he thought that this would convince Esau that he Went to 'meet him with complete confidence, and without apprehension" (Kalisch)—for he said (the historian adds the motive which explained Jacob's singular behavior), I will appease him (literally, I will cover his face, meaning I will prevent him from seeing my past offences, i.e. I will turn away his anger or pacify him, as in Proverbs 16:14) with the present that goeth before me,—literally, going before my face. So Abigail appeased David with a present (1 Samuel 25:18–32)—and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me—literally, lift up my face; a proverbial expression for granting a favorable reception (cf. Genesis 19:21; Job 42:8). "Jacob did not miscalculate the

influence of his princely offerings, and I verily believe there is not an emeer or sheikh in all Gilead at this day who would not be appeased by such presents; and from my personal knowledge of Orientals, I should say that Jacob need not have been in such great terror, following in their rear. Far less will now 'make room,' as Solomon says, for any offender, however atrocious, and bring him before great men with acceptance".

The Voice

**Jacob** (to the leader) When Esau, my brother, meets you and asks you, "To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose herds are these?" then say, "They belong to your servant, Jacob, and are a gift sent to my master, Esau. Jacob is coming along behind us."

Jacob instructed *those responsible* for the second and third herds, as well as those who followed behind *to help*:

**Jacob:** When you meet Esau, say the same thing these other herdsman have said, and make sure you tell him, "Your servant Jacob is coming along behind us." (to himself) I might be able to appease Esau with these gifts. He will see them before he sees me. When I see his face, I'll know whether he'll accept *and forgive me*.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and he directed to the first saying, given that Esau <sup>[Doing]</sup> my brother will encounter you and he will inquire of you saying, to who are you, and wherever are you walking, and to who are these to your face, and you will say, to your servant, to Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup>, she is a donation being sent to my lord, to Esau <sup>[Doing]</sup> and look, he is also behind us, and he also directed the second, also the third, also all the ones walking after the droves saying, in this manner you will speak to Esau <sup>[Doing]</sup> with your finding him, and you will also say, look, your servant Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> is behind us given that he said, I will cover his face with the donation walking to my face and afterward I will see his face, possibly he will lift up my face,...

Concordant Literal Version

And instructing is he the first, saying, "In case Esau, my brother, is encountering you, and he asks you, saying, 'Whose are you? And where are you going? And whose are these before you?'. Then you say, 'To your servant, to Jacob. A present offering is it, sent to my lord, to Esau. And, behold! He, moreover, is behind us.. And instructing is he the first; moreover, the second; and, moreover, the third; and, moreover, all those who are going after the droves, saying, "According to this word shall you speak to Esau, when you find him. And say, moreover, 'Behold! Your servant Jacob comes after us.' For,said he, "a propitiatory shelter am I making before his face with the present offering which is going before me, and afterward will I see his face. Perhaps he will lift up my face.

Darby Translation

And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meets thee, and asks thee, saying, Whose art thou, and where goest thou, and whose are these before thee? -- then thou shalt say, Thy servant Jacob's: it is a gift sent to my lord, to Esau. And behold, he also is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, According to this word shall ye speak to Esau when ye find him. And, moreover, ye shall say, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will propitiate him with the gift that goes before me, and afterwards I will see his face: perhaps he will accept me.

English Standard Version

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?' 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.'" 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, 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 afterwards I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me."

**Modern English Version** He commanded the one leading, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals belong?' then you are to say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is also behind us.'"

Likewise he commanded the second and the third and all that followed the droves, saying, "This is what you are to say to Esau when you find him. Moreover, say, 'Your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the gift that goes before me, and then I will see his face. Perhaps he will accept me."

**New King James Version** 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?' 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.'" 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; 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."

**Updated Bible Version 2.11** And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, saying, Whose are you? And where do you go? And whose are these before you? Then you will say [They are] your slave Jacob's; it is a present sent to my lord Esau: and, look, he also is behind us. And he commanded also the second, and the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, In this manner you + will speak to Esau, when you + find him; and you + will say, Moreover, look, your slave 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.

**Young's Updated LT** And he commands the first, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you, and has asked you, saying, 'Whose are you? And where do you go? And whose are these before you?' then you have said, Your servant Jacob's: it is a present sent to my lord, to Esau; and lo, he also is behind us." And he commands also the second, also the third, also all who are going after the droves, saying, "According to this manner do you [all] speak unto Esau in your finding him, and you [all] have said also, Lo, your servant Jacob is behind us;" for he said, "I pacify his face with the present which is going before me, and afterwards I see his face; it may be he lifts up my face."

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob tells the head of his servants 3 questions which Esau will ask them and how to answer them. He thinks to himself that this might mollify Esau's anger.

17-20

Genesis 32:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâvâh (צוה) [pronounced tsaw-VAW]	to commission, to mandate, to appoint; to ordain; to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge [command, order]; to instruct [as in, giving an order]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845

Genesis 32:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
rîshôwn (רִשׁוֹנִים) [pronounced <i>ree-SHOWN</i> ]	<i>first [in time, in degree, chief, former [in time], ancestors, former things; foremost; beginning; as an adverb: formerly, at first, first</i>	masculine singular adjective; also used as an adverb with the definite article	Strong's #7223 BDB #911
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pâgash (פָּגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>paw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to rush upon [anyone]; to attack; to meet, to encounter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6298 BDB #803
'Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i> ]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

**Translation:** He instructed the chief [of Jacob's servants], saying, "When Esau my brother meets you,..."

In all of life, there are authorities. Among Jacob's servants, there is a man in charge. If you watch the show *Downton Abbey* (a show about a rich, land-owning family in England and their servants), it is very clear that there is not just a pecking order among the servants, but clear lines of authorities. More than likely, Jacob is instructing this man in public, so that the other servants hear. But this will be the man in charge when they leave camp with Esau's present.

It is inevitable that they will meet Esau as they lead these herds of animals along. If I want to go to the store nearby, there are literally a half dozen routes I could take to get there, some of them being rather circuitous. However, in the ancient world, there were a few thoroughfares (and they would have been worse than most dirt roads that we have been on). But, when a person want to travel from point A to point B, there was often a single choice of roads or trails to travel along. Therefore, there was no way to avoid running into Esau. If Esau knew roughly the direction that Jacob was coming from, he would know the road that Jacob would be on.

Genesis 32:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wê (or vê) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâ'al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced <i>shaw-AHL</i> ]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand [require]; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7592 BDB #981

Genesis 32:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîy (מי) [pronounced <i>mee</i> ]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
'attâh (אתה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i> ]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61

**Translation:** ...he will ask you, 'To whom [do] you belong?'

I did not include the extra words *to say*; but they are found in the Hebrew.

The first thing that Esau will ask is, "To whom do you belong?" referring to the servants themselves. Esau would speak to the man in charge, so a 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular pronoun is used here; but it should be obvious, whoever is in charge will also belong to the same man as the others.

Jacob is placing his slaves in front. We are not told exactly how it is known, but Jacob recognizes that Esau will ask, "To whom do you belong?" So, a slave was recognizable as a slave. Although we do not know exactly how, it will be clear that these men are servants. There is something in the way that they dress or look that will be obvious to others. I am assuming manner of dress is the first thing that gives it away.

Furthermore, it will become clear that Jacob has a great many slaves.

Genesis 32:17c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ânâh (אנה) [pronounced <i>awn-AW</i> ]	<i>where; whether; where</i>	adverb with the hê local	Strong's #575 BDB #33
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

**Translation:** And, 'Where [are] you going?'

Here we have men who are obviously slaves; and they are leading a very large group of domesticated animals along the way. Therefore, Esau will also want to know, *where are you going?* Again, he will address the servant in charge, but obviously, the question applies to all of them.

The wâw conjunction is not a part of the question. It simply separates the 3 questions from each other.

Genesis 32:17d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîy (מי) [pronounced <i>mee</i> ]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
'êlleh (אלה) [pronounced <i>ALE-leh</i> ]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article (often the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	Strong's #428 BDB #41
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פנים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they literally translate to, *to your faces*. However, they properly mean *before you, before your face, in your presence, in your sight, in front of you*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in Your judgment*.

**Translation:** And, 'To whom [belong] these [herds of animals which are] before you?'

The third thing he will ask is, "To whom do all these animals belong?" Esau will observe that these are obviously slaves, leading livestock which do not belong to them; so to whom do they belong, he would ask.

Remember that these animals are being led forward on the road in formation. So, it should be clear that these are not servants running off with the animals of their master. However, since the animals are in formation, this looks unusual. They are not simply taking these animals out to find food somewhere. That is, shepherds do not lead their animals in this manner. A shepherd taking his flocks out would be off in the hills or meadows, in search of food and water; not on a main road. Furthermore, a shepherd usually does not have precise numbers of animals and many different kinds of animals grouped as we have here.

Genesis 32:17 He instructed the chief [of Jacob's servants], saying, "When Esau my brother meets you, he will ask you, 'To whom [do] you belong?' (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 32:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
The NET Bible: <i>The form is the perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive; it has the nuance of an imperfect of instruction.</i> <sup>301</sup> This is a very unusual combination.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>GE<sup>B</sup>-ved</i> ]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
Ya'âqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-âuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** And you will say to him, '[I belong] to your servant Jacob.

Jacob continues speaking to his servant. Apparently this will be the servant who is in front of the first group of animals. Jacob will say this same thing to the lead servant in each group.

## Genesis 32:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
min <sup>e</sup> châh (מִנְחָה) [pronounced <i>min-HAWH</i> ]	<i>tribute offering, gift, present; sacrifice, bloodless offering; [a general term for] offering</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4503 BDB #585
hîy' (היא) [pronounced <i>hee</i> ]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>being sent [for, forth, away], being dismissed, being deployed, being put forth, being stretched out</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

<sup>301</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

## Genesis 32:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾădônîy (אָדוֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NEE]	<i>my Lord, my Master, my Sovereign; my lord [master]; can be used to refer to a possessor, an owner; transliterated Adoni, adoni</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
The difference between this spelling and those which end in –ay or –ây is a vowel point, which would have been added much later by the Massorites. However, there would have been a difference in pronunciation.			
Several translations render <i>my lord the king</i> as <i>your majesty</i> (see CEV, GNB, God's Word™, and NSB for 1Kings 1:2).			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿÊsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced gay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796

**Translation:** These [animals are] a present being sent to my adonai Esau.

What will happen is each servant will be in front of a group of animals (probably the males and the females); and he will say that this grouping is a present from Jacob to Esau.

The servants present themselves as servants belonging to Jacob. The group of animals that they lead are presents for Esau. And Jacob is behind them all. Jacob expects that the presents will mollify his brother's anger.

Genesis 32:17–18b **Jacob instructed his head servant as follows:** “When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, ‘Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?’ You will say to him, ‘I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau.

### Genesis 32:18b: Jacob's massive present for Esau (various commentators)

Clarke: *This was a princely present, and such as was sufficient to have compensated Esau for any kind of temporal loss he might have sustained in being deprived of his birthright and blessing.*<sup>302</sup>

Clarke also writes: *By all this we see that Jacob was led to make restitution for the injury he had done to his brother. Restitution for injuries done to man is essentially requisite if in our power.*<sup>303</sup>

I have to disagree upon this requirement of restitution. There may be a proper time to restore someone that you have wronged; but God does not call upon us to spend the rest of our lives in restitution (however, for some people, this might given them an opening to present the gospel).

Dr. John Gill: *[T]he present consisted of five hundred and eighty head of cattle: a large number to spare out of his flocks and herds, that he had acquired in six years' time; and showed a generous disposition as well as prudence, to part with so much in order to secure the rest.*<sup>304</sup>

<sup>302</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:14.

<sup>303</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:15.

<sup>304</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:15.

## Genesis 32:18b: Jacob's massive present for Esau (various commentators)

David Guzik: *Jacob sent such an impressive gift because he wanted to make it completely clear to Esau that he did not need or want anything from him. It also could have been a carnal attempt to buy his brother's good favor.*<sup>305</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The present of Jacob consisted of five hundred fifty head of cattle, of different kinds, such as would be most prized by Esau. It was a most magnificent present, skilfully arranged and proportioned. The milch camels alone were of immense value; for the she camels form the principal part of Arab wealth; their milk is a chief article of diet; and in many other respects they are of the greatest use.*<sup>306</sup>

Lange: *Observe: 1) The climax; goats, sheep, camels, cattle, asses. 2) The spaces (breathing places) between the droves. Each impression must be made, and its force felt by Esau, before the next comes on. 3) The ever-repeated form of homage; your servant Jacob; a present; my lord Esau. 4) The final aim: friendly treatment; your servant, Jacob himself, is behind us.*<sup>307</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *This created five groups, and each group represented a gift to Esau. Jacob hoped that with each gift, Esau's anger would subside that much more.*<sup>308</sup>

The Open Bible suggests that, according to Near Eastern protocol, a present was customary when one person had wronged another.<sup>309</sup>

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Genesis 32:17–18b Jacob instructed his head servant as follows: “When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, ‘Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?’ You will say to him, ‘I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau.

## Genesis 32:18b: Jacob's language regarding Esau (a discussion)

Some commentators have made something out of Jacob's language:

Arthur Pink: *Clearly, the message which Jacob sent to Esau was utterly beneath the dignity of a child of God; such fawning phrases as "my lord Esau" and "thy servant Jacob" tell their own sad tale. This obsequious servility before a man of the world evidenced the state of his heart. Clearly, Jacob was afraid of Esau, and was no longer exercising confidence in God.*<sup>310</sup>

It is my opinion that Pink is perhaps a bit too hard on Jacob. We often find the language of *servant* and *lord* used throughout the Bible between two persons, and it is my thought that this is mostly said out of respect; or that the terms were used in order to convey respect.

Were these words used to indicate complete subservience? Was Jacob saying, “Listen, Esau, if you want me to travel with you and polish your boots, then that is what I will do” ? I don't think this is what Jacob was saying or intending to do. He is obviously afraid of Esau; but I think the language simply indicates respect. In fact, the intent may have been to disarm Esau; using manipulative techniques to get Esau to back off, so to speak.

<sup>305</sup> David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:13–21.

<sup>306</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:13–23.

<sup>307</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:13 (slightly edited).

<sup>308</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>309</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 49 (footnote).

<sup>310</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

## Genesis 32:18b: Jacob's language regarding Esau (a discussion)

I think that Pink better got the gist of this passage later: *Finally, Jacob's real design is made still more evident when we note his own soliloquizing- "For he said, I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; hoping that he might accept me."* (Gen. 32:20).<sup>311</sup>

My conclusion is, Jacob was using language which indicates respect; and perhaps the intent was to mollify Esau, as the present was supposed to do as well.

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Since there is a limited amount of editorializing which occurs in the narrative of Jacob's life, we are sometimes left to examine what he says and does, and draw some conclusions from that.

### Genesis 32:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, *he observed [that]*. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.

When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated *I see, he sees*. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word *right now*.

hûw' (אוּה) [pronounced hoo]	he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

**Translation:** Look, he [is] behind us.' "

For awhile, I had wondered if Jacob was just too afraid to be out front himself. However, it is normal for the servants to be the first in line here; and if Jacob is right behind them, then there is no reason to assume that Jacob is hiding from Esau, allowing his servants to take the brunt forces of Esau's attack.

This does not mean that Jacob is not apprehensive; he has already confessed to having some fear of Esau in this chapter. This great gift is his human viewpoint solution. We go into great detail about this gift and its presentation

<sup>311</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

because Jacob really thought all of this through. He gave careful consideration as to how this gift would appear to Esau and how he would react.

The excessiveness of the gift and the way that it is presented is strictly human viewpoint. What Jacob wants to do is to little by little decrease the anger and resentment which Esau may still carry toward him. Esau will ride a little, find a good sized group of asses. He will travel a little further and find the bulls and the cows. He will travel a bit further and come upon the camels. Some where along this ride, Esau will stop and ask who do these belong to; if they belong to the same man; what is he doing here? Then he will be told, by one of the first three groups that these are presents from his servant Jacob. This will calm Esau down somewhat; then, as he travels along further, he will come upon ewes and the rams and then the goats.

Jacob is giving an excessive gift and he is packaging it in such a way to make it seem even larger. He does not present it in one large group but in several small groups so that, when Esau asks, he will think back to the previous groups and he will look forward to the next few groups. In terms of human viewpoint, there is nothing wrong with this plan. It is an intelligent, well thought-out plan. However, God did not inspire this plan, human viewpoint and fear inspired it. Jacob is doing this because after showing great confidence and a great spiritual wisdom for taking God at His Word, Jacob goes to sleep and wakes up out of fellowship and afraid again. So, rather than go back to God and His promises and assurances, Jacob devises a plan of his own.

**Application:** We are not enjoined in this life from thinking, from planning or from acting. However, we are to think, plan and act in accordance with God's will, purposes and promises. We are not to act out of fear for our fellow man or out from human viewpoint.

**Application:** This does not mean that we adopt a devil-may-care attitude and constantly disregard our own safety. That would be a repudiation of common sense, not fear.

Genesis 32:17–18 Jacob instructed his head servant as follows: “When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, ‘Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?’ You will say to him, ‘I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau. Also, my master Jacob is behind us.’”

### Genesis 32:18c: What the servants were to tell Esau (various commentators)

Paraphrased from Dr. John Gill: They were to inform Esau that Jacob was right behind them, so that Esau would not think him afraid. As a result, Esau is given the change to prepare his own mind to meet Jacob.<sup>312</sup>

John Wesley: *They must call Esau their lord, and Jacob his servant: they must tell him the cattle they had was a small present which Jacob had sent him. They must especially take care to tell him that Jacob was coming after, that he might not suspect him fled. A friendly confidence in men's goodness may help to prevent the mischief designed us by their badness.*<sup>313</sup>

Trapp: *And, behold, also he is behind us.] He sends not only, but comes after us himself, to salute thee, and offer his service unto thee. Thus, by all means, he seeks to assuage the wrath of that rough man.*<sup>314</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *First, Jacob is willing to send Esau a large piece of his wealth. Secondly, he is willing to be called Esau's servant—Remember, the birthright inheritance always included the patriarchal leadership role in the family. Everyone else in the family was considered the servant of the patriarch. So for Jacob to tell Esau that he would be Esau's servant was tantamount to saying you can be the patriarch over me.*<sup>315</sup>

<sup>312</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:18.

<sup>313</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 32:17 (slightly edited).

<sup>314</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:18.

<sup>315</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019 (slightly edited).

The detail of this chapter fascinates me. But it is all these details that helps us to understand Jacob.

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Gen. 32:13–15 So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

Gen 32:16 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."

Gen 32:17–18 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?' 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.'" (ESV)

### Genesis 32:13–18: Jacob's great present and trusting God (various commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Jacob combined active exertions with earnest prayer; and this teaches us that we must not depend upon the aid and interposition of God in such a way as to supersede the exercise of prudence and foresight.*

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown continue: *Superiors are always approached with presents, and the respect expressed is estimated by the quality and amount of the gift.*<sup>316</sup>

Arthur Pink: *Had Jacob's motive been a righteous and praiseworthy one there was no need for him to have been at so much care and trouble in arranging his present for Esau. First he divided his extravagant present into three parts, or droves (for it consisted of cattle), putting a space between each and thus spreading them out to the best advantage, with the obvious intention of making as great an impression as possible upon his brother. Next, he commanded the servants who were entrusted with the care of his present, that when they should meet Esau and he inquired who these flocks and herds belonged to, they should say, "these be your servant's Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau."*

Pink continues: *[T]hough Jacob was a believer there still remained the "flesh," the old evil nature in him. And to this he gave way. The flesh is ever unbelieving, and where it is not constantly judged breaks forth in God-dishonoring activities. The clearest exemplification and demonstration of the two natures in the believer is to be seen in the history of Jacob recorded faithfully by the Holy Spirit not for our emulation but for our "warning." The same two natures are in every child of God today, the spiritual and the carnal, the one which believes God and the other which disbelieves. It is because of this we need to cry daily, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." (Mark 9:24).*<sup>317</sup>

Some may find this present to be disturbing, simply because it represents a great deal of wealth, and it is clear the Esau is already a wealthy man. However, when it comes to wealth—although the Bible speaks of giving to the poor and those who are without—it also speaks of men who are quite wealthy. Lists of possessions or references to wealth are found here: Genesis 30:43 31:9, 16 Deut. 8:18 1Samuel 25:2 Job 1:3 42:12.<sup>318</sup> There are far more references in the Scriptures to believers with great wealth.

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**Learning the Old and New Testaments:** I recall a friend of mine, an unbeliever, had read through the Old Testament, and never read the New because she was so appalled by the violence and the killing of the Old

<sup>316</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:13–23.

<sup>317</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019 (slightly edited).

<sup>318</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:14.

Testament. She did not get the point. **The natural (wo)man does not understand the things of the Spirit, they are foolishness to him (her)** (1Corinthians 2:14). Even the believer is not going to get much out of reading the Old Testament (or the New)—apart from the gospel message. That does not mean that we should discourage the unbeliever from reading the Bible. Given what this book is, even from a human level, I think that every education should include something about the Bible.

We were not designed to dig this information out by ourselves. I spent over twenty years under the ministry of R.B. Thieme, Jr. before I began recording this information and delving into Scripture myself directly (although there were a few times where I did an individual study here or there). **Now these things happened to them** [Israelites in the desert wanderings] **as an example; and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the ages have come** (1Corinthians 10:6, 11). We learn a great deal from the Old Testament and a good pastor-teacher should never forsake teaching the Old Testament for a total immersion in the New. God has preserved both the Old and the New Testaments that we should benefit by them both. Remember, when the writers of the New Testament spoke of the inspiration of Scripture, they were referring primarily to the Old Testament, almost the only Scripture which existed when they wrote their own books and epistles. Under a good pastor-teacher, the Old Testament should make a great deal of sense and should be very relevant to our daily lives. New Testament writers continually quoted Old Testament Scriptures and paraphrased or summarized Old Testament events.

When we exegete the Old Testament, we get to examine the spiritual giants and the spiritually bereft in their daily lives. We get to see their triumphs, their failures, their strengths and their weaknesses, and we, by means of their examples and by the control of the Holy Spirit, stand as examples, as living testaments to those around us. **You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and examined by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, ministered to under our authority, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tablets of stone, but on the tablets of human hearts** (2Corinthians 3:2–3). And we have greater power than those saints would ever know in their lifetimes. Moses longed to see our day. We have the filling of the Spirit (a function similar to their enduement of the Spirit—which could be removed); and we have the entire Word Of God, which is of inestimable help to us. We certainly begin in the New Testament and the unbeliever, if not witnessed to directly, should begin by reading the book of John, the first five or six chapters.

Now, young growing believers can read anything that they want and will get practically nothing out of it. They will pull verses out of context; they will misapply verses, they will give improper emphasis to one verse over another. Young believers should be under the ministry of a well-trained, qualified pastor-teacher; this is how God designed for us to grow. Unbelievers and baby believers who immediately went to the word and tried to dig everything out for themselves resulted in cults, false directions and ruined lives. What we look for in a pastor-teacher is someone who handles carefully and with respect God's Word and teaches it applying with the I.C.E.<sup>319</sup> principles. It is human arrogance to think that we, as immature believers in Jesus Christ, can go directly to God's Word and read a passage and have a good understanding of what it says. It takes a decent pastor years of study to where he can properly explain each passage and correlate each portion of God's Word with the rest of Scripture. It is even more arrogant to think that we can just open our Bible to any page, close our eyes, drop our finger on a verse, and suddenly find the recipe to cure what is presently ailing us.

Let me list the points that I am making here:

### Preparation by the Word of God

1. The Old Testament is as relevant to us today as it was to believers two, three or four millenniums ago.
2. Jacob's life, his successes (very few) and failures (the bulk of his life) are recorded objectively for us by Jacob himself that we might avoid some of the mistakes that he made in his life

<sup>319</sup> Isagogics (history), categories and exegesis (verse by verse and sometimes word by word studies, in context and in order in the book in which they were written)

## Preparation by the Word of God

3. We grow by being taught God's Word by a pastor who has been trained to teach His Word. This training may take place in a seminary, in a church, or by means of electronics to convey the teaching of a well-qualified pastor-teacher. Thieme said many times that it might take ten years of training to prepare a man for one good year of ministry.
4. We grow spiritually by being taught all of God's Word. A pastor must teach more than just salvation. Some pastors do nothing else but evangelize their congregation week after week after week (and maybe he spices things up now and again by asking for money). They might give a shallow sermon on Wednesday nights and make one or two points in the middle of evangelizing on Sunday night. Even though every pastor should do the work of an evangelist, he is to teach the entire Word of God. to the best of his ability.
5. When a pastor does nothing more than evangelize, he either (1) is in the wrong profession and should be an evangelist rather than a pastor (as Billy Graham decided early on in his ministry) or (2) he is not prepared well enough to be teaching. Often those in the latter category got saved, got excited, and wanted to share their salvation and faith with everyone they saw. They jumped into the position of pastor teacher prematurely. Some of these men might even have the gift and they will find out in eternity that they wasted the precious gift of God by not preparing first.
6. God uses prepared people. We find long preparation periods in the lives of Abraham, Moses, David and Paul. None of these spiritual giants got saved one day and the next day began their public ministry. I realize that perhaps there are men out there who are much greater than these four and do not feel that preparation is necessary for them. However, as an example to us, four of the greatest men from the Old and New Testaments experienced intensive, long training prior to entering into a public ministry. Perhaps we should follow their examples.

I may want to reposition this doctrine and the preceding information.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:18 And, 'Where [are] you going?' And, 'To whom [belong] these [herds of animals which are] before you?' And you will say to him, '[I belong] to your servant Jacob. These [animals are] a present being sent to my adonai Esau. Look, he [is] behind us.' " (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsâvâh (צָוָה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-VAW</i> ]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to appoint; to ordain; to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge [command, order]; to instruct [as in, giving an order]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 32:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
shênîy (שֵׁנִי) [pronounced shay-NEE]	<i>second, the second; two, both, double, twice; secondly; in addition, again. When only two items are named, it can be rendered [the] other</i>	adjective singular numeral ordinal with the definite article	Strong's #8145 BDB #1041
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sh'îlyshîy (שִׁלְשִׁי) [pronounced sh'li-SHEE]	<i>third, a third part, a third time; chambers [of the third story]</i>	adjective/ordinal numeral with the definite article	Strong's #7992 BDB #1026
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הֹלְכִים) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>those walking, those going, those who are departing; walkers, travelers</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
'êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced GAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5739 BDB #727

**Translation:** He also instructed the second and the third and all those following after the herds,...

Jacob gave similar instructions to everyone who would ride in before him, leading a group of animals. So, the animals are broken up into groups, and there were at least 5 groups of animals, given the way that this is organized here. If there is a first, a second, a *third*, and then *all those following after the herds*, then, because we do not have the *fourth* and nothing else, that means there are at least 5 groups. Therefore, we have all of the animals split up into groups by type and by gender. Each group will be led by one man, and I assume 1 or 2 others to help keep order. So, even though Jacob does not have 400 servants, he still has a lot of servants under him.

It appears that there was one slave per group of animals. Each slave would introduce his group of animals as a gift, and then tell Esau that Jacob is coming.

Genesis 32:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
dâbâr (דבר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command; business, occupation; case; something; manner</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
zeh (זה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
dâbar (דבר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Êsâv (עשו) [pronounced gay-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mâtsâ' (מצא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>finding [unexpectedly], happening upon, coming upon; detecting, discovering; meeting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
'êth (את) [pronounced ayth]	<i>him, it; he; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** ...saying, "You will say [exactly] these words to Esau when you meet him.

I have taken some liberties with the text here, because we have two verbs referring to what these men will say to Esau when they meet him. Jacob—again, probably awake all night—has determined what these men will say to Esau. You will recall that when Jacob left, he had just cheated Esau out of the final blessing by Isaac; and Esau was so mad, he was making plans to kill Jacob.

**A Review of Genesis 32:13–19:** We pick up where Jacob has his wives and children with him. He has left Paddan-aram. His Uncle Laban chased after him and caught up with him, and they managed to resolve their differences. Now, as Jacob moves further into the Land of Promise (he is still east of the Jordan River right now), he needs to confront Esau, his twin brother.

Jacob left the Land of Promise because of his scheming to take Esau’s blessing from him. He will soon confront his brother, 20 years after the fact, which is the background for the next few lessons.

There is a point of confusion, related to Genesis 32 and Genesis 33 and I am not sure if this has been dealt with before. Jacob intends to protect his wives and children by setting them up as a separate camp (Genesis 32:7–8 *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, thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape."*); but, in Genesis 33:1–6, he approaches Esau with his family. Therefore, bear in mind that, whatever Jacob plans out in this chapter appears to be reversed in the next chapter. This does not mean that there is a contradiction here; it simply suggests that Jacob changed his mind about his approach to Esau.

Gen. 32:13–16 *He [Jacob] spent the night there and took part of what he had brought with him as a gift for his brother Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. He entrusted them to his slaves as separate herds and said to them, "Go on ahead of me, and leave some distance between the herds."* (HCSB)

This is the present which he will send to Esau.

Gen 32:17–19 *And he told the first one: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'Who do you belong to? Where are you going? And whose animals are these ahead of you?' then tell him, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau. And look, he is behind us.'" He also told the second one, the third, and everyone who was walking behind the animals, "Say the same thing to Esau when you find him.* (HCSB)

Genesis 32:19 *He also instructed the second and the third and all those following after the herds, saying, "You will say [exactly] these words to Esau when you meet him.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
gam (גם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168

## Genesis 32:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
<p>This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i>. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.</p>			
<p>When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated <i>I see, he sees</i>. I have taken some liberties with this word in 1Kings 2:29 and translated this word <i>right now</i>.</p>			
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ĠE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #310 BDB #29

**Translation:** You will say, 'Furthermore, listen, your servant Jacob is behind us.'

Here is how it is supposed to go. Esau will be traveling with his men to meet up with Jacob. He first will come to this parade of animals—and it is obvious that these animals are not being grazed. They are grouped and they are being moved in these various groups.

Each man, as they meet Esau, say to him, "Also, please note, that Jacob is behind us."

That each group is so instructed suggests that there is a large space, perhaps, between each grouping. "Oh, Jacob is right behind us;" but then, coming behind them is another set of livestock being led by a slave or two. Human viewpoint is, Esau is to see this grand present, recognize Jacob's contrite nature, and forgive him.

Trapp: *Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us.] This he requires them all to insist on, lest Esau should think he meant, meanwhile, to escape some other way.*<sup>320</sup>

## Genesis 32:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

<sup>320</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:20.

## Genesis 32:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
The NET Bible: <i>The Hebrew word מַאֲלָה (maqel), traditionally represents Jacob's thought or reasoning, and is therefore translated "thought."</i> <sup>321</sup> I am confused, as I do not see that particular word anywhere.			
kāphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced kaw-FAHR]	to cover, to cover over [with], to be covered [with]; to spread over; to appease, to placate, to pacify; to pardon, to expiate; to atone; to obtain forgiveness; to free an offender of a charge	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Piel imperfect with the cohortative hê	Strong's #3722 BDB #497
The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with <i>let</i> or <i>may</i> ; in the plural, this can be <i>let us</i> . The cohortative is designed for the 1 <sup>st</sup> person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Generally there is the hê suffix to indicate this. This might be called <i>apocopated</i> in Owen's <i>Analytical Keys to the Old Testament</i> .			
NASB, NKJV, NRSV, REB, PESHITTA "I will appease him" TEV "I will win him over" NJB "I conciliate him" JPSOA, LXX "I propitiate him"			
Dr. Bob Utley continues: <i>[This] verb used for a blood cleansing sacrifice (cf. Leviticus 4, 16). Its basic meaning is "to cover" or "make atonement."</i> <sup>322</sup>			
The NET Bible: <i>The cohortative here expresses Jacob's resolve. In the Book of Leviticus the Hebrew verb translated "appease" has the idea of removing anger due to sin or guilt, a nuance that fits this passage very well. Jacob wanted to buy Esau off with a gift of more than five hundred and fifty animals.</i> <sup>323</sup>			
pānîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
When found by itself, pānîym, without a preposition preceding it and with a personal possessive pronoun, can be used for doing or saying something to someone, in front of someone or in their presence.			
The full set of BDB definitions: 1) face; 1a) face, faces; 1b) presence, person; 1c) face (of seraphim or cherubim); 1d) face (of animals); 1e) face, surface (of ground); 1f) as adverb of loc/temp; 1f1) before and behind, toward, in front of, forward, formerly, from beforetime, before.			
This literally means, <i>that I might cover his face</i> .			

<sup>321</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

<sup>322</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:13–21.

<sup>323</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

## Genesis 32:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Matthew Poole: <i>Heb. appease or allay his anger; for the Hebrew word panim signifies both anger, as Psalm 21:9 34:16.</i> <sup>324</sup> Not sure I agree with Poole entirely here.			
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
min <sup>e</sup> châh (מִנְחָה) [pronounced min-HAWH]	<i>tribute offering, gift, present; sacrifice, bloodless offering; [a general term for] offering</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4503 BDB #585

**Translation:** For he thought, "I might appease Esau [lit., his face] with [this] present..."

Jacob tells the men to do this, and he explains his thinking right here. Jacob thought, *I might patch things up with Esau with this present.* Then the present is specified.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "*Appease*" is the *piel* form of the verb *kaphar* (כָּפַר), which in the context of Esau and Jacob's relationship at this point refers to "reconciling" or "repairing" their relationship. The implication of this word is that with this gift Esau would be visually blocked from seeing Jacob's transgression of twenty years earlier or in other words, the gift was designed to "cover" the sin that Jacob had committed against Esau some twenty years earlier.<sup>325</sup>

We don't even have to guess that this was human viewpoint. God tells us right here that this is human viewpoint. This is what Jacob thought or assumed. The verb in the Hebrew is the Qal perfect of 'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAR] and it primarily means to utter or to speak; however, it can also mean to think (it is often used in conjunction with *the heart*, meaning that someone is thinking in their heart). However, here, it is a simple bit of thinking which Jacob has performed, apart from divine revelation, apart from God's will. Jacob could have offered Esau a present or not (a present and an apology would have been appropriate). No matter what approach Jacob took, God has made promises based upon His character and not upon Jacob's. Furthermore, these promises are made to Abraham his father and reiterated to him. God is not going to withdraw His promises that He made to Abraham just because Jacob is a failure. In fact, throughout much of his life, Jacob is a failure and God did not revoke, nullify or modify His promises to Abraham.

It is okay to think, to plan and to act, as long as these things are done within the framework of doctrine. Jacob, although he showed great spiritual wisdom the night before, is now acting in unbelief.

So, even though Jacob prayed to God—and he prayed an amazing prayer—he decides to attempt to manipulate Esau, just in case. If we know and understand God's will, then we do not have to act with human viewpoint *just in case*.

This will not be Jacob's only present. Future from this time, he will send a present to the prime minister of Egypt, given that his sons seemingly were given grain, but without paying for it in a time of need (Genesis 43:11). When Nabal will disrespect David and not appreciate David's protection, Abigail, his wife, will send a great present to David, to hopefully appease him (1Samuel 25:17–35).

<sup>324</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:20.

<sup>325</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>is walking, is going, is departing, is advancing, is traveling</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פני) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Literally, this would be translated *to faces of me, to my faces*. Together, these words mean *before me, before my face, in my presence, in my sight, in front of me; before me (in the sense of, before my time), prior to my being here*.

w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'achar (אחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

These two words together literally mean *after so*; however, they appear to mean *afterward, afterwards, after these things, after this, [and] after that*. See Genesis 15:14 23:19 25:26 Leviticus 14:36 Deut. 21:13 1Samuel 10:5.

**Translation:** ...—the [present] which goes before me and follows after me—...

So, each man who is speaking to Esau says, “The animals from right here where I am and following after me—this is your present from your brother Isaac.” You know, *from here to here*, they might motion with their hands.

## Genesis 32:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
râ'âh (ראה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
pânîym (פני) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

## Genesis 32:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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When found by itself, pânîym, without a preposition preceding it and with a personal possessive pronoun, can be used for doing or saying something to someone, in front of someone or in their presence.

The full set of BDB definitions: 1) *face*; 1a) *face, faces*; 1b) *presence, person*; 1c) *face (of seraphim or cherubim)*; 1d) *face (of animals)*; 1e) *face, surface (of ground)*; 1f) *as adverb of loc/temp*; 1f1) *before and behind, toward, in front of, forward, formerly, from beforetime, before*.

`ûwlay (אילי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, unless, suppose; if peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
nâsâ' (נשא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 BDB #669

NASB, NKJV, NRSV, LXX "accept me"  
 TEV "forgive me"  
 NJB "be inclined towards me"  
 JPSOA "show me favor"  
 REB "receive me kindly"<sup>326</sup>

Nâsâ' actually has a variety of Qal meanings: It means ❶ *to take up, to lift up, to bear up*; ❷ *to lift up someone's head* (this is used in a favorable way; i.e., it is misused to mean *to make one cheerful or merry*; ❸ *to lift up one's own countenance, i.e., to be cheerful, full of confidence*, ❹ *to bear, to carry*, ❺ *to lift up in a balance, i.e., to weigh carefully*; ❻ *to bear one's sin or punishment*, ❼ *to lift up the voice* (this can be used in the sense of bemoaning, crying, crying out, rejoicing, *to lift up any with the voice* (a song, an instrument); ❽ *to lift up the soul* (i.e., *to wish for, to desire*); ❾ *to have the heart lifted up* (i.e., they are ready and willing to do something; ❿ *to bear one's sin* (in such a way to expiate the sin, to make atonement for the sin, to pardon the sin). This list does not exhaust the various connotations for nâsâ'. BDB adds the following: *to support, to sustain, to endure; to take, to take away, to carry off, to forgive*.

pânîym (פנים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
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When found by itself, pânîym, without a preposition preceding it and with a personal possessive pronoun, can be used for doing or saying something to someone, in front of someone or in their presence.

The full set of BDB definitions: 1) *face*; 1a) *face, faces*; 1b) *presence, person*; 1c) *face (of seraphim or cherubim)*; 1d) *face (of animals)*; 1e) *face, surface (of ground)*; 1f) *as adverb of loc/temp*; 1f1) *before and behind, toward, in front of, forward, formerly, from beforetime, before*.

Dr. Bob Utley: *This is a Hebrew idiom "to lift the face" (cf. Job 42:8–9; Psalm 82:2; Proverbs 18:5; Lam. 4:16). In a legal setting it referred to a judge lifting the face of the accused, which jeopardized his impartiality.*<sup>327</sup>

Many translate this phrase, *I will see him [and] he might accept me*.

**Translation:** ...[then] I will see him [and] he might lift up my countenance."

<sup>326</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:13–21.

<sup>327</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:13–21.

What Jacob wants is this: he wants Esau to come upon him and for Esau to lift up his countenance. That is, he hopes that, in meeting with Esau again, after these 20 years, that he will be accepted by Esau. This would lift up Jacob's face. Now, Jacob is looking down, being embarrassed and ashamed of his actions in the past. Many translations have, *perhaps he will accept me*.

In Genesis 4:6, Cain's face is said to be fallen, because he was upset that God gave Abel's sacrifice respect but not his. Obviously, Jacob's fallen face is going to be different than Cain's; but let me suggest the Jacob is more ashamed and embarrassed than anything else about his previous actions.

David Guzik: *Jacob hoped, "perhaps he will accept me," but in Jacob's mind, perhaps not. Jacob also thought, "Perhaps he will kill me just like he said he would."*<sup>328</sup>

Arthur Pink: *[A]fter all our fleshly efforts have been put forth there is no confidence begotten thereby, nothing but an uncertain "peradventure" for our pains. How different from the way of faith, and the calm but certain assurance which is the blessed fruit of resting on the Divine promise and trusting God to undertake for us?*<sup>329</sup>

**Genesis 32:20** And also you will 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."

We continue this quotation from Jacob, which becomes a quote within a quote, within his quote. In the single quotation marks, we have what Jacob's servants will say; and in italics, this is what they will tell Esau that Jacob said.

Jacob, even after all these 20 years, is afraid of Esau. Knowing that Esau would meet him, accompanied by 400 men, did not help. Jacob recognizes that what he did to Esau was wrong. Jacob is far from being a perfect man; and it is not clear that he would not do all of this over again.

Since Esau will have 400 men with him, and Jacob is concerned for his safety and the safety of his family, we may reasonably assume that Jacob has a lot fewer men than that. Perhaps there are 40 men with Jacob, apart from his own family.

Whedon: *[V. 20] is a notable instance of metaphorical language. Literally, he says: "I will cover his face with the present which goes before me, and afterwards I will see his face; perhaps he will lift up my face."* The word cover (כַּפַּר) is that so often used afterwards in connexion with expiation and atonement for sin. He would cover Esau's face, so that he whom he had sinned against might cease to see the transgressions of the past. Those past offences hidden, he hopes himself to look on Esau's face, as on one so far appeased as not to turn away from him, and refuse to see him. Then he hopes that there will come the further favour of Esau condescending to lift up his (Jacob's) face — the downcast face of one prostrate in humility and contrition before him.<sup>330</sup>

It might be worth having *the doctrine of the three faces* here, as there are references in this passage 3 times to the face (in the Hebrew, *face* is always in the plural). Jacob had to be fully aware of the way that he was using language here.

Genesis 32:20 You will say, 'Furthermore, listen, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he thought, "I might appease Esau [lit., his face] with [this] present—the [present] which goes before me and follows after me—[then] I will see him [and] he might lift up my countenance." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

<sup>328</sup> David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:13–21.

<sup>329</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_33.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_33.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

<sup>330</sup> Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:20.

Genesis 32:17–20 He instructed the chief [of Jacob’s servants], saying, “When Esau my brother meets you, he will ask you, ‘To whom [do] you belong?’ And, ‘Where [are] you going?’ And, ‘To whom [belong] these [herds of animals which are] before you?’ And you will say to him, ‘[I belong] to your servant Jacob. These [animals are] a present being sent to my adonai Esau. Look, he [is] behind us.’” He also instructed the second and the third and all those following after the herds, saying, “You will say [exactly] these words to Esau when you meet him. You will say, ‘Furthermore, listen, your servant Jacob is behind us.’” For he thought, “I might appease Esau [lit., his face] with [this] present—the [present] which goes before me and follows after me—[then] I will see him [and] he might lift up my countenance.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:17–20 Jacob instructed his head servant as follows: “When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, ‘Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?’ You will say to him, ‘I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau. Also, my master Jacob is behind us.’” Jacob gave the same instructions to the second man, the third man, and to all those who followed after, saying, “Listen, say these words exactly to Esau when you meet him: ‘Besides this, your servant Jacob is following behind us. He thought that he might make things right with this present to you—all that you see before me and following after me, in hopes that you will see it and be reconciled.’” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:17–20 Jacob instructed his head servant as follows: “When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, ‘Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?’ You will say to him, ‘I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau. Also, my master Jacob is behind us.’” Jacob gave the same instructions to the second man, the third man, and to all those who followed after, saying, “Listen, say these words exactly to Esau when you meet him: ‘Besides this, your servant Jacob is following behind us. He thought that he might make things right with this present to you—all that you see before me and following after me, in hopes that you will see it and be reconciled.’”

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### Jacob's Second Human Viewpoint Solution: Hide His Family from Esau

I was unsure whether to include this next verse with the previous passage. Most translations do.

**And so passes over the present upon his faces and he [even] he lodged in the night in the camp.**

Genesis  
32:21

**The present passed over before him, and [then] he spent the night in [their] camp.**

**After the present passed over before him, he spent the night in their camp.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so passes over the present upon his faces and he [even] he lodged in the night in the camp.
Targum (Onkelos)	And the offering went over before his face, and he himself lodged that night in the camp.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the present passed over before him, and he abode that night in camp.
Revised Douay-Rheims	So the presents went before him, but himself lodged that night in the camp.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	So the present passed over before him, and he himself lodged that night in the camp.
Peshitta (Syriac)	So the present went over before him; and he himself lodged that night in the encampment.
Septuagint (Greek)	So the presents went on before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

Significant differences: None.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So the servants with the offerings went on in front, and he himself took his rest that night in the tents with his people.
Easy English	So Jacob's gifts went on before him. But he spent the night with his people.
International Children's B. <i>The Message</i>	So Jacob sent the gift to Esau. But Jacob stayed that night in the camp. So his gifts went before him while he settled down for the night in the camp.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	The men drove the gift herds ahead, while Jacob and his two camps bedded down for the night.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob's men took the gifts on ahead of him, but he spent the night in camp.
New Berkeley Version	So, his presents went over ahead of him, while he lodged in the camp.
New Century Version	So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau, but he himself stayed that night in the camp.
New Life Version	So the gift went in front of him, while he stayed that night in the tent.
New Living Translation	Jacob thought, "I will try to appease him by sending gifts ahead of me. When I see him in person, perhaps he will be friendly to me." So the gifts were sent on ahead, while Jacob himself spent that night in the camp. The previous verse is included for context.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So the gifts went out ahead of him, as he spent the night in the camp.
Beck's American Translation	The presents went on ahead of him while he stayed in the caravan that night.
International Standard V	So the presents went [Lit. <i>passed</i> ] ahead of him, while he spent that night in the camp.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So the gifts went on in advance of him, and he waited in the camp all night.
Translation for Translators	So the men taking the gifts [PRS] went ahead, but Jacob himself stayed in the camp that night.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	The gift was to pass through, a passing through turned before him, and he lodged that night in the camp.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Thus he sent presents over before him ; but he himself stopped that night in the camp.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	So went the present before him and he tarried all that night in the tent, and rose up the same night and took his two wives and his two maidens and his eleven sons, and went over the ford Jabok. And he took them and sent them over the river, and sent over that he had and tarried behind himself alone. The next two verses are included for context.
H. C. Leupold	So the present passed on ahead of him, and he spent that night in the encampment.
Tree of Life Version	So the offering passed over ahead of him, while he spent that night in the camp.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And the present crossed over before his face, and he lodged that night in the army.
New American Bible (2011)	So the gifts went on ahead of him, while he stayed that night in the camp.
Revised English Bible	So Jacob's gift went on ahead of him, while he himself stayed that night at Mahaneh.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	So the present crossed over ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.
exeGesés companion Bible	So the offering passes from his face: and he stays overnight that night in the camp:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985) Kaplan Translation	And so the gift went on ahead, while he remained in camp that night. He sent the gifts ahead of him, and spent the night in the camp.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	So went the minchah (present) over ahead of him; but he himself stayed balailah in the machaneh.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So the gift [of the herds of livestock] went on ahead of him, and he himself spent that night back in the camp.
The Expanded Bible	So Jacob sent [passed ahead of him] the gifts [or tribute] to Esau, but he himself stayed that night in the camp.
Kretzmann's Commentary	So went the present over before him; and himself lodged that night in the company. Night travel was nothing unusual in the East, so Jacob sent the small bands of presents off to the south at once, probably before nightfall, while he himself remained in camp for a while.
NET Bible®	So the gifts were sent on ahead of him [ <i>Heb</i> "and the gift passed over upon his face."] while he spent that night in the camp.
The Pulpit Commentary	So (literally, and) went the present over Before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.
The Voice	So the gifts were driven on ahead, and he stayed the night in the camp, <i>waiting</i> .

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and the donation crossed over upon his face and he stayed the night, in that night, in the campsite,...
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	So the present passed over before him,—whereas he himself tarried that night in the camp.
English Standard Version	So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.
Green's Literal Translation	And the present passed before his face, and he remained in the camp that night.
Modern English Version	So the gift went before him, but he lodged that night in the encampment.
Webster's Bible Translation	So the present went over before him; and he himself lodged that night in the company.
Young's Updated LT	And the present passes over before his face, and he has lodged during that night in the camp."

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob has organized and sent his present over to first meet up with Esau, then he stays the night in the camp.

**Genesis 32:21a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 32:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘âbar (עָבַר) [pronounced <i>ġaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
min <sup>e</sup> châh (מִנְחָה) [pronounced <i>min-HAWH</i> ]	<i>tribute offering, gift, present; sacrifice, bloodless offering; [a general term for] offering</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4503 BDB #585
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>ġahʃ</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
pânîym (פְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, ‘âl and pânîym mean *upon his face of, against the face of; facing him, in front of him, before (as in preference to) him, in addition to him, overlooking him.*

**Translation:** [The present passed over before him,...](#)

What we have here appears to be narrative. This is not what Jacob said would occur; this is what occurred. We are not yet at the part where Jacob and Esau meet up. That will not take place until Genesis 33. So, this present is organized and they pass before Jacob, and he essentially looks it over and is satisfied with what he has done.

The animals have been divided up into groups; the servants have taken charge of each group, and they parade before Jacob for his approval.

## Genesis 32:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
lûwn (וּלַיְלָה) [pronounced <i>loon</i> ]	<i>to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night, to lodge for the night, to abide</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3885 BDB #533
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Genesis 32:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lay <sup>e</sup> lâh (לַיְלִיל) [pronounced LAY-law]	<i>night; nightly, at night, in the night, during the night</i>	masculine singular noun; this word can take on adverbial qualities with the definite article	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

The NET Bible: *The disjunctive clause is circumstantial/temporal.*<sup>331</sup>

**Translation:** ...and [then] he spent the night in [their] camp.

Jacob spends the night in this camp. He is not done with all that he will do, but he has begun to put his own plan into motion.

This indicates that there was a great deal of space between Jacob and Esau—a half a day's travel or so. Jacob is lodged a distance behind the present; he will initially move his family elsewhere.

Whedon offers up the list of Jacob's successive movements: *His successive movements seem to have been as follows: 1) Report of Esau's coming. 2) Great fear and excitement, and first plans and arrangements for escape. Genesis 32:7. 3) He engages in earnest prayer. Genesis 32:9–12. 4) Having encamped for the night, he selects the present for Esau, and sends it on at once, over the ford, while he proposes to stay all night in the encampment. Genesis 32:13–21. 5) After the present has passed over, he is restless still, and rises up that same night, and sees his wives and all his family safely over the Jabbok, he only remaining behind. Genesis 32:22-24.*<sup>332</sup>

Genesis 32:21 **The present passed over before him, and [then] he spent the night in [their] camp.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:21 **After the present passed over before him, he spent the night in their camp.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:13–16 So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: **two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between droves."**

<sup>331</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

<sup>332</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:21 (edited).

Genesis 32:17–18 He commanded the one in front, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?' then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.'"

Genesis 32:19–21 Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying and you shall say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp. (Jack M. Ballinger)

### Genesis 32:13–21 More Antics: Jacob Buys Esau's Goodwill (Jack M. Ballinger)

1. Jacob's wonderful prayer is followed up the next day with more gimmickry (v.13).
2. The gift (Heb. minchah) is not tribute, it according to Jacob in v. 20 was designed to mollify Esau.
3. In 1Sam. 25:19 Abigail brings gifts to David to appease him after his mistreatment by Nabal.
4. Jacob shows himself subservient to his brother.
5. Jacob's activity does not square with his on point prayer.
6. Jacob again lets fear dictate his course of action.
7. This gift as Jacob calls it is designed to ingratiate himself with one who is superior.
8. Jacob's gift of five herds of goats, sheep, camels, cattle and donkeys was befitting someone of substantial means (vv. 14-15).
9. The total number of animals in this peace offering is 550.
10. It illustrates the degree to which God had blessed him with much wealth first mentioned back in 30:35.
11. Each herd of the different categories of domestic animals is entrusted to servants who are sent off in successive groupings separated by some distance and all are given the same message to be relayed to the approaching Esau (vv. 16-19).
12. Five kinds of livestock are separated into five herds separated by "a space between droves" (v. 19).
13. The message each drove leader was to convey to the inquiring Esau was simply to inform him that the animals were a present sent ahead to him by "[his] servant Jacob...sent to my lord Esau."
14. Esau was further to be told that Jacob was "behind [them]."
15. Evidently the effect of hearing five different leaders of five successive droves relay the same message was to turn Esau from his wrath.
16. Jacob's rationale is expressed in v. 20 by the term "I will appease."
17. The verb in the Hebrew is kaphar (Piel) which in other places means to offer a ransom.
18. Jacob sought to mollify Esau's deadly anger.
19. This scene ends with Jacob retiring for the night with what was a restless night (v. 21; cf. v. 22).
20. Jacob is not handling this well and so suffers unnecessary mental angst.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen32.htm> accessed March 2, 2019.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:13–16 So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau. Two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty nursing camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between droves."

Genesis 32:17 And he commanded the one in front, saying "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'to whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?'

Genesis 32:18–21 Then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he is also behind us.'" Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying "after this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him." And you will say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.'" for he thought, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present crossed over before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp. (Ron Snider)

### Summary Genesis 32:13–21 (by Ron Snider)

1. After his prayer, Jacob immediately resorts to human viewpoint activity to secure his own deliverance.
2. His idea was a rather sizable gift to Esau, with which he hoped to soften Esau up.
3. This gift included 580 head of various animals, divided male and female as was customary among those who raised livestock.
4. Not being certain that this will be favorably received, he divides the gift into 5 separate flocks, and puts one of his servants in charge of each drove.
5. The idea Jacob had was to send each flock out, and then allow a some distance between the flocks, so that Esau realized the magnitude of the five gifts.
6. Each of the men were instructed to say the same thing when and if they were questioned by Esau.
7. Their answer was to reflect the obsequious way in which Jacob was going to approach Esau.
8. Jacob resorts to false humility and consistently refers to Esau as the master and to himself as the slave.
9. Each man is to say the same thing and point out that Jacob was coming along behind them.
10. Obviously this had another significant purpose that of allowing the next group to observe if the preceding group was met with a hostile reception and violence.
11. Then they could head back to Jacob immediately and inform him that Esau had killed the one before him.
12. Jacob's thinking is clearly revealed in vs 20 and that is that he hopes to appease Esau with gifts.
13. He still believed Esau was full of the murderous rage he possessed 20 years before when Jacob had cheated him out of the blessing.
14. He sent the five separate flocks on across the river Jabbok, but kept his wives and children in the camp with him.
15. The plan is to have the present begin to arrive group by group the following day, indicating the Esau was not far away.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

[Chapter Outline](#)

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**Genesis 32:13–21: Jacob Prepares a Present** (Summary on a Slide); from [Slide Serve](#) (slide #13); accessed March 9, 2019.



## Jacob Prepares a Present

### Genesis 32:13-21

- **Jacob stays the night** and prepares a **gift** for **Esau**.
  - **Goats:** 200 female goats (200 ewes), 20 male goats (20 rams)
  - **Camels:** 30 milk camels, plus their calves
  - **Cattle:** 40 cows, 10 bulls
  - **Donkeys:** 20 female donkeys, 10 male donkeys
- Jacob tells the **servants** to **space out the herds**. (a **procession of gifts**)
- Jacob tells **each group** to **tell Esau** that these are **gifts from Jacob**, who is **behind** them.
- Jacob thought he may **appease Esau**. (Lit. "**appease his face**". In the Bible "**face**" can stand for the **person**.)
- Jacob thinks, "If I **appease his face**, when I **see his face**, he will **lift my face**."
- "**Appease**" means to "**cover over**". In the O.T., this often has the idea of **making an offering** to **cover over one's sin**. By **Jacob's gift**, he hopes to be **forgiven** of his **past sins** in the **eyes of his brother**.
- "**He will lift my face**" likely means **acceptance**, and could have the double meaning of making Jacob **smile**, indicating the **joy** of acceptance.
- The **gift** went on **ahead**, and **Jacob** spends **one more night** in the camp.

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Jacob will be unable to sleep; and he will continue to try to make this meeting with Esau work for him. Twice in this chapter, Jacob has expressed fear of Esau; so it is quite logical that, the night before they meet, Jacob cannot sleep at all.

Some of the translations place *and he was left alone* (from v. 24) and tack it onto v. 23, often as a continuation of v. 23.

Many translations begin a new subsection with these verses; and many begin this new subsection with v. 24.

I have previously mentioned that Jacob originally had a specific plan of isolating his wives and children in a second camp, and hiding that camp, so that they might escape if Esau attacked him. However, when we get to Genesis 33, it is clear that Jacob did not do that. I believe this verse indicates that he has changed his mind about that plan. It is reasonable to suggest that he is wrestling in his own mind with what to do; and this movement indicates both nervous energy and indecision.

I have been wrestling in my own mind whether: (1) Jacob is moving his family to a camp of safety or (2) if he is putting them right behind his present to Esau (which is where they will be in Genesis 33). I may not resolve that satisfactorily. Logically, if Jacob is going to do anything, it would be the shield his wives and children from harm.

**And so he rises up in the night the same and so he takes two of his wives and two of his maids and one-teen of his children and so he crosses over a ford of Jabbok. And so he takes them and so he sends them across the torrent and so he takes over that [which is] to him.**

Genesis  
32:22–23

**He then rose up in the same night and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children and he crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He takes them and sends them across the torrent; and he takes across [all] that [is] his.**

**He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them. He takes his family and sends them over the torrent; and along with them, all that belongs to him.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he rises up in the night the same and so he takes two of his wives and two of his maids and one-teen of his children and so he crosses over a ford of Jabbok. And so he takes them and so he sends them across the torrent and so he takes over that [which is] to him.
Targum (Onkelos)	And he arose in the night, and took his two wives, and his two concubines, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jubeka; and he took them and made them pass over the torrent, and made what was his to pass over.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the night in the camp. And he arose in the night and took his two wives, and his two concubines, and eleven children, and went over the ford Jubeka. And taking them he made them pass over the torrent, and all that he had went over.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And rising early he took his two wives, and his two handmaids, with his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of Jabot. And when all things were brought over that belonged to him,...
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of the Yabbok. He took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he rose up in the night, and took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven sons, and led them to the <u>desert</u> of Jabbok. And he took them, and brought them over the brook, and then he brought across everything that he had.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he rose up in that night, and took his two wives and his two servant-maids, and his eleven children, and crossed over the ford of Jaboch. And he took them, and passed over the torrent, and brought over all his possessions.
Significant differences:	The Syriac may have <i>desert</i> rather than <i>ford</i> (of the Jabbok). However, the two Aramaic versions above differ on this point.

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And in the night he got up, and taking with him his two wives and the two servant-women and his eleven children, he went over the river Jabbok. He took them and sent them over the stream with all he had.
Easy English	That night Jacob took his 2 wives, 11 sons and 2 female servants. And he sent them over the part of the River Jabbok that was not very deep [This part of the River

	Jabbok was not very deep and about 20 miles north of the Dead Sea.]. After he had sent his people across, he sent everything that was his over the stream.
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	During the night, Jacob got up and began moving his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven sons across the Jabbok River at the crossing. After he sent his family across the river, he sent across everything he had.
Good News Bible (TEV)	<b>Jacob Wrestles at Peniel</b> That same night Jacob got up, took his two wives, his two concubines, and his eleven children, and crossed the Jabbok River. After he had sent them across, he also sent across all that he owned, but he stayed behind, alone. A portion of v. 24 is included for context.
<i>The Message</i>	But during the night he got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He got them safely across the brook along with all his possessions.
Names of God Bible	<b>Jacob’s Fourth Encounter with God—He Wrestles with God</b> During that night he got up and gathered his two wives, his two slaves and his eleven children and crossed at the shallow part of the Jabbok River. After he sent them across the stream, he sent everything else across.
NIRV	<b>Jacob Wrestles With God</b> That night Jacob got up. He took his two wives, his two female servants and his 11 sons and sent them across the Jabbok River. After they had crossed the stream, he sent over everything he owned.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	<b>Jacob wrestles a mystery man</b> Sometime during the night Jacob woke up. Then he woke up everyone else. He led his two wives, two slave wives, and 11 children across the Jabbok River. Then he went back, loaded up all his possessions, and sent everything else across, too.
Common English Bible	<b>Jacob wrestles with God</b> Jacob got up during the night, took his two wives, his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed the Jabbok River’s shallow water. He took them and everything that belonged to him, and he helped them cross the river.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob got up in the middle of the night and took his wives, his eleven children, and everything he owned across to the other side of the Jabbok River for safety.
The Living Bible	But during the night he got up and wakened his two wives and his two concubines and eleven sons, and sent them across the Jordan River at the Jabbok ford with all his possessions, then returned again to the camp and was there alone; and a Man wrestled with him until dawn. V. 24 is included for context.
New Century Version	<b>Jacob Wrestles with God</b> During the night Jacob rose and crossed the Jabbok River at the crossing, taking with him his two wives, his two slave girls, and his eleven sons. He sent his family and everything he had across the river.
New Life Version	But he got up that same night and crossed the Jabbok River, with his two wives, the two women who served him, and his eleven children. He took them and sent them to the other side of the river with all that he had.
New Living Translation	<b>Jacob Wrestles with God</b> During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two servant wives, and his eleven sons and crossed the Jabbok River with them. After taking them to the other side, he sent over all his possessions.

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then during the night, he got up and took his two women, the two female servants, and his eleven children, and they crossed the Jaboch River... he took them and all his possessions through the raging river.
International Standard V	Later that night, he woke up, quickly took his two wives, his [The Heb. lacks <i>his</i> ] two women servants, and his eleven children, and forded the river at Jabbok. He took them across the river, along with all his possessions.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	But before dawn he rose, and took his two wives, their serving-women, and his eleven sons, across the ford of Jacob. And now he had set down all that was his on the further side, and he was left there alone. A portion of v. 24 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	<b>Jacob wrestled with Yahweh</b> Some time during that night, Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female slaves, and his eleven sons and his daughter, and he sent them across the ford at the Jabbok River. After he had done that, he sent other slaves, carrying all his possessions, across the river.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to rise up that night and was to take his two wives, the two maid servants, and his ten and one sons, even was he to cause them to pass over the ford Jabbok. He was to take them, and was to cause them to pass over the torrent-valley, even was he to cause them to pass over.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	However he arose at night and took his two wives, and the two second wives, and his eleven lads and crossed the ford of Jabok. So he took them and passed them over the brook, and sent over all who were with him.
H. C. Leupold	And he arose in the course of that night and took his two wives and his two handmaids and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them, namely, and brought them over the brook and brought over all that he had.
Tree of Life Version	Then he got up that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and he sent across whatever he had.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two maidservants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and crossed them over the stream, and crossed over what was his.
New American Bible (2011)	<i>Jacob's New Name.</i> * That night, however, Jacob arose, took his two wives, with the two maidservants and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he got them and brought them across the wadi and brought over what belonged to him, Jacob was left there alone. A portion of v. 24 is included for context. [32:23–33] As Jacob crosses over to the land promised him, worried about the impending meeting with Esau, he encounters a mysterious adversary in the night with whom he wrestles until morning. The cunning Jacob manages to wrest a blessing from the night stranger before he departs. There are folkloric elements in the tale—e.g., the trial of the hero before he can return home, the nocturnal demon's loss of strength at sunrise, the demon protecting its river, the power gained by knowledge of an opponent's name—but these have been worked into a coherent though elliptical narrative. The point of the tale seems to be that the ever-striving, ever-grasping Jacob must eventually strive with God to attain full possession of the blessing.

New Jerusalem Bible	That same night he got up and, taking his two wives, his two slave-girls and his eleven children, crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had taken them across the stream, he sent all his possessions over too.
New RSV	The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	He got up that night, took his two wives, his two slave-girls, and his eleven children, and forded the Yabok. He took them and sent them across the stream, then sent his possessions across; and Ya'akov was left alone.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and he rises that night and takes his two women and his two maids and his eleven children and passes over the ford Yabboq: and he takes them and passes them over the wadi and passes over what he has.
Kaplan Translation	In the middle of the night he got up, and took his two wives, his two handmaids, and his eleven sons, and sent them across the Jabbok River [An eastern tributary of the Jordan, about midway between the Kinnereth and the Dead Sea.] shallows. After he had taken them and sent them across, he also sent across all his possessions.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he rose up that night, and took his two nashim and his two shifchot, and his eleven yeladim, and passed over the ma'avar (ford) Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over [all] that he had.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But he got up that same night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and waded over the ford of the Jabbok. Then he took them and sent them across the brook. And he also sent across whatever he had.
The Expanded Bible	<b>Jacob Wrestles with God</b> During the night Jacob rose and crossed the Jabbok River [ <sup>c</sup> a tributary of the Jordan about 15 miles north of the Dead Sea in the Transjordan] at the crossing, taking with him his two wives, his two slave girls, and his eleven sons. He sent his family and everything he had across the river [wadi; ravine].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. Jacob's anxiety did not permit him to rest very long. Before the night had advanced very far, he took the members of his family and transferred them to the south side of the Jabbok, at the ford which is about eighteen miles from the Jordan. <b>And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.</b> So the tents were struck, and the entire caravan was on its way toward the south. Thus Jacob had made all the necessary arrangements, had done what he could to appease his brother, and could await the outcome of his plans with a more confident heart. It is nothing but a matter of simple wisdom to agree with adversaries as soon as possible, to offer them the hand of reconciliation, to appease them with kindness.
NET Bible®	During the night Jacob quickly took [ <i>Heb</i> "and he arose in that night and he took."] his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream along with all his possessions [ <i>Heb</i> "and he sent across what he had."].
The Pulpit Commentary	And he rose up that night,—i.e. some time before daybreak (vide Genesis 32:24) and took his two wives, and him two women servants (Bilhah and Zilpah), and his eleven sons (Dinah being not mentioned in accordance with the common usage of

the Bible), and passed over the ford—the word signifies a place of passing over. Tristram speaks of the strong current reaching the horses girths at the ford crossed by himself and twenty horsemen—Jabbok. Jabbok, from bakak, to empty, to pour forth (Kalisch), or from abak, to struggle (Keil), may have been so named either from the natural appearance of the river, or, as is more probable, by prolepsis from the wrestling which took place upon its banks. It is now called the Wady Zerka, or Blue River, which flows into the Jordan, nearly opposite Shechem, and midway between the Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea. The stream is rapid, and often completely hidden by the dense mass of oleander which fringes its banks. And he took them, and sent them (literally, caused them to pass) over the brook, and sent over that he had—himself remaining on the north side (Delitzsch, Keil, Kurtz, Murphy, Gerlach, Wordsworth, Alford), although, having once crossed the stream (Genesis 32:22), it is not perfectly apparent that he recrossed, which has led some to argue that the wrestling occurred on the south of the river (Knobel, Rosenmüller, Lange, Kalisch)

The Voice

Later that same night, Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his 11 children; and he crossed the Jabbok River. He sent them all ahead across the stream along with everything he had; but Jacob stayed behind, left alone in his distress and doubt. A portion of v. 24 is included for context.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and he rose in that night and he took two of his women and two of his maids and eleven of his boys and he crossed over the crossing of the Yaboq<sup>[Emptying]</sup>, and took them and he made them cross over the wadi and he made which belongs to him cross over,...

Emphasized Bible

And rising is he in that night and taking his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and is crossing the crossing of the Jabbok. And taking them is he and is passing them over the watercourse. And passing over is he all which is his.

English Standard Version

#### Jacob Wrestles with God

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. He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had.

Modern English Version

#### Jacob Wrestles With God

The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream along with all that he had.

New European Version

#### Jacob Wrestles with an Angel

He rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok. He took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had.

New King James Version

#### Wrestling with God

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. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

Young's Updated LT

And he rises in that night, and takes his two wives, and his two maid-servants, and his eleven children, and passes over the passage of Jabbok. And he takes them, and causes them to pass over the brook, and he causes that which he has to pass over.

The gist of this passage:

Still unable to sleep, Jacob gets up in the night and takes all of his family and possessions and brings them over the Jabbok.

Genesis 32:22a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (מוק) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
lay <sup>e</sup> lâh (הַלַּיְלָה) [pronounced LAY-law]	<i>night; nightly, at night, in the night, during the night</i>	masculine singular noun; this word can take on adverbial qualities with the definite article	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied; with the definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

There is a minor problem with the text here. It reads hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo], but it probably should read hahûw' (אוהה) [pronounced hah-hoo]. This is simply the definite article being added on.

**Translation:** [He then rose up in the same night...](#)

It is apparent that Jacob cannot sleep this night. Despite delivering an excellent prayer, Jacob cannot stop doing things. He has sent the present over towards Esau and now he is trying to hide his family from Esau.

Or, in the alternative, Jacob is restless, cannot decide what to do, and decides to move his family to where they would be right behind the present for Esau. By the time we get to Genesis 33, it will be clear that Jacob's family is right behind him and he is right behind his present to Esau. However, we do not know when this arrangement was implemented.

In Genesis 33, Esau will run directly into Jacob's servants and his present to Esau; and right behind this present will be Jacob and his family. What is unclear is, whether Jacob is moving his family closer toward Esau at this point or trying to hide them. I should also add that, even if we do not resolve this issue, it is not very important. However, I do have strong opinions as to what Jacob does here and later on.

Genesis 32:22b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 32:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law- KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
The NET Bible: <i>The first verb is adverbial, indicating that he carried out the crossing right away.</i> <sup>333</sup> This is a reference back to the first verb in v. 22a.			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sh <sup>e</sup> nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> n-Ā]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	feminine singular, dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
nâshîym (נָשִׁים) [pronounced naw- SHEEM]	<i>women, wives</i>	feminine plural noun; irregular plural of Strong's #802; with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sh <sup>e</sup> nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> n-Ā]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	feminine singular, dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
shiph <sup>e</sup> châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced shif-KHAW]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'echâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh- KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone</i>	numeral adjective; feminine singular	Strong's #259 BDB #25
'eser (עָשָׂר) [pronounced ĠEH-ser]	<i>ten</i>	masculine numeral	Strong's #6235 BDB #796
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדִים) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law- DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

<sup>333</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

## Genesis 32:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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The NET Bible: *The Hebrew term used here is 'לָדָד (yeled) which typically describes male offspring. Some translations render the term "children" but this is a problem because by this time Jacob had twelve children in all, including one daughter, Dinah, born to Leah (Gen 30:21). Benjamin, his twelfth son and thirteenth child, was not born until later (Gen 35:16-19).*<sup>334</sup>

**Translation:** ...and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children...

Jacob gathered up his family—his two wives, their maids and his 11 children. The reference here must be to his 11 sons, as he has already sired 11 sons and at least one daughter.

## Genesis 32:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âbar (אַבַּר) [pronounced gâw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ma <sup>e</sup> bâr (מַעְבָּר) [pronounced mah-guh <sup>B</sup> -VAWR]	<i>ford, pass, crossing pass, passage</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4569 BDB #721
Dr. Bob Utley: <i>The Hebrew root for "crossed" (BDB 716, KB 778, Qal IMPERFECT) is the same root as "ford" (BDB 721, cf. Joshua 2:7; Judges 3:28; Isaiah 16:2). It denotes wading across at a shallow point.</i> <sup>335</sup>			
Yabbôq (יַבְבֹּק) [pronounced yahb-BOHK]	<i>an emptying, a pouring out [forth]; transliterated Jabbok</i>	proper singular noun/location	Strong's #2999 BDB #132

The NET Bible: *Hebrew narrative style often includes a summary statement of the whole passage followed by a more detailed report of the event. Here v. 22 is the summary statement, while v. 23 begins the detailed account.*<sup>336</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *[The] root [for Jabbok] means "flowing" (BDB 132). It had cut a very deep gorge.*<sup>337</sup>

<sup>334</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

<sup>335</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

<sup>336</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 8, 2016.

<sup>337</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

**Translation:** ...and he crossed over the ford of the Jabbok.

It appears that what Jacob is doing is taking his family to safety. My guess would be that he takes some of his servants with them to take care of his family.

The Jabbok indicates that Jacob is east of the Jordan moving westward, to meet his brother, who is coming up from the south (from Edom) to meet him.

It is difficult to be 100% clear on these events on just a simple reading of the passage. Has Jacob moved his family to a more secure location or has he moved them right in behind the present for Esau? Whatever is happening here, in Genesis 33, he and his family will travel right behind the present for Esau.

**East of the Jordan Map** from [Katapi Bible Atlas](#); accessed September 2, 2015 (only the relevant portion of the map is shown). You see the Jabbok River near the top of the map, Edom (where Esau lives) is at the very bottom.

Jacob is traveling from the east towards the west. He apparently is going to move towards the Jordan River with the Jabbok River to the north (some might disagree here). Esau is coming up from Edom, traveling from south to north.

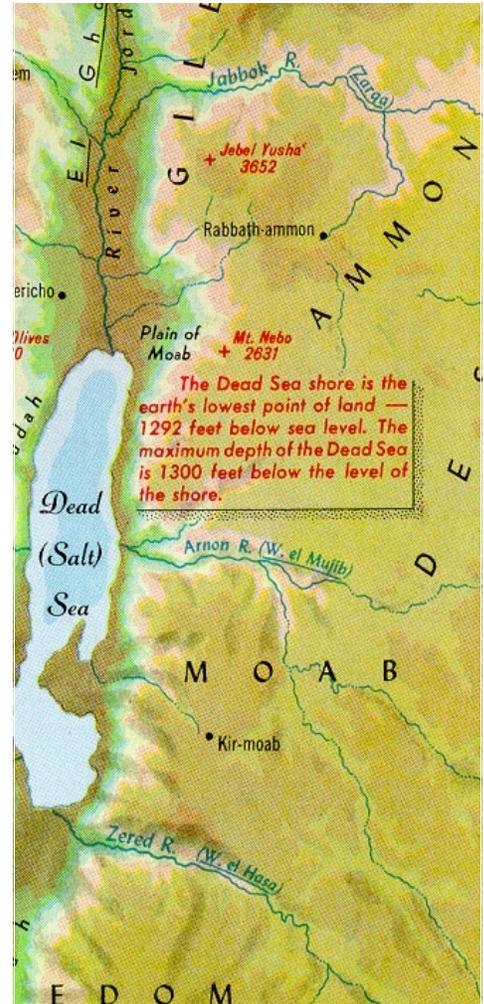
It appears that Jacob will meet Esau south of the Jabbok River (south, on a map, is always down), but he will place his family north of the Jabbok—it least during this evening.

What Jacob appears to be doing is separating his family from all of this. Here, it appears that his intention is that, they will be completely separate from him when he meets Esau. His intention seems to be that there will be a significant distance between Jacob's family and Jacob when he finally meets Esau face to face. With his family would be slaves, of course. That may be his *intention* at this point.

If this is the proper interpretation of what is happening, then he will change his mind by the time we get to Genesis 33.

## Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



In the alternative, Jacob is having a change of mind right now at this point, and he is moving his family closer to Esau. Now, quite frankly, at this point, I lean more toward the first situation. If, in vv. 22–23, Jacob moves his family towards Esau, then he, the night before, is going to be further from Esau, with his family between. No matter how we look at this, it seems less likely that Jacob is going to place himself in a safer position than his own family. Secondly, his outstanding prayer notwithstanding, we do not see any logical motivation for Jacob to be less afraid of Esau at this point.

Another point of speculation here is, where is Jacob and his family in relation to the Jabbok. Nearly everyone agrees that he is north of the Jabbok, so putting his family to the south, across the Jabbok, would move them closer to Esau. It is possible that Jacob and his family come in south of the Jabbok, and he moves his family north, at night, for their safety (and he might take them over the Jabbok and then over a stream north of that). Wherever their location, it makes more sense for Jacob to try to hide his family at this point. That is where his mind was at.

Also, bear in mind, if Jacob is doing the right thing here, then why does God wrestle with him? The right thing is not to be afraid; and not to worry about his family. Everything to this point suggests that Jacob is very worried about his family because he is afraid of Esau.

Dr. Peter Pett on the Ford of the Jabbok River: *A place where it was possible to cross the swiftly flowing river which Jacob has called the Jordan, being its tributary. This river flows through a deep gorge and is difficult to cross. This tributary flows east of the Jordan.*<sup>338</sup>

Genesis 32:22 He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them.

### The Jabbok River (various commentators)

Barnes: *The Jabbok rose near Rabbath Ammon, and flowed into the Jordan, separating North Gilead from South, or the kingdom of Og from that of Sihon.*<sup>339</sup>

Clarke: *This brook or rivulet rises in the mountains of Galaad, and falls into the Jordan at the south extremity of the lake of Gennesaret.*<sup>340</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[The Jabbok] was a river that took its rise from the mountains of Arabia, was the border of the Ammonites, washed the city Rabba, and ran between Philadelphia and Gerasa, and came into the river Jordan, at some little distance from the sea of Gennesaret or Galilee, about three or four miles from it.*<sup>341</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[The] Jabbok [is] — now the Zerka - a stream that rises among the mountains of Gilead, and running from east to west, enters the Jordan, about forty miles south of the Sea of Tiberias. At the ford it is ten yards wide. It is sometimes forded with difficulty; but in summer it is very shallow.*<sup>342</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jabbok is the present Wady es Zerka (i.e., the blue), which flows from the east towards the Jordan, and with its deep rocky valley formed at that time the boundary between the kingdoms of Sihon at Heshbon and Og of Bashan. It now separates the countries of Moerad or Ajlun and Belka.*<sup>343</sup>

The New Berkeley Bible: *The Jabbok brook still divides the Gilead mountain range. It empties into the Jordan 43 miles south of Lake Galilee and 23 miles north of the Dead Sea.*<sup>344</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *the ford of Jabbok [is] a stream which takes its rise in the mountains of Gilead, and falls into the Jordan to the south of the lake of Gennesareth. It is now called the Zerka. Deut. 2:37, Deut. 3:16; Joshua 12:2.*<sup>345</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *There is a tributary of feeding the Jordan river called the Jabbok. The name Jabbok means empty, or demoralized or devastated. The ford runs east to west through the Gilead, and then it angles southwest until it meets the Jordan.*<sup>346</sup>

<sup>338</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:22–23.

<sup>339</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>340</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:22.

<sup>341</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:22. Another source cited there.

<sup>342</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:22.

<sup>343</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:23–24.

<sup>344</sup> *The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)*, Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 33 (footnote).

<sup>345</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:22.

<sup>346</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

## The Jabbok River (various commentators)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: “Jabbok” is the proper noun *yabboq* (יַבְבֹּק) (*yab-boke*), which is a sixty-mile-long tributary east of the Jordan River and is one of the major streams of the Trans-jordan, originating in the mountains near Ammon, flowing north and then northwest and emptying into the Jordan River about 20 miles north of the Dead Sea.

Wenstrom continues: Today, the “Jabbok” is called the “Wadi Zerqa,” which means, “the blue river.” The “Jabbok” formed a natural boundary and constituted the limit of the territory the nation of Israel dispossessed under Moses (Numbers 21:24; Deuteronomy 2:37; 3:16; Joshua 12:2; Judges 11:13, 22).<sup>347</sup>

Bruce K. Waltke: The river flows through deeply cut canyons for about 50 miles westward from its source, moving from 1900 feet above sea level to 115 feet below sea level.<sup>348</sup>

Some believe (Henry S. Morris, James Burton Coffman<sup>349</sup>) that the Jabbok River received its name from the wrestling match to take place here (between God and Jacob). Although that is a possibility, nowhere do we read that Jacob (or anyone) gave the river its name. It is equally possible that God chose the form of a wrestler as a play on the name of Jabbok. Throughout the Bible, there is a divine playfulness with the Hebrew and Greek languages.

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Genesis 32:22 He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them.

## Genesis 32:22c: The Ford of the Jabbok (various commentators)

Keil and Delitzsch: The ford by which Jacob crossed was hardly the one which he took on his outward journey, upon the Syrian caravan-road by Kalaat-Zerka, but one much farther to the west, between Jebel Ajlun and Jebel Jelaad, through which Buckingham, Burckhardt, and Seetzen passed; and where there are still traces of walls and buildings to be seen, and other marks of cultivation.<sup>350</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: “Ford” is the noun *ma`avar* (מַעְבָּר), which refers to a shallow smooth flowing section of the Jabbok river, which would allow Jacob’s household to walk across to the other side.

Wenstrom continues: Before the construction of bridges, flat stepping stones or timber would be laid across the shallowest and narrowest part of the river to enable one to cross it.<sup>351</sup>

Whedon: *The ford Jabbok* — Or, the crossing place of the Jabbok. This stream is believed to be identical with the modern Wady Zerka, which runs north of Mount Jelad, and empties into the Jordan directly east of Shechem.<sup>352</sup>

We should bear in mind that, even if they are south of the Jabbok River (or north of it), there may be several tributaries which come of the Jabbok and head into the Jordan River. So what we read in this and the next verse could certainly be that they cross over the Jabbok and over an additional tributary which comes off the Jabbok.

<sup>347</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>348</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019, citing Genesis, A Commentary, page 445, Zondervan

<sup>349</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019.

<sup>350</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:23–24.

<sup>351</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>352</sup> *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:22.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Now, Genesis 32:22 records that Jacob sent his household across the Jabbok at night, which is significant. The darkness symbolizes the turmoil that Jacob was experiencing in his soul as he was trying to reconcile Esau's advance with four hundred men and God's promises to be with him and protect him and to return him to the land of Canaan.*<sup>353</sup>

Genesis 32:22 He then rose up in the same night and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children and he crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 32:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âbar (עָבַר) [pronounced ġaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	to cause [make] to pass over, to cause [allow] to pass through, to bring [over, to]; to transmit, to send over; to pass by sin, to cause to pass away, to cause to take away; to remit, to forgive	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
In v. 22, this is in the Qal imperfect; here, it is in the Hiphil imperfect. The Hiphil is the causative stem.			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced NAHKH-al]	brook, torrent, river, stream; valley	masculine singular noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #5158 BDB #636

The Cambridge Bible: *The Jabbok is called a "stream" (naḥal) in Deut. 3:16; Joshua 12:2.*<sup>354</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *The word "valley" (naḥal) represents the bed of a stream, often dry during summer.*<sup>355</sup>

**Translation:** He takes them and sends them across the torrent;...

<sup>353</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>354</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:23.

<sup>355</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 26:17.

The two camps which Jacob appears to have made is the camp of the servants and possessions which he will give to Esau; and the second camp will be his wives and children and all that he owns. I am assuming that Esau is approaching on one side of the Jabbok; and Jacob has taken his wives and children to the other. All of these things are taken across the Jabbok River for safety.

**Interpreting Genesis 32:22 and 23.** There is the problem that vv. 22 and 23 appear to contradict one another. In v. 22, Jacob is taking his family across the Jabbok and in v. 23, he is sending them across a stream.

We have the same verb used twice in this passage: ‘ābar (רָבַע) [pronounced *gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR*], which means, *to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over*. These are the Qal meanings, and this is how it is found in v. 22 (*He then rose up in the same night and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children and he **crossed over** the ford of the Jabbok.*). In v. 23, we have the same verb, but in the Hiphil stem. In the Hiphil, this verb means, *to cause [make] to pass over, to cause [allow] to pass through, to bring [over, to]; to transmit, to send over*. Therefore, v. 23 is translated: *He takes them and **sends them across the torrent; and he takes across [all] that [is] his***. Strong’s #5674 BDB #716. This suggests to me that there are two streams/torrents here; that Jacob brings his family across one, and sends them across another—most likely for safekeeping.

I should point out that the notion of two rivers or streams is a unique interpretation, and no other commentator which I have read sees this the same way (I consult over 40 different commentators from within my e-sword; I will later go online later to consult others). Most understand the ford of the Jabbok in v. 22 to be identical to the stream spoken of in v. 23. The commentator who assumes that this is a reference to the same river, then has to explain the different stems of ‘ābar (רָבַע). One explanation is, there were two traditions or two written accounts which were later woven together; and v. 22 and v. 23 describe the same event; and these verses were just shuffled together side-by-side. This is known as the **JEPD** theory, which I have covered many times in the past. This is an inaccurate approach to the Scriptures. For more information on this theory, see the **Doctrine of Documentary Hypothesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The simpler explanation to me is, there is a smaller stream which intersects the Jabbok at this point, and Jacob puts his family and his possessions on the other side of that intersecting stream. So his family would be safely tucked away to the north, with a tributary and the Jabbok River between them and Jacob. After Jacob’s wrestling match with the Lord and before Jacob meets Esau, he would have to fetch his family and bring them back and travel with him.

In the alternative, Jacob could be guiding and helping his family cross the Jabbok River up to a point where the water is very shallow. So he takes them to that point and then sends them across the portion which remains.

In either case, Jacob will be on one side of the Jabbok and his family and possessions on the other. There may be one or two rivers or streams between them.

I will cover this in points after the next portion of v. 23.

Recall, already in this chapter, that Jacob first set up two camps of his family and possessions; but now he has gathered them up and taken them across the Jabbok River. He cannot seem to figure out what to do about his family. However, even in his prayer, he recalled, “*You said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'*” (ESV; capitalized) Therefore, he ought not be worried about his offspring. God would do right by Jacob—despite his many failures—and bless and multiply his seed.

Genesis 32:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âbar (אָבַר) [pronounced gaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>to cause [make] to pass over, to cause [allow] to pass through, to bring [over, to]; to transmit, to send over; to pass by sin, to cause to pass away, to cause to take away; to remit, to forgive</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...and he takes across [all] that [is] his.

Apparently, all that belongs to him that he is not giving to Esau, goes with his family. This would be his other livestock and slaves. It appears that Jacob is trying to get his family to a safe area.

Jacob knows the promises of God, and yet he does not appear to trust the promises of God, if he is moving his family to a safer location.

When we reach the end of our lives (and Jacob sees that as a real possibility), we often fret over what to do about all of our possessions and all of our family. What do we do to preserve them? Obviously, we know that they are not going with us when we die.

The things moved include *all that is his*. This does not include his present to Esau, as that was sent on ahead in v. 21. So, one camp is the present to Esau, which has been sent out ahead; and a second camp is what Jacob has just established hidden. The remainder of the chapter will have Jacob alone on the other side of the river/stream.

I believe that this move further illustrates the lack of faith that Jacob had. He is so worried that Esau, even after being given these gifts, will kill him and his family, despite what God has promised, he sets them and his possessions even further back so that they can make a run for it if necessary (or just hide out until the coast is clear). We have already seen that Jacob has nowhere to turn to. He cannot go backward or to the left or to the right. So placing his family back a bit further is not really going to help. Recall, that with even three days of a head start, Laban traveling with his men, caught up with Jacob in a matter of seven days. So here we have a half a day's head start on Esau. How stupid. How faithless. Jacob is setting up all these contingency plans that, had he thought them through, would realize that they are not going to work.

The best thing that Jacob could hope for is, Esau would kill him, take the present, and return to the south. Then his family, once Esau is gone, could continue moving into Canaan. It is reasonable that Jacob has given his family instructions of what to do, just in case.

**Genesis 32:23** And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had.

This would appear to be the second camp which he will set up. At first, he was with this camp; but now he moved them off separate from him, on the other side of 1 or 2 rivers and streams. This is the camp which he hopes to protect, in case Esau kills him. His family would have been entrusted into the care of several slaves.

*What he had* refers to all of his animals and slaves, which represents his wealth.

What Jacob has already sent to Esau is a number of slaves, each bearing a gift of animals (which represented wealth in the ancient world). He will himself bivouac in the middle of these two camps or behind the two camps.

**Gen 32:21** So the gift was sent on ahead of him while he remained in the camp that night. (HCSB)

The gift is all of the livestock which Jacob has for Esau. This livestock would all come to Esau first, as a gift. We know that Jacob would be right behind that gift, as each of his servants would say to Esau. In Genesis 33, Jacob's family will be right behind him.

**Genesis 32:23** He takes them and sends them across the torrent; and he takes across [all] that [is] his. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Genesis 32:22–23** He then rose up in the same night and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children and he crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He takes them and sends them across the torrent; and he takes across [all] that [is] his. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Genesis 32:22–23** He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them. He takes his family and sends them over the torrent; and along with them, all that belongs to him. (Kukis paraphrase)

**Gen 32:22–23** During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female slaves, and his 11 sons, and crossed the ford of Jabbok. He took them and brought them across the stream, along with all his possessions. (HCSB)

Jacob was taking his wives and children and separating them out, to hide them away in another camp, in order to protect them, along with his wealth (animals and slaves). That is what he appears to be doing; however, Genesis 33 will suggest something different.

**Do verses 22 and 23 contradict one another?** There is no little confusion about what we read here:

**Genesis 32:22–23** He then rose up in the same night and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children and he crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He takes them and sends them across the torrent; and he takes across [all] that [is] his.

The Cambridge Bible: *According to Genesis 32:22 Jacob had crossed the stream; according to Genesis 32:23 he had not.*<sup>356</sup> This causes them to speculate that these two verses actually came from different sources, which is why they are contradictory.

<sup>356</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:22.

So many skeptics think that the text of the Old Testament was very fluid, and mostly put together hundreds of years after the fact. However, if that were the case, why did no one reading that and fixing it? It is illogical to suggest that the text is fluid, but then for there to be an *apparent* contradiction in side-by-side verses.

1. In v. 22, it sounds as if Jacob takes his wives and children and he crosses over the Jabbok with them. Then, in v. 23, Jacob sends them across the torrent (presumably Jabbok) but does not go with them.
2. There are several options which allow these two verses to stand.
3. The simplest is, there is the Jabbok and then there is another tributary or stream or torrent (which is not unusual). In order for them to get where they want to go, they must cross these two rivers. One river is more powerful and Jacob assists in moving his family through it. He goes across the Jabbok with his family. However, the stream (v. 23) is less powerful, and he can simply his family them to cross it.
4. So, when it comes to hiding his family, Jacob places them on the other side of a river and a stream.
5. This would allow for Jacob to cross the river with his family as per v. 22; but then, to send his family along further, over a stream, but without him.
6. Whether the end result was to place them in a hidden area or to put them right behind the present, we don't know (it is most logical to me that Jacob tries to hide and protect his family).
7. Another option is this: if there is but one river, then it is possible that Jacob went across with most of his family, and then did not complete the crossing, or came back to arrange for the rest to go across. He remains behind.
8. Whatever the exact situation, Jacob's family and servants are in one place, and he is in the other, separated by one or two rivers/streams.

Dr. Peter Pett writes of this passage: *[This passage] hides a more complicated manoeuver. Jacob wants to see everyone and everything safely over the ford and he himself no doubt crossed it a number of times both ways. It was a difficult river to cross. But he himself finally remains on the side away from the others. The repetition is typical of much ancient literature where hearers rather than readers had to be kept in mind. Movement at night was commonplace for caravans and for herdsmen and shepherds. It avoided the heat of the day.*<sup>357</sup>

It is not a big deal if we cannot get a few of these details exactly right. Even though they are pretty big details, we know the important parts of this narrative. An apparent contradiction is set aside if you can present a plausible explanation which removes the contradiction. This does not mean that the explanation is the exact way that things happened; it just gives us one possible solution to the apparent contradiction (so that it is no longer a contradiction).

For a time, Jacob wanted to isolate his family in a separate campsite, separate from everyone else. Is there a time when Jacob has two camps set up? That seems to be the case, both in separate areas. However, when he finally meets Esau, his family will be right behind him. In between these two periods of time, Jacob was confused and perhaps changed his mind a few times. He appears unable to sleep in this passage. He may have been wrestling inside his own head over what to do, mostly because he was wrestling between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint.

So, what we appear to have is this: (1) Jacob's present to Esau has already been sent out ahead of them all. This would be one encampment. (2) Jacob's family and all that he has appears to have been moved across two rivers/streams. Even though it might appear to be closer to Esau, I believe, at this time, they are more hidden. (3) Then, interestingly enough, Jacob remains by himself. If he sent his family across a river and then a stream, Jacob has cross the River Jabbok, but he has not crossed over the stream where his family is. This configuration makes the most sense to me. In the alternative, if there is only one river, Jacob crossed partway over, sent his family and all his possessions all the way over; but he will return to the other side and stay by himself.

<sup>357</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:22–23.

I don't believe that any of the text specifies whether he is now north of the Jabbok or south; but his family would be situated on the other side. I believe that every commentary has him originally coming towards the Jordan River, traveling westward, on a course north of the Jabbok. I would offer two alternate viewpoints: (1) there is a river and a stream, and when Jacob placed his family on the other side of the stream, they are more hidden from Esau's troop. (2) Jacob and his family cross over the Jabbok river to the south some time ago; and he has just move his family north of the Jabbok, further away from Esau. The standard view of this has Jacob's family and possessions closer to Esau, with him on the other side of the Jabbok River. This would place him in a more protected position than his family; and that makes no sense to me.

So, what is going on here? Jacob continually finds himself bivouacked separately from his two camps; and he seems to be caught up between two viewpoints: he is either thinking with human viewpoint, which means that he resorts to scheming and manipulation; or he thinks with divine viewpoint, which means, he depends upon God. This is why this chapter does not always seem to make sense—on the one hand, Jacob prays one of the great prayers of Scripture (vv. 9–12); but, on the other hand, he resorts to human manipulation (vv. 13–23). It is as if Jacob is continually wrestling with God. Will he settle upon human viewpoint or to divine viewpoint thinking?

### Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

1. Most Christians think with a variety of influences—they have the norms and standards that they were raised with, societal norms and standards, and some of what the Bible teaches. Every believer has a mix of each of these in his soul. What varies from believer to believer is which is prominent in his soul.
2. After knowing how to get back into fellowship, the key to the Christian life is being able to think like God. **Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. For I say through the grace which has been given to me to every one who is among you, stop thinking of yourself in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.** (Romans 12:2–3).
3. Very simply stated, divine viewpoint thinking comes from the Bible doctrine in your human spirit and human viewpoint thinking comes from your human soul.
4. A person can be a new believer or an unbeliever and have divine establishment thinking, which are the norms and standards of God designed to preserve a nation. Many times, unbelieving children can learn these norms and standards from doctrinally straight parents; or some people can acquire divine establishment norms and standards from having been in the military.
5. It is possible for unbelievers to have divine establishment viewpoints; and for believers to have **cosmic system thinking** predominant in their souls. See the **Laws of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
6. Arrogance is both a mental attitude sin and an indication of human viewpoint. Believers are warned **But He [God] gives greater grace. Therefore [Scripture] says, "God opposes the proud [or, arrogant], but he gives grace to the humble [or, grace oriented]."** (James 4:6). See also Romans 12:3
7. One form of arrogance is thinking that your norms and standards are superior to those found in the Bible. Your own norms and standards are not divinely inspired; you learned some of these from your parents and these were modified by the society in which you live. Your norms and standards are affected by your friendships, contacts, the laws that you are subject to, your education, along with advertising, movies, television, literature and art. An example of a societal norm which I have seen change from being correct to incorrect is society's view toward homosexuality—when I was young, it was viewed as sin, abnormal and distasteful. Today, much of society believes that homosexuality is simply how a person is born (which is not exactly correct) and, therefore, not a sin (again, incorrect). See the **Doctrine of Homosexuality** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
  - 1) I have recently viewed a television series where a homosexual crush between adolescents was encouraged by every single adult on the show, and that them hanging out together was presented as a date. This is deviant, cosmic system thinking.
  - 2) During the past 20–30 years, I have seen a societal battle to present homosexuality as normal and that anyone who thinks differently is judgmental and hates homosexuals.

## Human Viewpoint Thinking versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking

- 3) I have seen all manner of false statements and assertions being made about the homosexual lifestyle to pretend that it is just exactly like heterosexual relationships, when it is, in fact, not.
- 4) To be clear, homosexual acts are wrong. People who commit such acts are sinners, just like everyone else; and the solution for them is to believe in Jesus Christ.
- 5) No church should ban homosexuals (or any other kind of sinner) from coming in; but a church should ban certain behaviors in its sanctuary or in its parking lot. That is, if a homosexual couple wants to attend a Bible-believing church, then nothing should bar them from attending. However, they should not be allowed to display homosexual affections towards one another while on church grounds.
- 6) One more thing: it is *not* judging to believe that homosexual acts are wrong. This comes right from the Bible. It is not judging to believe that adultery or murder are wrong either.
- 7) At the same time, God did not appoint you or me to follow people around to critique their sins.
8. There is no place in the plan of God for human viewpoint thinking. **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways," declares the LORD (Isaiah 55:8). Therefore, all who are mature should think this way [as Paul has been teaching]. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you also [through the continued teaching of Bible doctrine] (Philip. 3:15). Keep thinking objectively about things above [divine viewpoint] and not about things on the earth [human viewpoint] (Colossians 3:2).**
9. Only the believer in fellowship can learn to think like God, building doctrine upon doctrine. **But the unregenerate man of the highest intellectual attainments is not given access to the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly, and he is not able to come to know them because they are understood in a spiritual realm. But the spiritual man investigates indeed all things, but he himself is not being probed by anyone. For who has come to know experientially the Lord's mind, he who will instruct Him? But as for us, we have the mind of Christ (1Corinthians 2:12–13).** Having the mind of Christ is divine viewpoint, and the apostles were able to teach divine viewpoint.
10. Pastor teachers should make every effort to be teaching from the Word of God to their congregation, instead of human viewpoint. Paul told the Corinthians: **My language and the message I preached were not adorned with pleasing words of worldly wisdom, but they were attended with proof and power given by the Spirit, so that your faith might not be in men's wisdom, but in God's power (1Corinthians 2:4–5).**
11. Acquiring divine viewpoint thinking is a day-by-day process of learning the Word of God. You do not suddenly decide, "I am going to start thinking like God thinks;" and then it happens. You get exposed to human viewpoint approximately 23 hours/day (minus your sleep time); and, ideally, you get exposed to Bible doctrine 1 hour per day. Over time, Bible doctrine will overtake human viewpoint in your thinking—if you are willing.
12. It has been my own personal experience that, many Christians decide, at some point in their lives, whether to believe the Bible or to follow out the norms and standards which they have in their own souls which contract the Bible. This is very likely a decision made many times during a person's life. A believer may go towards divine viewpoint thinking right away; they may not go towards divine viewpoint thinking at any point in their lives; or they may alternate between divine viewpoint thinking and cosmic viewpoint thinking.

In our passage, Jacob appears to be waffling between divine viewpoint thinking and cosmic viewpoint thinking.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

At one time, there was a marvelous repository of doctrines at Grace Bible Church Wichita (which does not appear to be a church, but the creation of a single person). He had a list of 525 doctrines there, all taken from outstanding teachers. Since that site closed down, it is more difficult to find a good doctrinal approach to some doctrines.

### Human Viewpoint versus Divine Viewpoint LINKS

Warren Doud on [human viewpoint](#).

## Human Viewpoint versus Divine Viewpoint LINKS

**Mental Attitude Dynamics** from R. B. Thieme, Jr. (order this booklet).

**Two Viewpoints.**

**Doctrine of the Mental Attitude** (Don Hargrove)

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:22–23 He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them. He takes his family and sends them over the torrent; and along with them, all that belongs to him.

So, what appears to be the case is, Jacob cannot sleep, so he gets up and moves his wives, children and possessions to a place more remote from Esau or to a campsite that is more protected. However, this will not be his final decision. By the time we get to Genesis 33, Jacob will be right there behind his present to Esau and his family will be right behind him.

Genesis 32:22–23 He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them. He takes his family and sends them over the torrent; and along with them, all that belongs to him.

### Where exactly was Jacob moving his family and possessions?

1. Twice in this chapter, Jacob has expressed fear of his brother Esau.
2. In previous chapters, we have studied how Jacob swindled his brother Esau when it came to receiving spiritual blessings.
3. Jacob has already talked about hiding his family off as a second camp. Let me suggest that there are two camps planned: one with his family and servants and animals; and another with just servants and animals, which is his present to Esau.
4. He had put together a present for Esau with a lot of animals and it appears that they were sent out ahead (v. 21). It appears that the original plan was for Jacob to come in behind this gift from a separate camp—a camp which excluded his family.
5. At some point, these two camps appear to have been set up. One camp had been sent out ahead. Esau would see this camp first in its entirety. The other camp would be hidden behind (the one with his family). That appears to be Jacob's original intent and moving his family in the middle of the night seemed to have achieved that goal.
6. At this point in our narrative, it appears that Jacob cannot sleep, and he takes his family and all of his possessions (which would appear to be everything that he expected to keep), and he guides them across the ford of the Jabbok. I think that wherever he moved them, that is an even more secure location.
7. I have suggested that they are actually south of the Jabbok River (which is the side that Esau would come from), and that he moved his family north of the Jabbok. Or, in the alternative, Jacob first led them across the Jabbok (either to the north or south) and then directed them to cross a smaller tributary and to set up camp in a more hidden location.
8. In any case, Jacob would spend that night separate from this camp. The encampment of his family is logically in a more secure location.
9. Based upon this, we have two logical options: Jacob is in a place most easily discoverable by Esau and his men, or his camp of women and children would be most easily discoverable by Esau.
10. Logically, for Jacob to be worried, unable to sleep, and thinking that he might do something about what happens, it seems to me that he would take his family and all that he has and hide them as best he can.
11. So, in one place, there is his present and the servants who would present his present. In another place

## Where exactly was Jacob moving his family and possessions?

- is his family and the remainder of his possessions; and, by himself, is Jacob.
12. What is logical is, Jacob's family, for this night, are hidden farthest from Esau. It appears that they might be on the other side of two rivers and streams.
  13. His present is probably closest to Esau.
  14. Jacob himself is alone, somewhere between his family and the present.
  15. When we get to Genesis 33, Jacob is clearly right behind his present; and his wife and children appear to be right behind him. So, this represents a change from all the movement that we are studying in this chapter.
  16. Therefore, even though it is logical that Jacob took steps to shield his family this night, in the morning, he will have his family right behind him, and they will all march in behind the present that he sends ahead to Esau.

To the best of my memory, I don't recall any verse that seems to indicate that, Jacob had a change of mind and therefore, brought his family in right behind his present. I think we can simply take that for granted.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



**Jabbok River** (a modern photo); from [Bible places](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

Interestingly enough, Bible Places is one of the few sources which has Jacob traveling along the south side of the Jabbok. Therefore, if he moves his family to the other side of the river, this moves them further away from Esau.

From Bible Places: *In almost any reconstruction of Jacob's journey back to the Promised Land, he traveled down this*

*valley pictured at right. Scholars debate the locations of Penuel and Mahanaim (see below), but everyone locates these sites somewhere in connection with this river. The natural terrain of this part of the valley would suggest that Jacob traveled on the south (right) side of the river at this point.*<sup>358</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary, on the other hand, has Jacob north of the Jabbok and crossing over to the south to meet Esau:



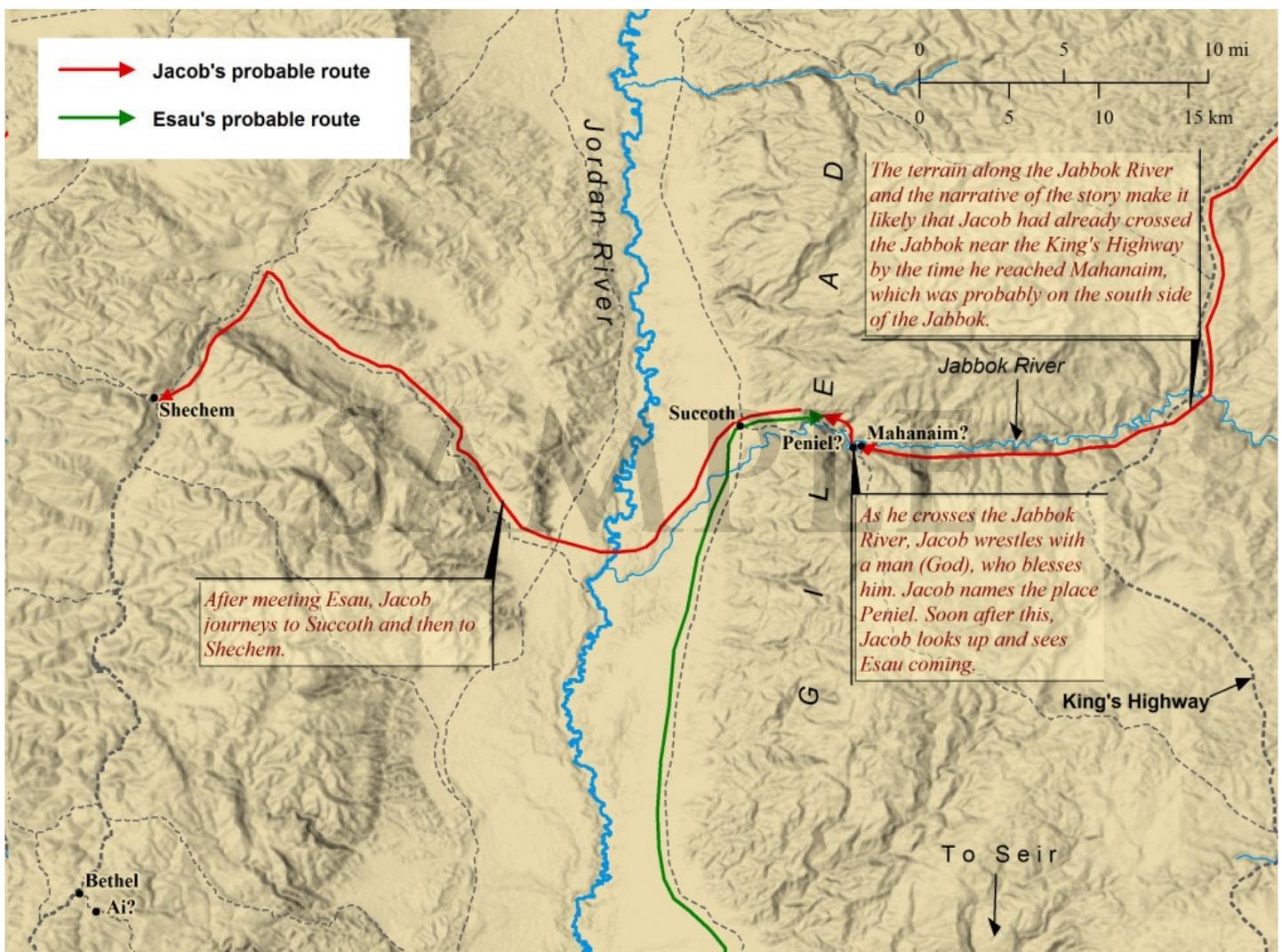
<sup>358</sup> From <https://www.bibleplaces.com/jabbok/> accessed March 7, 2019.

[Jacob] turned his back upon the Jabbok, having crossed to the south bank, if the previous night had been spent upon its north side, passed over the rising ground of Peniel, and advanced to meet his brother.<sup>359</sup>

**Fords of the Jabbok** (a modern photo); from [Bible places](#); accessed March 7, 2019. I believe that this view is from the west side, right before the Jabbok runs into the Jordan (the Jordan River cannot be seen in this photo).

From Bible Places: According to Genesis, Jacob first met the “angels of God” and named the site Mahanaim (“camps”; Gen 32:1-2). Mahanaim, according to this author, is the closer hill on the right side of the photo. From here, Jacob began to send waves of gifts to his brother Esau. Because he feared Esau and the 400 men with him, Jacob divided his family into two groups, and sent a gift of animals from his flock to Esau.<sup>360</sup>

**A Closer View of the Routes of Jacob and Esau** (a map); from [Bible Mapper.com](#); accessed March 31, 2019. You will note that they also see Jacob as coming along the southern bank of the Jabbok, which logically aligns with Jacob moving his family, initially, north of the Jabbok for their safety.



J. Vernon McGee: *This is the night of the great experience in Jacob's life. The land where he crossed the Brook Jabbok is very desolate. When I was there, I purposely got away from my group and took*

<sup>359</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–2.

<sup>360</sup> From <https://www.bibleplaces.com/jabbok/> accessed March 7, 2019.

*a walk across the bridge that is there today. The United States built a very lovely road through that area for the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan. There are several things in that area which you would not be able to see if there wasn't that good road, because it is quite a wilderness area. I took pictures of sheep that were drinking down at the Brook Jabbok. The crossing there is a very bleak place, right down between two hills, in that very mountainous and very rugged country. Here is where Jacob came that night. He is not a happy man, and he is filled with fear and doubts. You see, chickens are coming home to roost. He had mistreated Esau. God had never told him to get the birthright or the blessing in the way he did it. God would have gotten it for him. That night Jacob sends all that he has across the Brook Jabbok, but he stays on the other side so that, if his brother Esau comes, he might kill Jacob but spare the family. And so Jacob is left alone.<sup>361</sup>*

Jacob appears to be wavering between the faith that he expresses in his prayer (vv. 9–12) and his last-minute, human viewpoint solutions to protect his family from Esau (vv. 13–23).

Elijah, on Mount Carmel, spoke to the people of Israel, who could not seem to make up their minds whether to follow God or Baal. *Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.* (1Kings 18:21; NIV; capitalized) I think that this best describes Jacob at this point in his life—does he follow divine viewpoint or human viewpoint? Jacob's actions in this and the next chapter appear to be contradictory; but that is most easily explained by him wavering between two opinions.

I have read several opinions expressed by excellent commentators who believe that, in some way, vv. 13–23 continue to reveal Jacob's great faith, first revealed by his prayer (and vv. 9–12 do represent a marvelous prayer). The reason I disagree with this viewpoint is, the remainder of this chapter will be about Jacob wrestling with God. Now, if Jacob is moving in the right direction, first revealed in his prayer and then revealed by his actions in vv. 13–23, then *why does God need to wrestle with him?* Why can't God come to Jacob that night and give him the Big Thumbs Up? "Looks like you got this handled," God might say, "Go head on, My friend." But this is not God's interaction with Jacob in vv. 24–31. "At first you seem like a believer moving in the right direction and then you appear to be Chicken Little running around with your head cut off," might better describe what God would say to Jacob at this point.

So many commentators gush about how Jacob needed to take some time to commune with God; his alone time (Wenstrom, an outstanding commentator/teacher, answering the question, *why did Jacob do all of this last minute stuff the night before?*; writes: *Jacob wanted to be alone with God in prayer before his meeting with Esau the next morning.*<sup>362</sup>). Many commentators take this position. But that is not what is happening. Jacob is in a panic. He believes that he might die tomorrow. He can't sleep; he gets up and moves his family to a more secure location; and he still cannot sleep. He knows the doctrine; so where is his faith in God's Word? Why is Jacob not sleeping like a baby right now? He is struggling between faith in God and his fear of Esau. Which of those two positions controls Jacob's thinking, is key to whether he is in fellowship with God or not. Most of this past day or two, Jacob has been out of fellowship. He has the doctrine; he knows what is going on; and he has been directed back to the land directly by God. And yet, with all of that, he is afraid of his brother Esau. Do you ever get the impression that God might be looking at Jacob right now and thinking, "I need to knock some sense into that boy"?

**Application:** When examining and commenting on any particular chapter or set of actions in Scripture, I need to carefully evaluate them. That is what I am attempting to do. I am not saying, by this commentary, that I could have done a better job in the same circumstances as Jacob. I have to view each person and each set of actions with a critical eye, not claiming that I could have done it better; but that Jacob should have done it better.

**Application:** How many times has God looked at you or me and thought, "I need to knock some sense into that boy"?

<sup>361</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>362</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

God's wrestling match with Jacob is going to be emblematic of God's relationship with nation Israel throughout time. Even the Jewish unbeliever today who reads his own history must be struck by the number of times that his own ancestors have been at odds with their Patient God.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### Jacob's Night Alone, Wrestling with God

As mentioned earlier, some translations place the first phrase of v. 24 with v. 23.

Good News Bible <sup>22</sup>That same night Jacob got up, took his two wives, his two concubines, and his eleven children, and crossed the Jabbok River. <sup>23</sup>After he had sent them across, he also sent across all that he owned, <sup>24</sup>but he stayed behind, alone.

Jacob moves his family to safety; and then returns to be by himself. Then, something very unusual occurs.

Rev. James Hastings asks the question: *And now, when all things seem against him, and God Himself sets Himself as an adversary to him, in this darkest hour, in this night of the soul, of which the actual night during which this conflict found place was but the outward sign, can he lay hold on the promises and still hope and trust and believe?* <sup>363</sup>

Arthur Pink: *This passage introduces us to a most important crisis in the life of Jacob. The book of Genesis presents our patriarch in two characters, as he is exhibited to us as Jacob and as Israel; the one looking at the natural man, and the other at the spiritual man, the one telling of how Divine grace found him and the other of what Divine grace made him- this will become clearer as we continue these studies, if the Lord will. We are now to consider the memorable occasion when Jacob formally received his new name of Israel, when he who was rightly termed "the supplanter" became known as "God commands."* <sup>364</sup>

Let me ask the question, *can you win when you are in conflict with God?*

**And so is left Jacob to alone and so wrestles a man with him as far as the rising of the dawn. And so He sees that He has not prevailed to him and so He touches a hollow of his thigh, and so put out of joint a hollow of a thigh of Jacob in his wrestling with him.**

Genesis  
32:24–25

**So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. He realizes [lit., sees] that He will not prevail regarding him, so the Man [lit., he] injures the hollow of his thigh; He put the hollow of Jacob's thigh out of joint by wrestling with him.**

**So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. The Angel realizes that He will not win against him. Therefore, the Man injures the hollow of Jacob's thigh, which He knocked out of joint by wrestling with him.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so is left Jacob to alone and so wrestles a man with him as far as the rising of the dawn. And so He sees that He has not prevailed to Him and so He touches a

<sup>363</sup> *Great Texts of the Bible*; edited by the Rev. James Hastings, D.D.; Pub. 1911–1916; from E-sword; Genesis 32:24.

<sup>364</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

	hollow of his thigh, and so put out of joint a hollow of a thigh of Jacob in his wrestling with him.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob remained alone; and a Man wrestled with him till the morning ascended. And he saw that he prevailed not with him, and he touched the hollow [Or, "the palm."] of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was dislocated [Or, "moved."] in wrestling with him.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob remained alone <u>beyond the Jubeka; and an Angel contended with him in the likeness of a man. And he said, Hast thou not promised to give the tenth of all that is thine? And, behold, thou hast ten sons and one daughter: nevertheless thou hast not tithed them. Immediately he set apart the four firstborn of the four mothers, and there remained eight. And he began to number from Shimeon, and Levi came up for the tenth.</u> <u>Michael answered and said, Lord of the world is Thy lot. And on account of these things he (Michael) remained from God at the torrent till the column of the morning was ascending. And he saw that he had not power to hurt him,</u> and he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jakob's thigh was distorted in his contending with him.
Revised Douay-Rheims	He remained alone: and behold a man wrestled with him till morning. And when he saw that he could not overcome him, he touched the sinew of his thigh, and forthwith it shrank.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub was left alone, and wrestled with a man there until the breaking of the day. When he saw that he did not prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Ya'aqub's thigh was strained, as he wrestled.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob was left alone; and there a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when the man saw that he did not prevail 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.
Septuagint (Greek)	Peniel - Jacob is named Israel Gn.32.22-32 And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him till the morning. And he saw that he prevailed not against him; and he touched the broad part of his thigh, and the broad part of Jacob's thigh was benumbed in his wrestling with him.
Significant differences:	One of the targums has a massive amount of additional text. Jacob's name is missing from the Latin in the final phrase. Also, the final phrase seems to differ slightly in the different translation.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob was by himself; and a man was fighting with him till dawn. But when the man saw that he was not able to overcome Jacob, he gave him a blow in the hollow part of his leg, so that his leg was damaged.
Easy English	Jacob was alone. And a man came and fought with him. The man [This man was God who came to Jacob as an angel. (See Hosea 12:4-5.)] fought with Jacob until it was day. The man saw that he was not beating Jacob. So, he touched Jacob's hip ['Hip' is part of the body. It is at the top of the leg.]. And Jacob's hip broke as he fought with the man. Jacob fought with the man (God). Jacob was showing that he was stronger. But this man still broke Jacob's hip.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	<b>The Fight With God</b> Jacob was left alone, and a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun came up. When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he touched Jacob's leg and put it out of joint.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then a man came and wrestled with him until just before daybreak. When the man saw that he was not winning the struggle, he hit Jacob on the hip, and it was thrown out of joint.

<i>The Message</i>	But Jacob stayed behind by himself, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he couldn't get the best of Jacob as they wrestled, he deliberately threw Jacob's hip out of joint.
Names of God Bible	So Jacob was left alone. Then a man wrestled with him until dawn. When the man saw that he could not win against Jacob, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that it was dislocated as they wrestled.
NIRV	So Jacob was left alone. A man wrestled with him until morning. The man saw that he couldn't win. So he touched the inside of Jacob's hip. As Jacob wrestled with the man, Jacob's hip was twisted.
New Simplified Bible	Then Jacob was by himself. A man was fighting with him till dawn. The man saw that he was not able to overcome Jacob. He gave him a blow in the hollow part of his thigh, so that his leg was damaged.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	Jacob stayed behind, alone. A man came and wrestled him until it was almost sunrise. The man hadn't won the match yet so he hit Jacob on the thigh, dislocating Jacob's hip.
Common English Bible	But Jacob stayed apart by himself, and a man wrestled with him until dawn broke. When the man saw that he couldn't defeat Jacob, he grabbed Jacob's thigh and tore a muscle in Jacob's thigh as he wrestled with him.
Contemporary English V.	Afterwards, Jacob went back and spent the rest of the night alone. A man came and fought with Jacob until just before daybreak. When the man saw that he could not win, he struck Jacob on the hip and threw it out of joint.
The Living Bible	But during the night he got up and wakened his two wives and his two concubines and eleven sons, and sent them across the Jordan River at the Jabbok ford with all his possessions, then returned again to the camp and was there alone; and a Man wrestled with him until dawn. And when the Man saw that he couldn't win the match, he struck Jacob's hip and knocked it out of joint at the socket. Previous verses are included for context.
New Berkeley Version	So Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until daybreak, who, when he saw he was not throwing him, struck his hip socket, so that Jacob's thigh was dislocated in his wrestling with him.
New Life Version	Then Jacob was left alone. And a man fought with him until morning. When the man saw that he was not winning he touched the joint of Jacob's thigh. And Jacob's thigh was put out of joint while he fought with him.
New Living Translation	This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. When the man saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it out of its socket.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	It was there that while Jacob was all by himself, a man came and wrestled with him until the next morning. [And when the man] saw that he wasn't going to win, he touched the upper part of Jacob's thigh, which became numb as they wrestled.
Beck's American Translation	When Jacob was left behind alone, Someone wrestled with him till the dawn came; and when He saw He couldn't master Jacob, He struck the joint of Jacob's hip, so that it was dislocated as He wrestled with him.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And now he had set down all that was his on the further side, and he was left there alone. And there one appeared to him who wrestled with him until the day broke. At last, finding that he could not get the better of Jacob, he touched the sinew of his thigh, which all at once withered;... V. 23 is included for context.

Translation for Translators So Jacob was left there alone. But a man came and wrestled with him until dawn. When the man realized that he was not winning against Jacob, he struck Jacob's hip and caused the thigh bone to pull away from the hip socket.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Jacob was to remain there, and was to wrestle a man to the coming up of the dawn. He was to perceive - is he to have overcome him? - Even he was to touch the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was to be dislocated as he wrestled.

Conservapedia Jacob was left alone, and he wrestled with a man [The "man" is undoubtedly a Messenger of God, i.e. an angel.] until the rising of the dawn When the stranger realized that he was not winning against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh. The hollow of Jacob's thigh was dislocated as he wrestled with the man.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible Jacob, however, was left alone by himself, and a man wrestled with him until the departure of the darkness. He saw, however, that he was not equal to him, so he touched him in the hollow of the thigh, and struck the hollow of the thigh of Jacob whilst wrestling with him.

God's Truth (Tyndale) And there wrestled a man with him unto the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he could not prevail against him, he smote him under the thigh, and the sinew of Jacobs thigh shrank as he wrestled with him.

Lexham English Bible And Jacob remained alone, and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the dawn. And when he saw that he could not prevail against him, he struck his hip socket, so that Jacob's hip socket was sprained as he wrestled with him.

Tree of Life Version  
**Jacob Wrestles With God**  
 So Jacob remained all by himself. Then a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When He saw that He had not overcome him, He struck the socket of his hip, so He dislocated the socket of Jacob's hip when He wrestled with him.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible And Jacob was left separate, and a Man wrestled with him until the ascending of the dawn. And he saw that he did not prevail over him, and he struck him in the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

New American Bible (2002) After he had taken them across the stream and had brought over all his possessions, Jacob was left there alone. Then some man [Some man: a messenger of the Lord in human form, as is clear from ⇒ Genesis 32:29-31] wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When the man saw that he could not prevail over him, he struck Jacob's hip at its socket, so that the hip socket was wrenched as they wrestled. The previous verse is included for context.

New American Bible (2011) Jacob was left there alone. Then a man\* wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When the man saw that he could not prevail over him, he struck Jacob's hip at its socket, so that Jacob's socket was dislocated as he wrestled with him [Hos 12:5].  
**A man:** as with Abraham's three visitors in chap. 18, who appear sometimes as three, two, and one (the latter being God), this figure is fluid; he loses the match but changes Jacob's name (v. 29), an act elsewhere done only by God (17:5, 15). A few deft narrative touches manage to express intimate contact with Jacob while preserving the transcendence proper to divinity.

New Jerusalem Bible And Jacob was left alone. Then someone wrestled with him until daybreak who, seeing that he could not master him, struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with him.

Revised English Bible After he had sent them across the wadi with all that he had, Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him there till daybreak. When the man saw that he could

not get the better of Jacob, he struck him in the hollow of his thigh, so that Jacob's hip was dislocated as they wrestled. V. 23 is included for context.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then some man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he did not defeat Ya'akov, he struck Ya'akov's hip socket, so that his hip was dislocated while wrestling with him.
exeGesex companion Bible	<b><u>YAAQOV WRESTLES</u></b> And Yaaqov remains alone; and there a man wrestles with him until the ascending of the dawn: and when he sees that he prevails not against him, he touches the hollow of his flank; and the hollow of the flank of Yaaqov dislocates as he wrestles with him:.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Jacob's hip at its socket, so that the socket of his hip was strained as he wrestled with him.
Kaplan Translation	Jacob remained alone. A stranger [According to tradition, this was Samael, guardian angel of Esau and the incarnation of Evil (Bereshith Rabbah 77; Rashi; Zohar). See Hosea 12:4,5. Jacob's wrestling with him would symbolize the struggle with evil that he and his descendants would have from this time forth (Bachya; See Handbook of Jewish Thought 4:29). According to others, it was a holy angel, symbolizing Jacob's future struggles with the spiritual (Targum Yonathan; Tanchuma).] [appeared and] wrestled with him until just before daybreak. When [the stranger] saw that he could not defeat him, he touched the upper joint of [Jacob's] thigh [Or 'hip socket,' i.e. where the thigh joins the hip. See note on Genesis 24:3. This denotes that although Jacob was victorious in his struggles, his children would suffer. See Genesis 34:2.]. Jacob's hip joint became dislocated as he wrestled with [the stranger].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov was left by himself; and there wrestled an ish with him until the shachar (dawn, sunup). And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he struck his hip socket; so Ya'akov's hip socket dislocated while he wrestled with him.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	<b>Jacob Wrestles</b> So Jacob was left alone, and a Man [came and] wrestled with him until daybreak. When the Man saw that He had not prevailed against Jacob, He touched his hip joint; and Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with Him.
The Expanded Bible	So Jacob was alone, and a man came and wrestled with him until the sun came up [daybreak]. When the man saw he could not defeat Jacob, he struck Jacob's hip [hip socket] and put it out of joint [as he wrestled with him].
Kretzmann's Commentary	<b>Verses 24-32</b> The Struggle at Peniel And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day, until the morning dawned and its brightness arose in the eastern sky. Jacob, having crossed first with his family, returned and sent over his herds in charge of the servants, while he himself remained on the north side of the brook. Suddenly there came upon him a nameless man, and the two engaged in a fierce wrestling-match. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, when the unknown man found that he could not overcome the determined resistance of

Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, the socket of the hip-joint. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. His hip was sprained or paralyzed in consequence of the twisting in the struggle and the touch of the unknown man.

NET Bible®

So Jacob was left alone. Then a man wrestled with him until daybreak [*Heb* “until the rising of the dawn.”]. When the man [*Heb* “he”; the referent (the man) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] saw that he could not defeat Jacob [*Heb* “him”; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], he struck [Or “injured”; traditionally “touched.” The Hebrew verb translated “struck” has the primary meanings “to touch; to reach; to strike.” It can, however, carry the connotation “to harm; to molest; to injure.” God’s “touch” cripples Jacob – it would be comparable to a devastating blow.] the socket of his hip so the socket of Jacob’s hip was dislocated while he wrestled with him.

The Pulpit Commentary

And Jacob was left alone (probably on the north bank of the Jabbok; but vide on Genesis 32:23); and there wrestled—thus assaulting in his strong point one who had been a wrestler or heel-catcher from his youth (Murphy). The old word נִפְּחַק, *niph.* of נָפַח, unused, a dehorn, from נָפַח, dust, because in wrestling the dust is raised (Aben Ezra, Gesenius), or a weakened form of נָפַח, to wind round, to embrace (Furst), obviously contains an allusion to the Jabbok (vide on Genesis 32:22)—a man—called an angel by Hosea (Genesis 12:4), and God by Jacob (verse 30); but vide infra—with him until the breaking of the day—literally, the ascending of the morning. And when he (the unknown wrestler) saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched—not struck (Knobel)—the hollow of his thigh (literally, the socket of the hip); and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him—literally, in his wrestling with him.

The Voice

Later that same night, Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his 11 children; and he crossed the Jabbok River. He sent them all *ahead* across the stream along with everything he had; but Jacob *stayed behind*, left alone *in his distress and doubt*. *In the twilight of his anguish*, an *unknown* man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw he was not winning the battle with Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was thrown out of joint as he continued to wrestle with him. The two previous verses are included for context.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.

...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> was reserved by himself and he was grappling a man with him until the going up of the dawn, and he saw that he was not able and he touched with the palm of his midsection and the palm of the midsection of Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> was dislocated in his grappling with him,...

Concordant Literal Version

And left is Jacob alone. And wrestling is a Man with him till the ascending of the dawn. And seeing is he that he does not prevail against Him. Yet touching is He the palm of his thighbone. And strained is the palm of Jacob's thighbone in his wrestling with Him.

Darby Translation

And Jacob remained alone; and a man wrestled with him until the rising of the dawn. And when he saw that he did not prevail against him, he touched the joint of his thigh; and the joint of Jacob's thigh was dislocated as he wrestled with him.

NASB

#### Jacob Wrestles

Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob’s thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him.

New European Version

Jacob was left alone, and wrestled with a man there until the breaking of the day. When he saw that he didn’t prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was strained, as he wrestled.

Third Millennium Bible And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when the man 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.

Young's Updated LT And Jacob is left alone, and one wrestles with him till the ascending of the dawn. And he sees that he is not able for him, and he comes against the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh is disjointed in his wrestling with him.

**The gist of this passage:** When Jacob is alone, he finds himself wrestling with a man until dawn; and when the man cannot seem to defeat Jacob, he touches Jacob's thigh and it is caused to be dislocated as a result.

24-25

Genesis 32:24a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâthar (יָתַר) [pronounced yaw-THAHR]	<i>to be left over, to be left behind, to remain; to excel, to be superior [to the rest]; to gain a victory</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3498 BDB #451
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bad (בַּד) [pronounced bahd]	<i>separation, by itself, alone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #905 BDB #94

Together, the lâmed preposition and bad (בַּד) mean *in a state of separation, by itself, alone, only; apart.*

**Translation:** So Jacob is left alone...

Jacob has gotten one camp together which will present a gift to Esau and they are moving toward the west and then they will turn south (presumably). And Jacob has left the other camp behind, which is his family, as far away as possible, on the other side of the Jabbok and possibly across another tributary.

Now, Jacob needs to be behind his servants because that is what he told them he would be.

Jacob is in the middle of the two camps. Behind him is his family, entrusted to the care of several slaves. They probably have many animals in that camp, which represent his wealth. In front of him are many of his slaves leading many animals as a present for Esau. Jacob has gone between the two camps, to organize everything, and now he is between them both and apparently alone.

In some ways, this parallels his time in Bethel, 20 years ago, when he was leaving Canaan. He was alone<sup>365</sup> when he left Canaan to go towards Haran. At that time he had seen angels traveling between heaven and earth (Genesis 28:10–22). In both instances, he is alone; and in both instances, there is contact with angels (when he

<sup>365</sup> It is very likely that he went with his nanny, Deborah, who is not mentioned until she dies in Genesis 35:8.

left and when he returned, he saw visions<sup>366</sup> of angels). For the rest of this chapter, Jacob will wrestle a particular angel.

I was surprised as to how many generally good commentators spoke of Jacob taking this time to himself to petition the Lord in prayer; or to spent much of the night in prayer.<sup>367</sup> If that were the case, I would then posit that there would be no wrestling match as there would be no need for one. Our Lord could spend a significant portion of His public ministry in communion with His Father. But Jacob? Everything that we know about Jacob thus far is, he is scheming, indecisive, afraid, and despite offering a wonderful prayer, there is nothing to indicate that his focus is now upon God and His promises to the line of promise. Too often in his life—and even right now—Jacob acts as if everything depends upon him.

Jacob is in a place of half-trust in God. He places his family on the other side of the Jabbok because he is worries that Esau will kill him and everyone with him. But, he still goes out to face Esau with the river at his back (quite honestly speaking, Jacob may have little choice at this point).

David Guzik makes an important point here: *God had to get Jacob alone before He dealt with him. While all the hustle and bustle of the huge entourage was with Jacob, he could busy himself with a thousand different tasks. But once he was alone, God could command his attention.*<sup>368</sup>

Arthur Pink: *"And Jacob was left alone." In this sentence we have the first key to the incident we are now considering. On these words it has been well said, "To be left alone with God is the only true way of arriving at a just knowledge of ourselves and our ways. We can never get a true estimate of nature and all its actings until we have weighed them in the balances of the sanctuary, and there we may ascertain their real worth. No matter what we may think about ourselves, nor yet what man may think about us, the great question is, What does God think about us? And the answer to this question can only be learned when we are left alone." Away from the world, away from self, away from all the thoughts, reasonings, imaginings, and emotions of mere nature, and alone with God, '- thus, and thus alone, can we get a correct judgment about ourselves.'* (C. H. M).<sup>369</sup>

Jacob was famous for getting bogged down in complex, non-spiritual matters. However, now, he is alone. God can meet him one-on-one. Jacob, unfortunately, is not like his grandfather Abraham. God could speak to Abraham and he would take it in and act on it. Jacob is not like that. Jacob was more like us.

Genesis 32:22–24a Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. So he took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across all he had. So Jacob was left alone. (Ron Snider)

### Summary Genesis 32:22–24a (by Ron Snider)

1. Jacob proceeds with his plan to appease Esau, having sent over the five separate flocks which would meet Esau in the morning.
2. He now makes plans to send everyone else across the river Jabbok.
3. During the night he readied Rachel and Leah alone with their servants and children and sent them across a smaller portion of the river.
4. The eleven children obviously refers only to the boys, since we know of at least one daughter who has been born.
5. He stays on the N. side of the Jabbok, and sends them all across to the south side.

<sup>366</sup> I believe what Jacob saw was real; that God allowed him both times to peer into another dimension which existed side-by-side his own world.

<sup>367</sup> Gill as one example. Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>368</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:22–23.

<sup>369</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019 (slightly edited).

## Summary Genesis 32:22–24a (by Ron Snider)

6. Jacob has sent the flocks, his possessions and now last of all, his family across the stream.
7. He stayed behind out of fear, hoping that if Esau was still inclined to kill him, that his rage would be spent by the time he reached him.
8. Jacob is willing to sacrifice everything and everyone due to his fear, even his wife and children.
9. He is alone on the north bank of the river.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

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### Genesis 32:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾābaq (קָבַח) [pronounced aw-BAHK]	<i>to wrestle, to grapple; to get dirty</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #79 BDB #7
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The verb translated “wrestled” (קָבַחַי, vayye’aveq) sounds in Hebrew like the names “Jacob” (יַעֲקֹב, ya’aqov) and “Jabbok” (קְבוֹי, yabboq). In this way the narrator links the setting, the main action, and the main participant together in the mind of the reader or hearer.</i><sup>370</sup></p>			
<p>William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: <i>“Wrestled” is the niphal form of the verb `avaq (קָבַח) (aw-vak) and is a play on the name “Jabbok,” which means, “Wrestler” and Jacob’s name, which means, “heel catcher.” So to paraphrase this word play, we could say that the Lord “Yabboked” Jacob or “He Jacobed” him.</i><sup>371</sup></p>			
<p>Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary: <i>[This Hebrew] word only occurs in this place.</i><sup>372</sup></p>			
<p><i>Wrestling and struggling</i> are found throughout the Old and New Testaments: Genesis 30:8 Luke 13:24 22:44 Romans 8:26–27 15:30 Ephesians 6:12, 18 Colossians 2:1 4:12 Hebrews 5:7.<sup>373</sup></p>			
ʾīysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
<p>The NET Bible: <i>Reflecting Jacob’s perspective at the beginning of the encounter, the narrator calls the opponent simply “a man.” Not until later in the struggle does Jacob realize his true identity.</i><sup>374</sup></p>			
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced ġahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723

<sup>370</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 9, 2016.

<sup>371</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>372</sup> *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:2432.

<sup>373</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>374</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 9, 2016.

Genesis 32:24b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘âlâh (אָלַח) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>a rising of, a coming up of, an ascending of, a climbing of, a springing up, a shooting forth of</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
shachar (שָׁחַר) [pronounced SHAH-khahr]	<i>dawn, morning; felicity [a dawning after misery]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #7837 BDB #1007

**Translation:** ...and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.

We suddenly have a very unusual situation here. Jacob finds himself in a wrestling match and it appears that he is wrestling with the Revealed God. This man that Jacob meets is a theophany; he is a manifestation of God prior to the incarnation. God reveals Himself in a number of ways: as a man, an angel, a burning bush, a cloud, etc. Here, God is a wrestler.

There is no reason to think that this is a vision or a dream or an out-of-body experience. The rule of thumb for the Bible is, unless you are given overwhelming evidence to think that something is different from what it is described (in this case, believing this to be a dream that Jacob has rather than an actual fight), we accept the events as literally stated. So we accept this as a literal wrestling match between Jacob and a manifestation of God, which is another man, Jacob's Opponent.

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.

### Genesis 32:24b: Jacob the wrestler (various commentators)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Notice, that the Lord initiates the wrestling match and not Jacob since it states that the Lord "wrestled with Jacob" and not "Jacob wrestled with the Man." Jacob did "not" want to wrestle anybody.*

Wenstrom continues: *Remember, he had just left his uncle Laban who abused him for twenty years and now he is about to face his old rival, Esau who had sought to kill him in the past. Therefore, the last thing that Jacob wanted to do was pick a fight with someone.*<sup>375</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *Jacob didn't want to wrestle anybody. He has Uncle Laban in back of him who doesn't mean good at all, and he has his brother Esau ahead of him. Jacob is no match for either one. He is caught now between a rock and a hard place, and he doesn't know which way to turn. Do you think he wanted to take on a third opponent that night? I don't think so.*

McGee continues: *Years ago Time magazine, reporting in the sports section concerning the votes for the greatest wrestler, said that not a vote went to the most famous athlete in history, wrestling Jacob. Lo and behold, the magazine received a letter from someone who wrote asking them to tell something about this wrestler Jacob. The writer of the letter had never heard of him before! And evidently he had never read his Bible at all. Jacob is no wrestler — let's make that very clear here at the beginning. That night he was alone because he wanted to be alone, and he wasn't looking for a fight.*<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>376</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.

### Genesis 32:24b: Who or what is Jacob wrestling? (Various commentators)

Benson: *There wrestled a man with him* — The eternal Word, or Son of God, who often appeared in a human shape, before he assumed the human nature.<sup>377</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: Here the person is called a "man" (BDB 35, ish, cf. Genesis 32:6), but the context implies it was a physical manifestation of Deity (cf. Genesis 32:28; Genesis 32:30; Genesis 18:1-2). However, Genesis 32:26 implies some kind of angelic creature.

Utley continues: YHWH appears to Jacob several times (cf. Genesis 28:10-22; Genesis 32:22-31; Genesis 35:9-13; Genesis 46:2-4) and each time it is the character and promises of God that are emphasized. The key element is not Jacob (or his acts), but God and His covenant promises.<sup>378</sup>

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: In Hosea 12:4-5, the man who wrestled with Jacob is called the angel, and the Lord of Hosts. In Genesis 32:30, Jacob calls him God.<sup>379</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: Hosea 12:4 says that Jacob "wrestled with the angel" whereas Hosea 12:3 says that Jacob "contended with God," and Hosea 12:5 calls the angel "the Lord is His name," thus identifying the angel as God. Therefore, the context of Hosea 12:3-5 and Genesis 32:24-32 indicates quite clearly that the "man" that Jacob wrestled with was a preincarnate appearance of the Son of God.

Wenstrom then makes this observation, which I am thinking about: [The human author] under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit does not immediately identify to the reader that it was the Lord that Jacob was wrestling with in order to heighten the story's tension and to draw the reader in. Jacob is alone, unprotected, and in the dark and now he is attacked by some man, which would cause the reader to take notice. Therefore, we see Jacob left alone in prayer with God and then an unidentified man initiates a wrestling match with him at night.<sup>380</sup>

At the **end** of this narrative, I will ask this question again.

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Genesis 32:24 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.

### Genesis 32:24b: Christophany or Theophany (by William E. Wenstrom, Jr.)

"Man" is the noun *ish* (אִישׁ) (eesh), which refers to the Son of God prior to becoming a human being permanently in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and is therefore a "theophany" or "Christophany."

The words "theophany" or "Christophany" are technical theological terms used to refer to a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Joshua 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). Therefore, in the Old Testament a "theophany" or "Christophany" were appearances of the "preincarnate" Christ.

The word "incarnate" is from the Latin, *in* and *caro*, whose stem *carn* means, "flesh." Therefore, the term "preincarnate" means before the Son of God became a human being permanently in Bethlehem.

There are three stages in the career of the Lord Jesus Christ: (1) "Preincarnate": Eternity past as the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Son of God. (2) "Incarnate": Virgin birth through the 1st Advent to the resurrection. (3) "Glorified Incarnate": Resurrection and on into eternity future.

<sup>377</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>378</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

<sup>379</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–32.

<sup>380</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

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**Gustave Doré, Jacob Wrestling with the Angel (1855)** (a graphic); from [wikipedia](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

Now, even though we accept this as a literal event with an actual conversation and a literal physical outcome, that does not mean that there are not further spiritual implications. That is, we should understand this, not as some random event that just happened, but a situation which has meaning. There is a spiritual dimension to this wrestling match—that is, even though it is a literal wrestling match between two men, it has meaning for Jacob to know and consider; and meaning for us as well. This is why God the Holy Spirit, the Divine Editor, included this event in the narrative.



This wrestling match describes Jacob's relationship with God over a long period of time. Jacob continually has been at odds with God, always trying to do things his own way. Jacob has been wrestling with God all of his life.

We might see this wrestling match as an answer to Jacob's prayer earlier in this chapter (vv. 9–12). Here is what Jacob prayed:

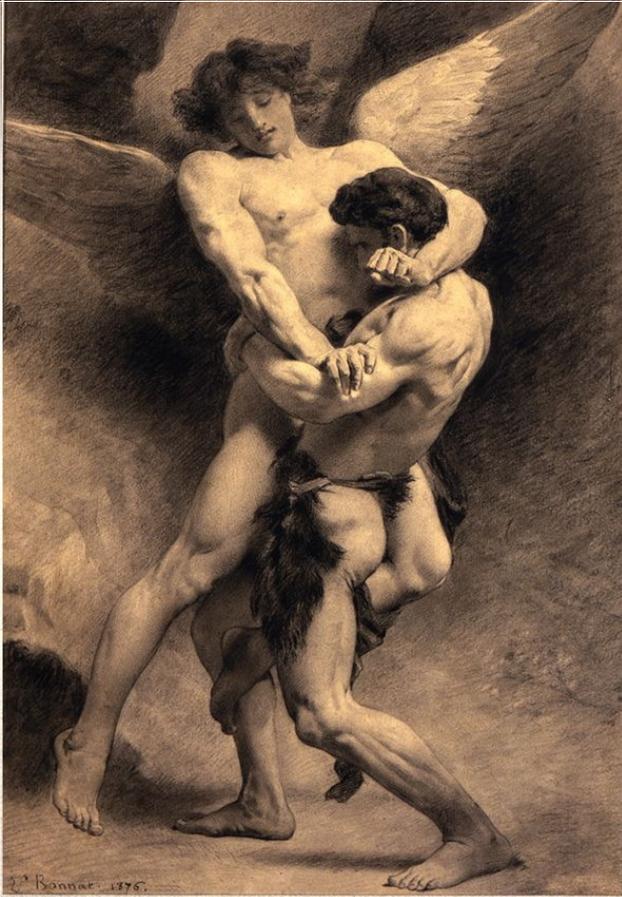
And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. 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. 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.'" (Genesis 32:9–12; ESV; capitalized)

Guzik expresses it in this way: *Here, God is answering Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9–12. But before Jacob could be delivered from the hand of his brother, he had to be delivered from his own self-will and self-reliance.*<sup>381</sup>

Even though Jacob showed great promise the night before, after perhaps a restless sleep where he was overthinking everything; during an attempt to sleep, during which time he did not just commit his problems to God. There was, apparently, where he realized, at least for a short time that there were no human solutions to his problem. However, even though he was in a hopeless situation, Jacob tries to deal with it using human viewpoint.

<sup>381</sup> David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:26.

He began a day or so ago with a great fear of Esau, then God wrestled that fear from him with His promises; then Jacob's evil nature wrestled those tremendous promises from God, ignored them, and began depending upon his own human ingenuity. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the cosmic system forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of evil in high places (Ephesians 6:12). I am fleshly, led astray into bondage to sin.<sup>382</sup> For that which I am doing, I do not understand; because I am not practicing the thing I [would] like to [do], but I am doing the very thing that I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish [to do], I agree with the Law, that it is good. So, as the case stands: no longer am I the one doing it, but [the old] sin [nature] which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me—that is, in my flesh—for the desire is present in me, but the doing of the good [is] not. For the good that I wish to I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not desire [to do]. But if I am doing the very thing I do not desire [to do], I am no longer the one doing it, but [my old] sin [nature] which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the



one who desires to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging ward against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, which is in my members. Totally miserable man that I am! Who will release me from the body of this death? Thanks belongs to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh, the law of sin (Romans 14b–25). What I am hoping to establish here by quoting these few verses, and recalling the inner struggle that Jacob is having between believing the promises of God and acting upon them in faith or resorting to human viewpoint. Jacob is essentially wrestling within himself and he has allowed his human viewpoint to win over. God will have to wrestle him and recover the spiritual victory.

Now let me ask you—how many of you spiritually immature types or those who have been great Christians for five or ten years read this passage and understood why the Angel of God, Jesus Christ, wrestled with Jacob? Was this a good spot in the Bible for a wrestling match? God just got so pissed off that He came down and kicked Jacob's butt? God perhaps thought, “Esau is not going to harm you, but you need your butt kicked.” Possibly Jacob, the writer, thought that there was not enough human drama in this passage, so Jacob threw in a little conflict?

However, after being taught what is happening here, the whole chapter hangs together and makes perfect sense and, strangely enough, will turn out to be relevant to your life. Some of you may have had God kick your butt. By yourself, you would not have wrestled this information from this passage. It would be another portion of the Word of God that you would read quietly, in a half-sleep, and give no more heed to it than the genealogies that you breeze through.

**Léon Bonnat Jacob Wrestles the Angel (1876)** (a graphic); from [Wikipedia](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

Now we know exactly why Jacob wrestles with Jesus Christ, the Angel of God. And just in case you don't have it, here it is in points:

### Why God Wrestles with Jacob

<sup>382</sup> The principal of the indwelling of Paul's old sin nature

1. Jacob first revealed that he had a great fear of Esau.
2. In Jacob's past, he had both contended with his brother Esau and with Laban, his uncle.
3. Near the beginning of this chapter, Jacob thought about God's promises and God's commission to him and then called upon God to make good on these things (this is Jacob's prayer—which is an exceptional prayer).
4. Then Jacob slept on it, became fearful again, and devised a human viewpoint solution to the problem. Jacob did not fully and completely believe that God would deliver him, so he developed a contingency plan.
5. Jacob is here in a desperate, hopeless situation and there is nothing he can do. So what does he do? Instead of trusting God's promises, he trusts his own bad judgment. He trusts his own human ingenuity over God's omniscience.
6. What we have here is Jacob wrestling within himself against God and God's Word. The New Testament mentions this fight, this war that we have, within ourselves (Romans 7:17–24 8:3–13) and against the unseen powers of evil (Ephesians 6:11–12 1Peter 5:8–10).
7. It looks like Jacob's human viewpoint has won this wrestling match within himself. Instead of trusting God, he has a plan that he believe will work.
8. However, this is not God's will for Jacob and Jacob has not only gotten out of God's directive will and has begun to move out of His geographical will, but Jacob has just crossed over to the point of inciting God's overruling will.
9. This means that God Himself will intercede and will overrule Jacob's plan.
10. God will wrestle with Jacob once more and prevail and Jacob will remember this for the rest of his life because God will cause him to limp for the rest of his life due to this wrestling match (this is an assumption which I have made—but this injury will not be mentioned again).
11. If Jacob had gotten up that morning and again told God, "You promised me that You would prosper me and that You would make my progeny like the sand of the sea—and I am now putting You in charge and You must fulfill these promises made to me, my father Isaac, and my father Abraham." If Jacob had done that and firmly stood upon God's promises, there would be no wrestling match and the latter third of Genesis 32 would not be here.
12. However, since Jacob's human nature wrestled his faith from him, God will wrestle that faith back.

No matter what Jacob decides to do, God's plan still moves forward.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Barnes provides a really weird reason for this wrestling: *When God has a new thing of a spiritual nature to bring into the experience of man, he begins with the senses. He takes man on the ground on which he finds him, and leads him through the senses to the higher things of reason, conscience, and communion with God.*<sup>383</sup> It sounds like Barnes is saying, *when God has a new thing of a spiritual nature to bring into the experience of man, he begins by wrasslin' with him.*

One moment Jacob is out of fellowship in fear of Esau, then he remembers God's promises to him. Then he sleeps on these promises and wakes up with human viewpoint. Jacob has just escorted his family across a river and a stream and is returning Jacob onto his other men and the presents that he has set up for Esau. He is about ready to go to sleep again, midway between the two camps, when Jesus Christ wrestles him.



<sup>383</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:23–32.

**Jacob struggles with the angel by Gutenberg Bible (1558)** (a graphic); from Wikipedia; accessed March 7, 2019.

## Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:24 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.

#### Genesis 32:24: The Angel wrestles with Jacob (various commentators)

Note, that it is this Mysterious Man Who wrestles with Jacob; and not the other way around.

Benson: *It was not only a corporal but a spiritual wrestling, by vigorous faith and holy desire; and this circumstance shows that the person with whom he wrestled was not a created angel, but the angel of the covenant; for surely he would not pray and make supplication to a creature.*<sup>384</sup>

Arno Gaebelein: *The night experience at Jabbok was not a dream, nor a vision, but an actual occurrence. The same person who appeared to Abraham at Mamre (chapter 18) appeared to Jacob that night.*<sup>385</sup>

Guzik: *Jacob thought the real enemy was outside of him, being Esau. The real enemy was his own carnal, fleshly nature, which had not been conquered by God.*<sup>386</sup>

John T. Willis: *The Biblical author is not relating a vision, dream, or fantasy; nor is he using well-known external phenomena to symbolize an inner struggle (like prayer); rather, he is relating a real, hand to hand combat. Genesis 32:28,30, show that Jacob was actually wrestling with God Himself, but apparently God had assumed a human form, for Jacob's assailant is called "a man" in Genesis 32:24,25. Although the plain meaning of the text is very hard for modern man to comprehend or rationalize, there is no justification for forcing it to say something it does not say.*<sup>387</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *This is the kind of text that western literalism cannot understand. This has both physical and symbolic aspects. This contest was for Jacob's benefit. It surely does not describe the "wrestling" characteristics of God.*<sup>388</sup>

Utley also writes: *The exact nature of this struggle it is impossible for us to tell, but the whole drift of the narrative is against our explaining it as a dream, or an inner vision which had no external reality.*<sup>389</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministry: *Certainly God had the power to win a test of strength, but this wasn't a test of strength. This was a test of wills. That prideful, stubborn, deterministic will was the barrier God was determined to penetrate.*<sup>390</sup>

<sup>384</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>385</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>386</sup> David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:26.

<sup>387</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional reference there.

<sup>388</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

<sup>389</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:24.

<sup>390</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

### Genesis 32:24: The Angel wrestles with Jacob (various commentators)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *This wrestling match between God and Jacob is a “microcosm” or “symbolic” of Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. The wrestling match with Jacob did “not” teach any spiritual lessons to Jacob but rather the divine discipline that he underwent in the form of the fourteen years of hard labor for his deceitful uncle Laban taught Jacob many spiritual lessons, which are symbolized in the wrestling match with the Lord.*

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob’s problems with his father Isaac (favored Esau over Jacob), his brother Esau, and his uncle Laban, and his wives were in reality problems with God since God permitted these people to come into his life to draw him closer to God. Since the wrestling match depicts Jacob’s struggles with God and men, the Lord initiating the wrestling match with Jacob symbolizes that the Lord is the one who gave him his father Isaac and his brother Esau and brought his uncle Laban into his life who were the source of great adversity in Jacob’s life.*<sup>391</sup>

God does everything possible to persuade Jacob, but without actually reaching into his soul and revising his volition. Jacob retains his volition throughout. As a result, Jacob makes a number of faulty decisions.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:24 [So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

#### Genesis 32:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
rā’âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong’s #7200 BDB #906
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong’s #3588 BDB #471
lô’ (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong’s #3808 BDB #518
yâkôl (יָכוֹל) [also yâkôwl (יָכוֹל)] [pronounced yaw-COAL]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3201 BDB #407

With the negative, this means *cannot, to be unable to, to lack the ability to, to be powerless to, to lack permission to, to lack the power to.*

<sup>391</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** He realizes [lit., sees] that He will not prevail regarding him,...

I would suppose that this and the next statement are closely related. The Angel recognizes that He cannot win wrestling with Jacob because his mind is so independent and so opposed to God's grace. God must allow Jacob's free will to function.

Jacob, throughout his life, wrestled with the Lord. He was continually at odds with God.



**Jacob Wrestles the Angel** (a graphic); from [Christian Publishing House](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

Genesis 32:24–25a **So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. The Angel realizes that He will not win against him.**

It appears here as if God is unable to defeat Jacob in this wrestling match. Why is God unable to out-wrestle Jacob? Jacob refuses to surrender. He refuses to give in to God. This illustrates Jacob's hard-headedness. Everything that God does to guide Jacob into doing the right thing is met by Jacob's hard-headedness, always doing what he thinks should be done instead.

God is a gentleman and He allows us our free will. We do not become God's robots; God does not make us into automatons. However, He deals with us just like we might deal with our own son or daughter. We do not want robots for children; but we do not want children whose lives are filled with sin (which means they would have very unhappy lives). So, as parents, there are times that we must put our foot down, and there are times that we must discipline them. Also, unfortunately, we have to accept that (1) children have sin natures and (2) they may not always obey us. These things are true no matter what we do as parents.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The Lord did not prevail over Jacob in the sense that the Lord could not refuse Jacob's prayer requests because they were according to His will and because Jacob persevered in prayer.*<sup>392</sup>

<sup>392</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

**Genesis 32:22–24: God Prepares Jacob** (Summary on a Slide); from [Slide Player](#) (slide #6); accessed March 9, 2019

## God prepares us for our encounter with Him

Genesis 32:22–32 (NET) <sup>22</sup> During the night Jacob quickly took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. <sup>23</sup> He took them and sent them across the stream along with all his possessions. <sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone.

- His past was a struggle
- Ahead of him was his biggest struggle.
  - He perceived it to be Esau
  - But first, a bigger battle
- God wants alone time:
  - No family
  - No servants
  - No possessions

God brings circumstances outside of our control into our lives to make us helplessly dependent on Him.

This graphic appears to be on-point, but it makes the mistake that many commentators make—that Jacob wanted alone time with God or God wanted alone time with Jacob. Jacob finds himself alone for the very simple reason that, ahead of him is Esau’s present. Behind him is the camp where his wives and children are.

Jacob will find himself alone with this wrestler; but there is no reason to think that Jacob had some ultimate plan to get by himself for any reason (except, perhaps, for peace and quiet).

Genesis 32:25b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

## Genesis 32:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâga <sup>c</sup> (עָגַ) [pronounced naw-GAHḠ]	<i>to touch, to reach into; to violate, to injure; to come to a person; to strike</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5060 BDB #619
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
kaph (כף) [pronounced kaf]	<i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3709 BDB #496
These nouns are tied together because of the fact that they are concave.			
yârek <sup>e</sup> (רֵךְ) [pronounced yaw-REK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>thigh, inner thigh; loin, side, base; shaft; uterus, reproductive system</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3409 BDB #437

**Translation:** ...so the Man [lit., he] injures the hollow of his thigh;...

Because of this, I assume that Jacob is going to walk with a limp for a significant amount of time. This injury is not mentioned again in the narrative of Jacob's life. In any case, this injury represents divine discipline.

## Genesis 32:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâqa <sup>c</sup> (עָקַ) [pronounced yaw-KAHḠ]	<i>to be dislocated, to be torn away; metaphorically, to be alienated</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3363 BDB #429
kaph (כף) [pronounced kaf]	<i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3709 BDB #496
These nouns are tied together because of the fact that they are concave.			
yârek <sup>e</sup> (רֵךְ) [pronounced yaw-REK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>thigh, inner thigh; loin, side, base; shaft; uterus, reproductive system</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3409 BDB #437
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

## Genesis 32:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'ābaq (אָבַק) [pronounced aw-BAHK]	wrestling, grappling, being wrestled with; getting dirty	Niphal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #79 BDB #7
This word is very similar to <i>Jabbok</i> , and some suggest that the river received its name from this word.			
'îm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	with, at, by, near; like; from	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** ...He put the hollow of Jacob's thigh out of joint by wrestling with him.

It is possible that God did this in such a way that Jacob would be half-lame for the remainder of his life; but that he can still walk. Again, this is speculation. The injury sounds bad enough to affect him for the rest of his life; but the Jacob narrative does not mention it again.

The damage done to Jacob's thigh is the damage which Jacob has done to himself by resisting God. We can interpret this as divine discipline.

Genesis 32:25 He realizes [lit., sees] that He will not prevail regarding him, so the Man [lit., he] injures the hollow of his thigh; He put the hollow of Jacob's thigh out of joint by wrestling with him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:24–25 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. He realizes [lit., sees] that He will not prevail regarding him, so the Man [lit., he] injures the hollow of his thigh; He put the hollow of Jacob's thigh out of joint by wrestling with him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:24–25 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. The Angel realizes that He will not win against him. Therefore, the Man injures the hollow of Jacob's thigh, which He knocked out of joint by wrestling with him. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:24–25 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. The Angel realizes that He will not win against him. Therefore, the Man injures the hollow of Jacob's thigh, which He knocked out of joint by wrestling with him.

### Genesis 32:25b-c: Jacob's injury from wrestling (various commentators)

NIV Study Bible: *God...showed Jacob that He could disable him at will.*<sup>393</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Finally, because Jacob continued to struggle, the Lord simply "touched the hollow of his thigh," putting it out of joint (v.25). He could have done this before, but had given Jacob opportunity to submit without any drastic action. Usually, however, we require some hard measures before we learn to truly submit ourselves to God.*<sup>394</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *The rabbis say this refers to the vein of the thigh and this part of the animal carcass is not allowed to be eaten in Judaism (cf. Genesis 32:32).*<sup>395</sup>

<sup>393</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 56 (footnote).

<sup>394</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>395</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

## Genesis 32:25b-c: Jacob's injury from wrestling (various commentators)

Whedon: *The socket of the hip-joint, which is here called caph, (כף) from its resembling the hollow palm of the hand. The angel's touch dislocated this joint; and gave Jacob to know that the mighty wrestler could at any moment disable him, and in so far contending with him had only been graciously condescending to his weakness.*<sup>396</sup>

The Hebrew part is correct; but was God's point to Jacob, "I can beat you are wrestling at any time"?

Dr. John Gill: *[T]he thigh bone, was moved out of the hollow place in which it was: this was done to let Jacob know that the person he wrestled with was superior to him, and could easily have overcome him, and obliged him to cease wrestling with him if he would; and that the victory he got over him was not by his own strength, but by divine assistance, and by the sufferance of the himself he wrestled with; so that he had nothing to boast of: and this shows the truth and reality of this conflict.*<sup>397</sup>

Lange: *Lit., the socket of the hip. It is not said that he struck it a blow (Knobel) (for it is God who is spoken of); needs but to touch its object, and the full result is secured...The sinews of his thigh (nervus ischradicus) were paralyzed through the extreme tension and distortion. But this bodily paralysis does not paralyze the persevering Jacob.*<sup>398</sup>

Clarke: *[The injury that] he received [may have been] a stroke on the groin, not a touch; for the Hebrew word נגה naga often signifies to smite with violence, which stroke, even if comparatively slight, would effectually disable him for a time, and cause him to halt for many hours, if not for several days. I might add that in this place - the groin, a blow might be of fatal consequence; but as the angel gave it only as a proof of his power, and to show that he could not prevail because he would not, hence the blow was only disabling, without being dangerous; and he was probably cured by the time the sun arose.*

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *"The socket of his thigh" refers to the ball and socket joint of Jacob's thigh since "socket" is the noun kaph (כף) (kaf), which denotes the "acetabulum," the cup shaped socket in the hipbone that receives the head of the thighbone.*<sup>399</sup>

The Geneva Bible: *God assails his [Own] with the one hand, and upholds them with the other.*<sup>400</sup>

We must bear in mind that, whatever this injury was, Jacob was able to continue walking—probably requiring a staff in order to walk. There is no indication how painful this is. Based upon what follows, I would suggest that this was a sprain which Jacob suffered.

God always leaves open the option of divine discipline when dealing with us (illustrated here with Jacob).

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<sup>396</sup> Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:25.

<sup>397</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:25.

<sup>398</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–32.

<sup>399</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>400</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 32:25.

**Jacob Wrestles with an Angel** (graphic from *Treasures of the Bible*); from **Mary's Rosaries**; accessed March 7, 2019.

Despite his sins and failures, Jacob wanted the blessing which he had learned about since he was a child. And so he demands this of God.

You may wonder, *just what the heck is going on?* This appears to be God that Jacob is wrestling against. Jacob has, over and over, tried to exert his own power over his own life, and be the champion of his own destiny. However, God has made it very clear that Jacob has a destiny, and despite all of his mistakes and rebellion, God is going to prevail. If God has to knock Jacob's thigh out of whack in order to get him to walk in the right direction, then He will do it. In other words, there is something in the works here which is far, far greater than Jacob and his negative volition. However, you must bear this in mind. Even though God exerts some pressure by means of divine discipline, Jacob still makes the subsequent decisions from the ultimate source of his own volition.



How do we know this? When Jesus was being crucified, on each side of Him was a criminal who had been sentenced to death along with Jesus. Both of these men saw all that went on with Jesus and heard Him pronounced as innocent, even though the Romans still crucified Jesus (at the insistence of the religious Jews). One man on his cross reviled Jesus; the other man believed in Jesus and asked to be remembered when Jesus went to His kingdom. Jesus promises that this second criminal will be in heaven with Him on that very day.

Both men faced certain death; both men were dying slowly and unmercifully by a crucifixion. I don't believe that we could imagine a greater horror for the last hours of a man's death. Yet, one man believed in the Lord and the other did not. Both men were only a few feet away from their Savior; one knew it and one did not; one believed it and the other did not.

Jacob had resisted God's promises and God's will the night before and he was resisting these again until it was clear that Jacob was not going to trust God. So God had to pull his hip out of joint. Now Jacob realizes what is happening and Who he is wrestling.

God has given Jacob free will and allows Jacob to employ it. God puts Jacob's hip out of joint in discipline to Jacob. Jacob realizes Who he is wrestling, calls upon his faith again, and demands that God bless him. This time Jacob is not asking Isaac to bless him through some means of duplicity, but Jacob hangs desperately onto God for his life, calling upon God to fulfill His Word to him.

Genesis 32:24–25 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. The Angel realizes that He will not win against him. Therefore, the Man injures the hollow of Jacob's thigh, which He knocked out of joint by wrestling with him.

### Genesis 32:25: Why God hurt Jacob in this wrestling match (various commentators)

Gary Everett: *Jacob was a shepherd, or herdsman, and depended upon the strength of his legs to walk with the flocks daily. His legs represented his physical strength. When he lost full use of his legs, it was figurative of his strength giving place to his faith in God's strength to become his provider.*

## Genesis 32:25: Why God hurt Jacob in this wrestling match (various commentators)

Everett continues: *Here at Peniel, Jacob died to himself. With a limb, he could no longer go where he wanted to go. For the first time in his life, he became totally depend upon God. exceeding great reward He never made selfish decisions for himself after this night.*

Everett concludes: *He had lived his life the way he wanted to live it. But on this night, Jacob had to make a choice. He either faced possible death at the hands of his brother, or he had to find grace with the God of Abraham and Isaac. In order to find grace in God's eyes, he had to become weak, so that God could become strong.*<sup>401</sup>

David Guzik: *The second memorial was a perpetual limp. Jacob would remember his being conquered by God with every step he took for the rest of his life. This was a small price to pay for such a great gift.*<sup>402</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *Notice how God deals with him. He touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh. Just a touch of the finger of God, and this man becomes helpless. But you see, God is not pinning down his shoulders. Now Jacob holds on to Him. **The Man says, "Let Me go," and Jacob says, "No, I want Your blessing."** He's clinging to God now. The struggling and striving are over, and from here on Jacob is going to manifest a spiritual nature, dependence upon God. You will not find the change happening in a moment's notice. Psychologists tell us that certain synaptic connections are set up in our nervous systems so that we do things by habit. We are creatures of habit. This man will lapse back into his old ways many times, but we begin to see something different in him now. Before we are through with him, we will find that he is a real man of God.*<sup>403</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *God disabled him to further bring home to him his weakness.*<sup>404</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The dislocation of Jacob's hip symbolized that by means of the fourteen years of hard labor for Laban, which constituted divine discipline, the Lord had succeeded in getting Jacob to stop trusting in his own power to solve his problems and to depend upon the power of God.*<sup>405</sup>

Wenstrom does not present this injury as divine discipline, but as an act with a deeper meaning: *Jacob was physically very strong as witnessed by his moving the large stone from the well of water when Rachel appeared to him for the first time (See Genesis 29:10). However, the fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban had taught Jacob that he was impotent to solve his own problems with Laban by means of his own physical strength and had to rely upon the omnipotence of God to solve his problems with Laban.*

Wenstrom continues: *Therefore, the dislocation of Jacob's hip during this wrestling match symbolizes what the Lord had accomplished in Jacob through the divine discipline in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for Laban, which was to demonstrate to Jacob his own impotence and God's omnipotence.*

Wenstrom continues: *During the fourteen years of hard labor for Laban, the Lord had broken Jacob's confidence in his own strength and got him to acknowledge that God was all powerful and all sufficient and that he was helpless and hopeless and totally and completely dependent upon God.*

Wenstrom continues: *The divine discipline in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for his uncle Laban humbled Jacob so that he acknowledged his own human weakness or impotence so as to experience the power of God in life and his right to appropriate that power by prayer and claiming the divine promises given to him.*

<sup>401</sup> Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 32:25.

<sup>402</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:30–32.

<sup>403</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>404</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–25.

<sup>405</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:25: Why God hurt Jacob in this wrestling match (various commentators)

Wenstrom concludes: *Therefore, the dislocation of Jacob's hip was symbolic of the Lord breaking Jacob's confidence in his own strength and ability to deal with problems with people. The dislocation of Jacob's hip would be a perpetual reminder or memorial to Jacob to not depend upon his own power and ability but rather to depend and rely upon the power of God to deal with problems with people and adversities in life.*<sup>406</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:24–25 So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn. The Angel realizes that He will not win against him. Therefore, the Man injures the hollow of Jacob's thigh, which He knocked out of joint by wrestling with him.

Even though I believe it is clear that this *Angel* is God; there are some commentators who do not clearly define the Angel as such in this passage.<sup>407</sup>

These next 4 verses are going to require a great deal of discussion and explanation.

And so He says, "Send Me away for is rising the morning." And so he says, "I will not send You away for if You bless me." And so He says to him, "What [is] your name?" And so he says, "Jacob." And so He says, "Not Jacob will be called no longer your name for if Israel, for you contend with Elohim and with men and so you will be able." And so asks Jacob and so he says, "Tell me, I pray, Your name." And so He says, "For why this you ask for My Name?" And so He blesses him there.

Genesis  
32:26–29

He said, "Send Me away for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You name will no longer be called Jacob, but [it will be] Israel, for you contend with Elohim and with men and you will prevail." Jacob asked and said, "Tell me, please, Your Name." But He said, "Why [is] this [that] you ask for My Name?" Nevertheless, He blessed him there.

He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail." Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name." But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?" Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so He says, "Send Me away for is rising the morning." And so he says, "I will not send You away for if You bless me." And so He says to him, "What [is] your name?" And so he says, "Jacob." And so He says, "Not Jacob will be called no longer your name for if Israel, for you contend with Elohim and with men and so you will be able." And so asks Jacob and so he says, "Tell me, I pray, Your name." And so He says, "For why this you ask for My Name?" And so He blesses him there.

<sup>406</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>407</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:26.

Targum (Onkelos)	And he said, Let me go, for the column of the morning ascendeth; <u>and the hour cometh when the angels on high offer praise to the Lord of the world: and I am one of the angels of praise, but from the day that the world was created my time to praise hath not come until now.</u> And he said, I will not let Thee go, unless Thou bless me. And He said to him, What is thy name? And he said, Jakob. And He said, Thy name shall be no longer Jakob, but Israel; for <u>a prince art thou</u> before the Lord, and with men, and thou hast prevailed. And Jakob asked Him, and said, Show me now Thy Name! And He said, Why dost thou ask My Name? And He blessed him there.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said, Let me go, for the column of the morning ascendeth; <u>and the hour cometh when the angels on high offer praise to the Lord of the world: and I am one of the angels of praise, but from the day that the world was created my time to praise hath not come until now.</u> And he said, I will not let thee go, until thou bless me. [JERUSALEM. And the hollow of Jakob's thigh was displaced in contending with him. And he said, Send me away, for the column of the dawn ariseth, and, behold, the hour cometh for the angels to praise. And he said, I will not release thee until thou bless me.] And he said, What is thy name? He answered, Jakob. And he said, Thy name shall be no more called Jakob but Israel, because thou art magnified with <u>the angels of the Lord</u> and with the mighty, and thou hast prevailed with them. And Jakob asked and said, Show me now thy name. And he said, Why dost thou ask for my name? And he blessed <u>Jakob</u> there.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And he said to him: Let me go, for it is break of day. He answered: I will not let you go except you bless me. And he said: What is your name? He answered: Jacob. But he said: your name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel: for if you have been strong against God, how much more shall you prevail against men? Jacob asked him, Tell me by what name are you called? He answered: Why do you ask my name? And he blessed him in the same place.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh; And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said to him, What is thy name? And he said, Jakob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jakob, but Israel: for <u>as a prince</u> hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jakob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name: And he said, why is it that thou dost ask after my name? and he blessed him there.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the man said to him, Let me go, for day is breaking. And he said, I will not let you go unless you bless me. And he said to him, What is your name? And he said, Jakob. And he said to him. Your name shall no more be called Jakob, but Israel ( <u>the Prince of God</u> ); for you have proved your strength wrestling with an angel and with man, and have prevailed. And Jakob asked him, and said, Tell me your name. And he said, Why is it that you ask my name? And <u>the angel</u> blessed him there.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said to him, Let me go, for the day has dawned; but he said, I will not let you go, except you bless me. And he said to him, What is your name? and he answered, Jacob. And he said to him, Your name shall no longer be called Jakob, but Israel shall be your name; for you have prevailed with God, and shall be mighty with men. And Jakob asked and said, Tell me your name; and he said, Why do you ask after my name? and he blessed him there.
Significant differences:	The targums used above have a lot of additional text. The words <i>to him</i> is missing from the targums and the Latin. <i>Your name</i> is found twice in the Greek, while it is only found once in the Hebrew. The Aramaic might include additional text (it is unclear whether those words explain <i>Israel</i> or are found in the actual text). These two manuscripts also disagree about having <i>the angel</i> in the final phrase.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And he said to him, Let me go now, for the dawn is near. But Jacob said, I will not let you go till you have given me your blessing. Then he said, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel: for in your fight with God and with men you have overcome. Then Jacob said, What is your name? And he said, What is my name to you? Then he gave him a blessing. Then the man said 'Let me go because now it is day.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go until you bless me.'
Easy English	The man asked Jacob 'What is your name?' Jacob replied 'Jacob'. Then the man said 'Your name will not be Jacob any more. Your name will be Israel [Israel means 'fights with God', 'Prince of God', or 'May God keep me safe'. A prince is the son of a king. By changing Jacob's name, God gave him a new beginning. The descendants of Jacob, now called <i>Israel</i> , are called the 12 <i>tribes of Israel</i> .] This is because you have fought with God. And you have fought with men. And you have shown that you are strong.'
The Message	Jacob said 'Please tell me your name.' But the man said 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed Jacob there. The man said, "Let me go; it's daybreak." Jacob said, "I'm not letting you go 'til you bless me." The man said, "What's your name?" He answered, "Jacob." The man said, "But no longer. Your name is no longer Jacob. From now on it's Israel (God-Wrestler); you've wrestled with God and you've come through." Jacob asked, "And what's your name?" The man said, "Why do you want to know my name?" And then, right then and there, he blessed him.
NIRV	Then the man said, "Let me go. It is morning." But Jacob replied, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will not be Jacob anymore. Instead, it will be Israel. You have wrestled with God and with people. And you have won." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you want to know my name?" Then he blessed Jacob there.
New Simplified Bible	He said to him: »Let me go now, for the dawn is near.« But Jacob said: »I will not let you go till you have given me your blessing.« Then he asked: »What is your name?« And he said, »Jacob.« The man said: »Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel (He Struggles With God), because you have struggled with God and with men and you have won.« Jacob said: »Please tell me your name.« The man answered: »Why do you ask for my name?« Then he blessed Jacob there.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	Then the man said, "Let go of me. It's almost dawn." But Jacob said, "I'm not going to let you go until you bless me." The man asked, "What's your name?" Jacob said, "I'm Jacob." "Not anymore," the man said. "From now on you won't be called Jacob. You'll be called Israel, because you're a fighter. You have fought with God and with people. And you've lived to tell about it." Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." "Why?" the man asked. Before Jacob could answer, the man blessed him.
Contemporary English V.	They kept on wrestling until the man said, "Let go of me! It's almost daylight." "You can't go until you bless me," Jacob replied. Then the man asked, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. The man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have wrestled with God and with men, and you have won. That's why your name will be Israel." Jacob said, "Now tell me your name." "Don't you know who I am?" he asked. And he blessed Jacob.

## The Living Bible

Then the Man said, "Let me go, for it is dawn."  
 But Jacob panted, "I will not let you go until you bless me."  
 "What is your name?" the Man asked.  
 "Jacob," was the reply.  
 "It isn't anymore!" the Man told him. "It is Israel—one who has power with God. Because you have been strong with God, you shall prevail with men."  
 "What is your name?" Jacob asked him.

## New Life Version

"No, you mustn't ask," the Man told him. And he blessed him there.  
 The man said, "Let me go. For the morning has come." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you pray that good will come to me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel. For you have fought with God and with men, and have won." Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, what is your name?" But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he prayed that good would come to Jacob.

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

## American English Bible

Then [the man] told [Jacob]: 'Let me go, because the sun is coming up!  
 But [Jacob] said: 'I'm not going to let you go until you give me a blessing!  
 So [the man] asked: 'What is your name?'  
 And he answered, 'Jacob.'  
 And [the man] told him: 'Your name will no longer be Jacob. Rather, IsraEl will be your name; for you've grown stronger with God and mightier with men.'  
 Then Jacob said: 'Tell me your name.'  
 And he said: 'Why do you [have to] ask my name?'  
 Then He blest him there.

## International Standard V

When the man realized that he hadn't yet won the struggle, he injured the socket [Or *hollow* and so throughout the chapter] of Jacob's thigh, dislocating it as he wrestled with him, and said, "Let me go, because the dawn has come [Lit. *has ascended*.]"  
 "I won't let you go," Jacob [Lit. *he*] replied, "unless you bless me." The previous verse is included for context.  
 Then the man [Lit. *Then he*] asked him, "What's your name?"  
 "Jacob," he responded  
 "Your name won't be [Lit. *be called*] Jacob anymore," the man [Lit. *anymore*, " *he*] replied, "but Israel, because you exerted yourself against both God and men, and you've emerged victorious."  
 "Please," Jacob inquired, "Tell me your name."  
 But he asked, "Why are you asking about my name?" And he blessed Jacob [Lit. *him*] there.

## New Advent (Knox) Bible

At last, finding that he could not get the better of Jacob, he touched the sinew of his thigh, which all at once withered; then he said, Let me go, the dawn is up. But Jacob answered, I will not let you go until you give me your blessing. What is your name? asked the other, and when he heard that it was Jacob, Jacob, he said, is no name for you, you shall be called Israel, one that prevails with God. If you have held your own with God, how will you prevail over men! Tell me, asked Jacob, what is your own name? Why would you know my name? he answered, and gave him there and then his blessing. The previous verse is included for context.

## Translation for Translators

*Then Jacob realized who he was really wrestling with.* So he replied, "No, if you will not bless me, I will not let you go!" The man said to him, "What is your name?" He replied, "Jacob." The man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob. Your name will be Israel, *which means 'he struggles with God'*, because you have struggled with God and with people, and you have won." Jacob said, "Now, please tell me your

name!" The man replied, " Why do you ask me what my name is?/You should not have to ask me what my name is! " [RHQ] But he blessed Jacob there.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to say: Be letting me loose, for the dawn is to have come up. He was to say: was I to let you loose till you is to have approved of me? - He was to say: Your name is? He was to say: Jacob. He was to say: was your name to be spoken as Jacob, it is to be Isra-el? - For you is to have contended with he of mighty ones and men, even was to overcome! Jacob was to ask, and was to say: Be telling me your name. He was say: was you to ask the same as this, my name? - He was to well consider him there.
Conservapedia	The man said, "Let me go! Dawn is rising!" And Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." The man said, "What's your name?" And Jacob said, "Jacob." The man said, "You shall not be named Jacob anymore, but rather Israe [Israel literally means "he struggled with God" or else "the struggle of God.]"I--because you are upright with God and with men, and you have won." Jacob asked him, "Tell me your name, please." And the man said, "What do you ask my name for?" And he blessed him there.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then he said, " Release me, for the darkness is going." But he replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." Then he answered, " What is your name ? " And he said, "Jacob." When he responded, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but ' Israel ' ; — for you have wrestled with a Divine Messenger, as with men, and been equal to it." Then Jacob asked, and said, " Tell me your name ? " And he replied, " Why do you ask my name ? " but he then blessed him.
H. C. Leupold	And he said: Let me go for dawn is arising. But he said: I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And He said to him: What is thy name? And he said: Jacob. And he said: Not Jacob shall thy name be called from now on, but Israel, for thou hast striven with God and men and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked and said: Reveal thy name, I pray? And He said: Why then dost thou ask for My name? And He blessed him there.
Tree of Life Version	Then He said, "Let Me go, for the dawn has broken." But he said, "I won't let You go unless You bless me." Then He said to him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he said. Then He said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but rather Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men, and you have overcome." Then Jacob asked and said, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, "What's this—you are asking My name?" Then He blessed him there.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	The man said, "Let me go, for day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you have given me your blessing." The man then said, "What is your name?" "Ja cob" was the reply. He answered, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have been strong-with-God as you have been with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "What is your name?" He answered, "Why do you ask my name?" And he blessed him there.
The Heritage Bible	And he said, Send me away, because the dawn is ascending. And he said, I will not send you away unless you bless me. And he said to him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have contended with God, and with men, and have prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Please cause to stand out boldly to me your name. And he said, Why do you ask my name? And he knelt down with goodness to him there.

- New American Bible (2002) The man then said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you bless me."  
"What is your name?" the man asked. He answered, "Jacob."  
Then the man said, "You shall no longer be spoken of as Jacob, but as Israel [Israel: the first part of the Hebrew name Yisrael is given a popular explanation in the word *sarita*, "you contended"; the second part is the first syllable of *elohim*, "divine beings." The present incident, with a similar allusion to the name Israel, is referred to in → Hosea 12:5, where the mysterious wrestler is explicitly called an angel.], because you have contended with divine and human beings and have prevailed."  
Jacob then asked him, "Do tell me your name, please." He answered, "Why should you want to know my name?" With that, he bade him farewell.
- New American Bible (2011) The man then said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you bless me."  
"What is your name?" the man asked. He answered, "Jacob." [Gn 35:10; 1 Kgs 18:31; 2 Kgs 17:34]  
Then the man said, "You shall no longer be named Jacob, but Israel [**Israel**: the first part of the Hebrew name Yisrael is given a popular explanation in the word *saritha*, "you contended"; the second part is the first syllable of *'elohim*, "divine beings." The present incident, with a similar allusion to the name Israel, is referred to in Hos 12:5, where the mysterious wrestler is explicitly called an angel.], because you have contended with divine and human beings and have prevailed."  
Jacob then asked him, "Please tell me your name." He answered, "Why do you ask for my name?" With that, he blessed him.
- New Jerusalem Bible He said, 'Let me go, for day is breaking.' Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'  
The other said, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob,' he replied.  
He said, 'No longer are you to be called Jacob, but Israel since you have shown your strength against God and men and have prevailed.'  
Then Jacob asked, 'Please tell me your name.' He replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' With that, he blessed him there.
- New RSV Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' Then the man [Heb *he*] said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [That is *The one who strives with God* or *God strives*], for you have striven with God and with humans [Or *with divine and human beings*], and have prevailed.' 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.
- Revised English Bible The man said, "Let me go, for day is breaking," but Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."  
The man asked, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.  
The man said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob but Israel, because you have striven with God and with mortals, and have prevailed."  
Jacob said, "Tell me your name, I pray." He replied, "Why do you ask my name?" but he gave him his blessing there.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

- Complete Jewish Bible The man said, "Let me go, because it's daybreak." But Ya'akov replied, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." The man asked, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Ya'akov." Then the man said, "From now on, you will no longer be called Ya'akov, but Isra'el; because you have shown your strength to both God and men and have prevailed." Ya'akov asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he answered, "Why are you asking about my name?" and blessed him there.

exeGesese companion Bible	<p>...and he says, Send me away, for the dawn ascends. And he says, I send you not away, unless you bless me. <b><u>YAAQOV NAMED YISRA EL</u></b> And he says to him, What is your name? And he says, Yaaqov. And he says, Your name is said no more Yaaqov, but Yisra El: for you prevail with Elohim and with men - and prevail. And Yaaqov asks him and says, Tell me, I beseech you, your name. And he says, Why ask you my name? - and he blesses him there.</p>
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	<p>Then he said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking." But he answered, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." Said the other, "What is your name?" He replied, "Jacob." Said he, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed." Jacob asked, "Pray tell me your name." But he said, "You must not ask my name!" And he took leave of him there.</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p>'Let me leave!' said [the stranger]. 'Dawn is breaking.' 'I will not let you leave unless you bless me.' 'What is your name?' 'Jacob.' 'Your name will no longer be said to be Jacob, but Israel (Yisra'el) [This was later reaffirmed by God (Genesis 35:10). Also see 1 Kings 18:31, 2 Kings 17:34.]. You have become great (sar) before God and man [(Targum). Or, 'You have become a prince (sar) among the angels and man' (Ralbag). Others have, 'You have fought (or struggled) with a divine being and you have won' (Bereshith Rabbah; Josephus 1:2:2; Septuagint; cf. Hosea 4:5). The root of the word sari-tha here is thus sarah, meaning to contend or 'fight to win' (Radak, Sherashim. cf. Hosea 9:6). It is related to the root sarar, to rule; cf. Numbers 16:13, Esther 1:22, Proverbs 8:16. Also see Judges 9:22, Hosea 8:4. Israel (Yisrael) thus means, 'he who will be great [before] God,' or 'he who will struggle with the divine.']. You have won.' Jacob returned the question. 'If you would,' he said, 'tell me what your name is.' 'Why do you ask my name? [See Judges 13:18.]' replied [the stranger]. He then blessed [Jacob].</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<p>And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he struck his hip socket; so Ya'akov's hip socket dislocated while he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for shachar breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, unless thou make a berakah upon me. And he said unto him, What is shemecha? And he said, Ya'akov. And he said, Shimcha shall be called no more Ya'akov, but Yisroel: for sarita im Elohim ([yisrah=to prevail + El=G-d = Yisroel] ye have striven with Elohim) and with anashim, and hast overcome. And Ya'akov asked him, and said, Tell me, now, shemecha. And he said, Why is it that thou dost ask after shmi? And he made a brocha upon him there.</p>
The Scriptures 1998	<p>And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I am not letting You go until You have blessed me!" So He asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Ya'aqob." And He said, "Your name is no longer called Ya'aqob, but Yisra'el, because you have striven with Elohim and with men, and have overcome." Footnote: Yisra'el means "to strive with El, to overcome with El, (then) to rule with El"</p>

And Ya'aqob asked Him, saying, "Please let me know Your Name." And He said, "Why do you ask about My Name?" And He blessed him there.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

#### *The Amplified Bible*

Then He said, "Let Me go, for day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You declare a blessing on me." So He asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask My name?" And He declared a blessing [of the covenant promises] on Jacob there.

#### The Expanded Bible

Then he said to Jacob, "Let me go. The sun is coming up [Daybreak is coming]." But Jacob said, "I will let you go if you will [not let you go unless you] bless me." The man said to him, "What is your name?" And he answered, "Jacob."

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel [sounds like "he wrestled/fought/strove with God" in Hebrew], because you have wrestled [fought; strove] with God and with people, and you have won [prevailed]."

Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name."

#### Kretzmann's Commentary

But the man [he] said, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed Jacob there. And he said, Let Me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. In spite of the sprained hip Jacob persevered in his struggle with the man, of whose identity he became surer every moment. It was the Lord Himself, in human form, who here assumed the role of an antagonist to Jacob, and for that reason Jacob insisted upon having His blessing before permitting Him to depart. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 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. From the position of a mere Jacob, holder of the heel, in which capacity he had overcome his brother Esau, he was here advanced to that of Israel, God-wrestler, the captain, or prince, of God, because he had prevailed as a prince in his struggle with the Lord. Cf Hos. 12:4-5. 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? Cf Judges 13:18. It is not for sinful man to know every name of the great Lord of heaven; besides, the Lord had already indicated His name. And he blessed him there. The Lord formally repeated the patriarchal blessing, Genesis 28:13-15, with its Messianic promise.

#### NET Bible®

Then the man [*Heb* "he"; the referent (the man) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking [*Heb* "dawn has arisen."]." "I will not let you go," Jacob replied [*Heb* "and he said, 'I will not let you go.'" The referent of the pronoun "he" (Jacob) has been specified for clarity, and the order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.], "unless you bless me." The man asked him [*Heb* "and he said to him." The referent of the pronoun "he" (the man who wrestled with Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], "What is your name?" He answered, "Jacob." "No longer will your name be Jacob," the man told him [*Heb* "and he said." The referent of the pronoun "he" (the man who wrestled with Jacob) has been specified for clarity, and the order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.], "but Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have prevailed."

Then Jacob asked, "Please tell me your name." "Why do you ask my name?" the man replied [*Heb* "and he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?'" The referent of the pronoun "he" (the man who wrestled with Jacob) has been specified for clarity, and the order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been

## The Pulpit Commentary

rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.]. **Then he blessed Jacob** [*Heb* “him”; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] **there**. **And he** (the man) **said, Let me go** (literally, send me away; meaning that he yielded the victory to Jacob, adding as a reason for his desire to depart), **for the day breaketh**—literally, for the morning or the dawn ascendeth; and therefore it is time for thee to proceed to other duties (Wilet, Clarke, Murphy), e.g. to meet Esau and appease his anger (‘Speaker’s Commentary’). Perhaps also the angel was unwilling that the vision which was meant for Jacob only should be seen by others (Pererius), or even that his own glory should be beheld by Jacob (Ainsworth). Calvin thinks the language was so shaped as to lead Jacob to infer nocturna visions *se divinitus fuisse edoctum*. **And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me**. The words show that Jacob now clearly recognized his mysterious Antagonist to be Divine, and sought to obtain from him the blessing which he had previously stolen from his aged father by craft. **And he said unto him, What is thy name?** (not as if requiring to be informed, but as directing attention to it in view of the change about to be made upon it) **And he said, Jacob**—i.e. Heel-catcher, or Supplanter (vide Genesis 25:26). **And he said, Thy name shall be called no more** (i.e. exclusively, since both he and his descendants are in Scripture sometimes after this styled) **Jacob, but Israel**:—לְאִשְׁרָיִל, from הָרָשָׁת, to be chief, to fight, though, after the example of Ishmael, God hears, it might be rendered "God governs" (Kalisch), yet seems in this place to signify either Prince of El (Calvin, Ainsworth, Dathe, Murphy, Wordsworth, and others), or wrestler with God (Furst, Keil, Kurtz, Lange, et alii, rather than warrior of God (Gesenius), if indeed both ideas may not be combined in the name as the princely wrestler with God (‘Speaker’s Commentary,’ Bush), an interpretation adopted by the A.V.—**for as a prince hast thou power with God**—literally, for thou hast contended with Elohim [Keil, Alford, &c.), οὔτι εἰ νίσχυσας μετὰ θεοῦ (LXX.), *contra deum fortis fuisti* (Vulgate), thou hast obtained the mastery with God (Kalisch), rather than, thou hast striven to be a prince with God (Murphy)—**and with men, and but prevailed**. So are the words rendered by the best authorities (Keil, Kalisch, Murphy, Wordsworth), though the translation καὶ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων δυνατός ἐ΄ση (LXX.), *quanto magis contra heroines prevalebis* (Vulgate) is by some preferred (Calvin, Rosenmóller, &c.). **And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name**. A request indicating great boldness on the part of Jacob—the boldness of faith (Hebrews 4:16; Hebrews 10:19); and importing a desire on Jacob’s part to be acquainted, not merely with the designation, but with the mysterious character of the Divine personage with whom he had been contending. **And he** (the mysterious stranger) **said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?** Cf. Judges 13:18, where the angel gives the same reply to Manoah, adding, "seeing it is secret;" literally, wonderful, i.e. incomprehensible to mortal man; though here the words of Jacob’s antagonist may mean that his name, so far as it could be learnt by man, was already plain from the occurrence which had taken place (Murphy, ‘Speaker’s Commentary,’ Bush). **And he blessed him there**. After this, every vestige of doubt disappeared from the soul of Jacob.

## The Voice

**Man:** Let me go; the dawn is breaking.

**Jacob:** I will not let you go unless you bless me.

**Man:** What’s your name?

**Jacob:** Jacob.

**Man:** You will no longer go by the name Jacob. From now on, *your name will be Israel* because you have wrestled with God and humanity, and you have prevailed.

**Jacob:** Please, tell me your name.

**Man:** Why do you ask what my name is?

*Right then and right there the man blessed Jacob.*

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

**Benner's Mechanical Trans.** ...and he said, send me given that the dawn went up and he said, I will not send you unless you respect me, and he said to him, what is your title, and he said, Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup>, and he said, Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> will not be said again as your title, instead Yisra'el <sup>[He turns El]</sup> given that you turned away with Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> and with men and you were able, and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> inquired and he said, please tell your title, and he said, why is this you inquire for my title, and he respected him there,...

**Context Group Version** And he said, Let me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let you go, unless you esteem me.  
And he said to him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob.  
And he said, Your name will not be Jacob anymore, but Israel: for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.  
And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I beg of you, your name. And he said, Why is it that you ask for my name? And he esteemed him there.

**English Standard Version** Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 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." 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.

**Modern English Version** Then He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."  
But Jacob said, "I will not let You go, unless You bless me."  
So He said to him, "What is your name?"  
And he said, "Jacob."  
Then the man said, "Your name will no more be called Jacob, but Israel. For you have fought with God and with men, and have prevailed."  
Then Jacob asked Him, "Tell me, I pray You, Your name."  
But He said, "Why do you ask Me My name?" Then He blessed him there.

**New King James Version** And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."  
But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"  
So He said to him, "What is your name?"  
He said, "Jacob."  
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."  
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.

**Young's Updated LT** And he says, "Send me away, for the dawn has ascended." And he says, "I send you not away, except you have blessed me." And He says unto him, "What is your name?" and he says, "Jacob." And he says, "Your name is no more called Jacob, but Israel; for you have been a prince with God and with men, and will prevail." And Jacob asks, and says, "Declare, I pray you, your name;" and he says, "Why is this, you ask for My name?" And He blesses him there.

**The gist of this passage:** There is an interchange between Jacob and the wrestler, Who is God. The wrestler asks to be let go, and Jacob will not until he is blessed. God also renames Jacob *Israel*. Then God blesses him.

Genesis 32:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (l) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 32:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
shālach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>send, send off, send away [back], dismiss, give over, cast out, let go, set free, shoot forth [branches], shoot [an arrow]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperative with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'ālâh (אָלַח) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
shachar (שָׁחַר) [pronounced SHAH-khahr]	<i>dawn, morning; felicity [a dawning after misery]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #7837 BDB #1007

**Translation:** He said, “Send Me away for the dawn is breaking.”

God, in the form of an angel, is wrestling Jacob and they have been wrestling for most of the night (this began after Jacob moved his family to what I would assume is a more secure place—and then Jacob returned to the solitude of his own camp).

God has injured Jacob; but Jacob continues to hold on. God tells Jacob, “Send Me away, for the dawn has come.” Now, this does not mean that God will turn into a pumpkin or anything like that. However, Jacob has a lot of things to do. His servants are about to present a great present to his brother Esau, and Jacob needs to be right behind them so that, after the present, Esau sees Jacob. Therefore, Jacob needs to let go of God because he, Jacob, has a big day in front of him.

Nevertheless, it is odd that God is the One to say this.

So far, while wrestling, God has injured Jacob's leg, but Jacob continues to fight against God, which very much describes the sort of life Jacob has led. He faces divine discipline often, and yet, he keeps opposing God with his various schemes.

At least one commentator, Clarke,<sup>408</sup> understood this to be Jacob speaking. This is what I thought at first, but changed my mind when comparing this to the rest of the sentence. Why did I choose this to be the Angel speaking rather than Jacob? The Angel is the subject of the verbs in the previous 2 verses and the next two verses after this one. Therefore, it would make little sense to change that around for this verse alone. Furthermore, in this verse, we have one person speaking then the next clearly answering. The one answering in the next half of this verse must be Jacob, because he demands the Angel bless him. Even though all of this is done with pronouns from vv. 25–28, there are enough references to Jacob to make each non-specific reference clear.

<sup>408</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:26.

## Genesis 32:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לא or לו) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Piel perfect with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'îm (אם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
Together, kîy 'îm (כי אם) [pronounced kee-eem] act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and therefore should be rendered <i>but, except, except that, unless</i> and possibly <i>only</i> . However, these particles are not used in a limiting way <i>if</i> they follow an oath, a question or a negative. Then they can be rendered <i>that if, for if, for though, that since, for if, but if, indeed if, even if; except for, but</i> .			
bârak <sup>e</sup> (ברך) [pronounced baw-RAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1288 BDB #138

The NET Bible: *Jacob wrestled with a man thinking him to be a mere man, and on that basis was equal to the task. But when it had gone on long enough, the night visitor touched Jacob and crippled him. Jacob's request for a blessing can only mean that he now knew that his opponent was supernatural. Contrary to many allegorical interpretations of the passage that make fighting equivalent to prayer, this passage shows that Jacob stopped fighting, and then asked for a blessing.*<sup>409</sup>

**Translation:** But he said, "I will not send You away unless You bless me."

Jacob apparently recognizes that he is wrestling with God and he will not allow God to get away without blessing him first. So, despite his injury, Jacob continues to hold on to God.

<sup>409</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

This struggle between Jacob and God is not one of strength. When God wants us gone, we're gone. We are not a match for His authority or omnipotence. However, the struggle here is between wills: Jacob's hard-headed free will as over against God's will for Jacob's life. Although there is God's overruling will, God prefers for us to choose Him and to choose His plan. God would rather that our free will coincided with His plan; because the end result is a much better and happier life for us.

Regarding man's volition, there are 3 categories of God's will:

### 3 Categories of the Will of God

1. God's directive will is what God wants us to do. Various mandates in both the Old and New Testaments tell us what God wants us to do.
2. God's permissive will is when God allows us to do something which does not line up with His plan. What we do might be sin; or what we do might simply be the human viewpoint solution that we have come up with.
3. God's overruling will is when we intend for X to happen, but God sees to it that not-X happens instead.

Directive will of God: God tells Jacob what to do. For instance, God told Jacob to pick up and leave Haran and to return to the land of promise.

Permissive will of God: God allowed some of Jacob's goofy schemes to be carried out. Jacob deceiving his father was not what God wanted Jacob to do. God allowed Jacob to carry out his breeding scheme. God has allowed Jacob to rearrange his encampments and to send the present to Esau, even though these plans indicate a lack of faith in God.

Overruling will of God: Despite Jacob's many mistakes and acts of disobedience, God will still bless him and his descendants.

Also see the **Doctrine of the Will of God** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

There are several things which cause us to advance spiritually. Obviously, when our will conforms to God's will, that is a good thing; but, how do we know God's will? That comes from Bible doctrine. That comes from principles of doctrine in our souls—principles that we believe, draw on and depend upon. However, none of that is any good unless we are in fellowship.

Jacob understands a new principle. Jacob recognizes that ultimately, his blessing comes from God, and here he is, wrestling with God. Jacob does not want to let God go without being blessed by Him. This represents an advance in Jacob's thinking. If you remember back, Jacob has, through a variety of schemes, tried to receive blessing. Jacob got Esau to give him his birthright because Esau was starving; he deceived his own father in order to receive a blessing from him (he took Esau's blessing). Jacob also tried some scheming to get over on Laban, his uncle (remember his ridiculous breeding scheme?). But ultimately, all blessing comes from God. While Jacob struggles with God, refusing to let Him go without being blessed, Jacob has come to an important principle in the spiritual life: all blessing ultimately comes from God.

Philip. 4:19 **And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**  
 James 1:17 **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.** 2Cor. 9:8 **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.** (ESV; capitalized) For Jacob, this is an advance; this indicates an important stage of his spiritual growth. However, let me add that, Jacob has not reached spiritual maturity yet. The spiritual advance that he enjoys here will get him about 12 hours down the road. He will meet Esau and that will go well, but, about midway through Genesis 33, he will unnecessarily lie to Esau. In Jacob's life, spiritual progress has been made, but we would be remiss to designate him as spiritually mature now.

**Exodus 32:26** (a graphic); from **Reversing Verses**; accessed March 7, 2019.

Do not be confused by this wrestling match. God is not unable to break free from Jacob; but there is some involvement of Jacob's volition here. Jacob has to make some choices. Jacob's choice here is not to let the Lord go until He has blessed him. Based upon his life to this point, few of us would think that Jacob ought to be blessed. But that sort of thinking would be based upon legalism; and God's program is grace.

I believe that Jacob wants to hear, one more time, a repetition of the blessing which he is already aware of. He wants assurance from God about what will take place the next day. Furthermore, to hear the blessing of God from the mouth of God must certainly be reassuring.



Dr. Peter Pett sees it this way: *No one would suggest that God could not defeat Jacob. The point was that though Jacob could not defeat God he clung to Him and would not himself accept defeat. God could not, as it were, escape because Jacob was so desperate. He was clinging to God.*<sup>410</sup>

In any case, this is fascinating, and perhaps just the reason that Jacob is such a prominent figure in Genesis. He demands this blessing from God. He has not earned it; he does not deserve it; he has failed many times. But he knows that he is a critical link in the plan of God and he demands this blessing from God.

You may recall that, throughout Jacob's life, he was trying to maneuver things so that he would be blessed. He appropriated Esau's birthright and later his blessing, given to him by their deceived father, Isaac. Surely Jacob realized that the blessing given him from his father, while deceived, was a shaky blessing (although it did hold true). And before leaving Canaan, Jacob received another blessing from his father that was real. However, Jacob is now wrestling with God and he demands to be blessed. There is only One Entity that can truly bless Jacob and that is God. Despite his many shortcomings, Jacob knows Who blesses him.

Right now, Jacob is wrestling with God—something which describes his life—but Jacob has God right there with him. Jacob is not going to let God go without getting a blessing from Him. Jacob knows that, if God gives him a blessing, then he is truly blessed. Jacob knows that being blessed by God cannot be lost or bettered.

One of the things which I learned as a new believer was to demand that God do thus and so. If God has given us a promise, then we can demand in prayer that He deliver on that promise. Don't get all weird on me and think that this is the key to getting whatever it is you want in prayer—that is not going to happen. But in life, when you have difficulties, and you pray to God, you can hold to various divine promises and demand that God fulfill these promises. Whatever God has promised us in the Word of God, He must fulfill those promises (read each promise in context to make certain that, if you play a part, then that is a part of the promise).

The ESV; capitalized is used below (unless otherwise indicated). Even though many of these promises have very specific recipients under very specific circumstances, there are still applications of these promises to believers today.

It is a good idea for the believer to memorize a number of promises from God. This does not necessarily mean that you need to memorize them word-for-word; you simply need to know what God has promised you.

<sup>410</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–25.

## Some Promises from God

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. Even though this is a very specific promise for a very specific time, it has application to today. Your life will be better if you honor your parents. Giving respect to your parents could potentially increase your lifespan as well.

Isa. 40:29 He [God] gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength.

Isa. 40:31 ...but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Isa. 41:10 ...fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isa. 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. This is not to make you swim across the ocean or to walk through fire; but this means that God will be with you and preserve you in circumstances that you find yourself in it.

Isa. 54:10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isa. 54:17 ...no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD."

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2Chron. 7:14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Deut. 31:8 It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Jer. 29:11 For I [God] know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalms 34:17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

## Some Promises from God

Psalm 37:4 [Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.](#)

I took these from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/gods-promises-verses-in-the-bible/> accessed February 7, 2019. There are literally hundreds of websites which list the various promises of God.

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**Jacob Wrestling the Angel (oil on panel - 12'x8' - 2012)** (a graphic); from [Saint Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church](#); accessed March 9, 2019. This was the only site to offer any information about this particular painting, and below it, it has © 1892 - 2019 St. Matthews Evangelical Lutheran Church. All Rights Reserved, which I believe applies to the painting. However, no artist's name is given or any other details. Being one of the coolest pictures, I had to include it.



Let's take Jacob as an example. God has promised Jacob a whole host of things by virtue of being the line of promise. "I want to hear directly from You, God, my blessings from You," Jacob is demanding.

God tells Jacob to let Him go; and it is Jacob who refuses during this wrestling match.

Since this is God, it should be clear that this is not a matter of strength, strategy or ability. Jacob has not wrestled God to a point where God cannot beat him. The key here is Jacob's volition. Jacob wants God and God's blessing, while fighting with God at the same time. Jacob has some understanding of God's blessing, but in his

actions, insofar as he continues to oppose God, are often wrong. Jacob so often does the wrong thing, but intending to yet gain God's blessing.

In many ways, we might understand that Jacob is exploiting God's grace (but in a good way).

Essentially, God says to Jacob, "You keep fighting Me; you cannot seem to stop fighting Me." Then He asks Jacob, "What is it that you want? What do you really want?" And Jacob answers Him, "I want You to bless me."

For some of us, this describes our lives with God. We are always at odds with Him. We want God to bless us, but we are doing exactly the opposite of what God wants us to do.

Genesis 32:26 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me."

### Genesis 32:26b "Do not leave until You bless me." (Various commentators)

NIV Study Bible: *Jacob finally acknowledged that the blessing must come from God.*<sup>411</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *What happens now? Jacob is just holding on; he's not wrestling. He is just holding on to this One. He found out that you do not get anywhere with God by struggling and resisting. The only way that you get anywhere with Him is by yielding and just holding on to Him. Abraham had learned that, and that is why he said amen to God. He believed God, and He counted it to him for righteousness. Abraham reached the end of his rope and put his arms around God. My friend, when you get in that condition, then you trust God. When you are willing to hold on, He is there ready to help you.*<sup>412</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *It is evident that Jacob was aware of the character of Him with whom he wrestled; and, believing that His power, though by far superior to human, was yet limited by His promise to do him good, he determined not to lose the golden opportunity of securing a blessing.*<sup>413</sup>

Barnes: *Despairing now of his own strength, he is Jacob still: he declares his determination to cling on until his conqueror bless him. He now knows he is in the hand of a higher power, who can disable and again enable, who can curse and also bless. He knows himself also to be now utterly helpless without the healing, quickening, protecting power of his victor, and, though he die in the effort, he will not let him go without receiving this blessing. Jacob's sense of his total debility and utter defeat is now the secret of his power with his friendly vanquisher. He can overthrow all the prowess of the self-reliant, but he cannot resist the earnest entreaty of the helpless.*<sup>414</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob had suddenly realized, through the touch of physical suffering, that he was in the grasp of more than mortal power. He neither shrinks, nor desists, but maintains his hold and asks for a blessing.*<sup>415</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Jacob was rendered unfit to wrestle any more, but he was still clinging to the Lord, who told him, "Let me go, for the day breaks." The Lord could have easily left at once, but He gave opportunity to Jacob to say what he did, "I will not let You go unless you bless me" (v.26). At least the faith of Jacob was real, though it was weak. He knew he needed the Lord's blessing, though he had acted inconsistently with a spirit of unquestioning faith and dependence on God.*

<sup>411</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 56 (footnote).

<sup>412</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

<sup>413</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:26.

<sup>414</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:23–32.

<sup>415</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:26.

## Genesis 32:26b “Do not leave until You bless me.” (Various commentators)

Grant continues: *God said of Jacob that he would be named Israel because he had "struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." It certainly does not mean that he had defeated God in wrestling, for he actually prevailed only when he was crippled and therefore clung dependently to the Lord. This dependence on God would enable him to prevail with men too.*

Grant concludes: *This will prove true in the future for the nation Israel also; and the same proves true for every believer today who has been brought down to a place of clinging dependently to the Lord. May we know this place well.*<sup>416</sup>

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Gen 32:24–26 Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that He could not defeat him, He struck Jacob's hip as they wrestled and dislocated his hip socket. Then He said to Jacob, "Let Me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." (HCSB)

Robert Dean is an outstanding doctrinal teacher.

### Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. Explains This Wrestling Match

Now we are left with this mystery. Who is this man? Why is he called a man? Well, when does this take place? It is night; it is dark. Jacob doesn't know who is there, all he knows is there is what appears to be a man in opposition to him, and he is under assault. Jacob is strong. What has he been doing for 20 years? He has been out working with the flocks and the herds. We know that he is strong because when he first arrived in Paddam-aram he single-handedly picked up the large stone that covered the well. So we know that he was a man who was physically strong. We don't know who he is wrestling with yet, but if we read to the end of the story we know that it is God. Why is God wrestling with Jacob? And if He is wrestling with him why doesn't God just take him out at the very beginning and win the match? Why does God let Jacob seem to win or come close to winning? Probably the reason for this whole episode here is a real physical picture of what was going on spiritually for the last thirty or forty years or more in Jacob's life where he was struggling or wrestling with God and God's place in his life. All of this time Jacob has been trying to manipulate the blessing. He was trying to out-fox Esau, trying to cheat him, and then goes to Laban, and he is constantly trying to manipulate to get what God had already promised and prophesied in that original announcement when the two twins are struggling in Rebekah's womb, and God said that the older would serve the younger, and that these represent two nations. He already knows that but has been busy trying to manipulate God to get what was already his to begin with.

God in grace does the same thing with us. We are always wrestling with God in our lives, and God just doesn't hit us over the head with a 2 x 4, He doesn't win the match right away. There is grace in the process as He gives us that time to learn and to grow before God finally drives the point home that He needs to be the one who is in complete charge of our life and our thinking, and He needs to be the only and ultimate reference point for everything that is in our life. This is that point in Jacob's life. He has gone through these stages of spiritual advance and it is here that everything is going to change. We know that because at the end of this episode God gives him a new name, Israel, which means he who wrestles with God and he has prevailed against God. But in his prevailing against God, what happens? God wins. There is this ironic twist that take place in this episode. God at the very end just touches. It is a word that can mean to smite or to strike or to hit, but it also means just to lightly touch. It is not a word which tells us what the power of the touch was, and since it is God it doesn't have to be anything powerful, He can just touch that hip joint and displace it and Jacob is going to be crippled for the rest of his life as a constant reminder of who is ultimately in charge of his life. What God is showing Jacob is that Jacob has to be in complete submission to God's authority in his life before God is going to give him the blessing. God is not giving him the blessing yet. Jacob has out-foxed Esau, and has deceived his father

<sup>416</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

## Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. Explains This Wrestling Match

Isaac, but God has not made the point of giving the blessing to Jacob, and it is at this point that Jacob in his wrestling with God, pleads with God to give him the blessing. It is at this point that Jacob recognizes that he must be in complete and total dependence upon God. And we never again see in the life of Jacob that old cunning manipulator that we have seen up to this point. This is a transforming event and time in Jacob's life. This is when he moves into a new level of spiritual maturity and dependence upon God. So this whole wrestling match is designed to be a picture, a training aid, as it were, for Jacob and for us of the reality that we, too, have to come to this point where just as Jacob meets God face to face and recognizes that he must make God the ultimate authority in his life, we have to come to that same point as well.

From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen134.htm> accessed June 3, 2015. I originally had this as coming from Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. but I could not find this link anymore. When I began to do phrase searching, I kept coming up with this study as coming from Buddy Dano's site. Dean transferred his notes over to another site, but I was unable to locate the reference there. However, after doing some searching on Dano's site (I think someone else is maintaining it), it turns out that this is Dean's work.

From <http://www.divineviewpoint.com/sane/dbm/setup/Genesis/Gen134.htm> accessed March 18, 2019. The parent directory is: <http://www.divineviewpoint.com/sane/dbm/setup/> I do not know how much of this is Dano's, Dean's or if other author's works are included here as well. I did a brief exploration of this index and found only Dean's work.

This brings up something worth discussing—other people's work in the Scriptures. I have noticed in my studies that there is some serious overlap in some of the old references which I use. In reading John Wesley, it may turn out that he has simply quoted Matthew Poole, but without attributing anything to him. Seems like Wesley has done this with Benson's work as well.

I do everything possible to attribute proper authorship when I use someone else's doctrine or take a quote from someone. Even when I paraphrase someone, or read something that someone wrote, and that inspires me to write, as a quote from them just would not work. Even then I try to attribute the original author. It is my belief that doctrinal teachers should freely share their material; but that it is also just good manners to attribute the original source.

Now, 100 years from now, there will be a pastor who may read my material and depend on it strongly in order to exegete, say, the book of Genesis. It is far more important, when teaching from the pulpit, that the information be taught to a congregation rather than to attribute this or that work. I would have no problem if a pastor added another night of Bible study, and primarily pulled his sermons from the work which I have done. What is of the utmost importance is, believers of each generation here the Word of God taught accurately.

The person I quote the least from is R. B. Thieme, Jr.; but it is his teaching from the pulpit of Berachah Church which gave me the most thorough understanding of Bible doctrine I could hope for. I do not know another teacher from the 20<sup>th</sup> century who can match the work that he has done. I highly recommend **his studies** to any person interested in the Word of God—particularly to those who believe that they may have the gift of pastor-teacher (I particularly recommend his work from the late 60's, 70's and early 80's). His son Bobby has picked up the torch and has also done an outstanding job of **teaching** as well.

More important than anything else is for believers all over the world to get under a pastor-teacher and learn Bible doctrine and have souls filled with God's Word.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

In a nutshell, it is like this. God has promised specific blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Jacob is constantly trying to earn these blessings, sometimes through deception and other often devious approaches. In this way, he is actually wrestling with God, when he does not have to be.

Although there will be a marked change in the life and behavior of Jacob, he does not ever achieve the level of Abraham's spiritual growth. Therefore, do not look for him to be so changed as to be as spiritually mature as his

grandfather. However, when we study Jacob living in Egypt, it will be clear that he, at the end of his life, becomes much more doctrinally oriented.

Jacob has returned to the land from Paddan-aram. He is about to meet his brother, Esau; and he knows that Esau has 400 men with him. Jacob has set a huge amount of livestock aside for Esau.

**A Review of Genesis 32:24–26:** This is the night before Jacob is about to meet his estranged twin brother Esau. Jacob has divided his people into two camps, primarily to hide his wives and children from Esau. In front of him are most of his servants with a large present of livestock for Esau. Behind him are his wives and children (and probably some slaves); hidden so that they might be protected. Jacob is worried that his brother Esau might kill him, as he was ready to do 20 years ago. At this point, Jacob is alone between the two camps.

**Gen. 32:24–25** Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that He could not defeat him, He struck Jacob's hip as they wrestled and dislocated his hip socket. (HCSB)

Jacob, for all of his life, despite being in the line of promise, appeared to be in opposition to God. Whenever there was a choice between the right way of doing things and Jacob's way of doing things, Jacob went with his own way, his own plan. The oft-time repeated phrase of the book of the Judges is, **And every man did what was right in his own eyes**, also describes Jacob's approach to life. If he could work a situation to benefit himself, that is what he did.

**Gen 32:26** Then He said to Jacob, "Let Me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." (HCSB)

Jacob demands a blessing from God.

Genesis 32:26 He said, "Send Me away for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
mâh (מה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552

## Genesis 32:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
shêm (שׁוּם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027

The NET Bible: "What is your name?" The question is rhetorical, since the Lord obviously knew Jacob's identity. But since the Lord is going to change Jacob's name, this question is designed to bring focus Jacob's attention on all that his name had come to signify.<sup>417</sup>

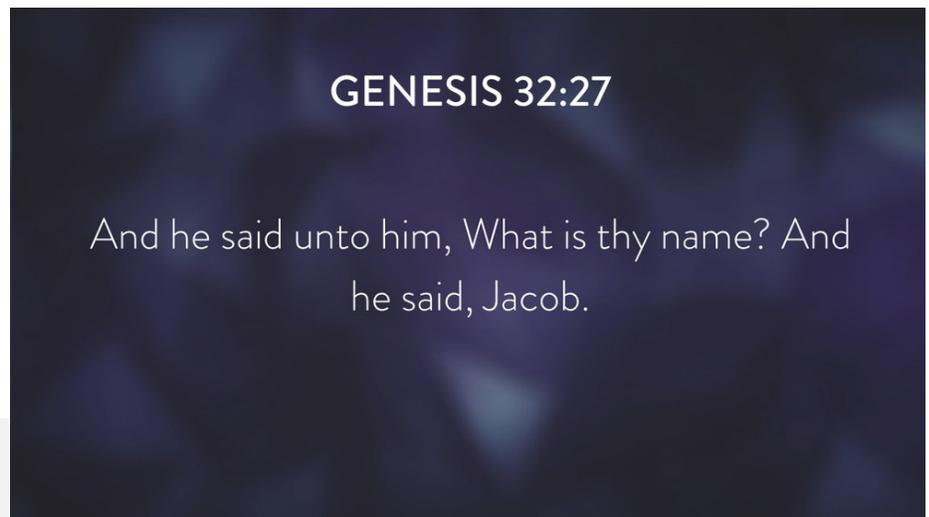
**Translation:** He asked him, "What [is] your name?"

God asks Jacob his name. This is not because God is fishing for information; it is not because God has forgotten Jacob's name. God is going to make a point when blessing Jacob.

**Genesis 32:27** (a graphic); from **Fairview Decatur**; accessed March 7, 2019.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



God knows who Jacob is. God does not ask questions to gain information. He asks us questions to make us think. Jacob knows what Jacob's name is and God knows what it means. God is thinking about his name and his general manipulative character and God speaks to him:

God does not ask questions in order to elicit information, as God is omniscient. God often asks questions in order to teach—God here uses the Socratic method of teaching over a millennium before Socrates. What is God getting at? God is reminding Jacob of who he is; of how he solves problems. Jacob is a *chiseler*; he is a *supplanter*; he is a *heel-catcher*. Jacob is the name of a man who *takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy*.<sup>418</sup> He is a man whose every thought appears to be centered on, *what's best for me; what's in it for me; how can I profit by this situation?* God is telling him, "This is who you are."

Genesis 32:26–27a He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?"

### Genesis 32:27a: Why does God ask Jacob "What is your name?" (Commentators)

The Open Bible: [To say his own name was] to confess a deep character flaw.<sup>419</sup>

E. W. Bullinger: [This is a] Figure of speech Anthropopatheia. For He knew his name.<sup>420</sup>

<sup>417</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

<sup>418</sup> From [Wenstrom.org](http://Wenstrom.org) accessed September 1, 2015.

<sup>419</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 49 (footnote).

<sup>420</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:27.

## Genesis 32:27a: Why does God ask Jacob “What is your name?” (Commentators)

Dr. John Gill: *[This] question is put, not as being ignorant of it, but in order to take occasion from it, and the change of it, to show that he had granted his request, and had blessed him, and would yet more and more.*<sup>421</sup>

L. M. Grant: *The Lord then first requires Jacob to confess his name by natural birth. But Jacob (“the supplanter”) must have his name changed if he is to receive proper blessing from God.*<sup>422</sup>

Guzik: *Jacob must have felt a sense of shame, admitting his name was “Jacob,” meaning “con-man, sneaky, cheater.” Yet, this was who he was, and Jacob had to admit to it. i. We all want to name ourselves favorably. We say, “I am firm; you are obstinate; they are stubborn fools.” God wouldn’t allow Jacob to cover up his name.*<sup>423</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *“What is your name” This is not lack of information on the angelic/divine wrestler's part, but a reminder to Jacob of his character of trickery and manipulation.*<sup>424</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *This question, concerning the name which the Questioner knows, leads up to the solemn pronouncement of Jacob’s new title.*<sup>425</sup>

Whedon: *The answer of Jacob was the confession of his name, Jacob, supplanter; the man who took his brother by the heel, and had been guilty of many an act of wrong. Thus to confess one’s name is to confess one’s sins, and “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9).*<sup>426</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The Lord did “not” ask Jacob his name to solicit information since He is omniscient, rather the Lord did so because He wanted to arouse in Jacob an awareness of his former character reflected in his name and to prepare him for a change of name, which would accurately reflect his new character.*

Wenstrom continues: *The name given to “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” (yah-ak-ove) (בִּקְעָה) implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.*

Wenstrom concludes: *The name “Jacob” was an accurate description of his character that was the result of being a slave to his old Adamic sin nature.*<sup>427</sup>

God gets Jacob to focus on himself in an honest way to begin with. Then God will change his name.

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<sup>421</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:27.

<sup>422</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>423</sup> *David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:27–29.

<sup>424</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

<sup>425</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Gen.32:27.

<sup>426</sup> *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:27 (slightly edited).

<sup>427</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Ya'âqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-âuh-KOH <sup>B</sup> V]	supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

**Translation:** And he answered, "Jacob."

Jacob says that his name is *Jacob*, which means *supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel*. Obviously, this is not a great name. This name quite accurately describes Jacob and his actions throughout his life.

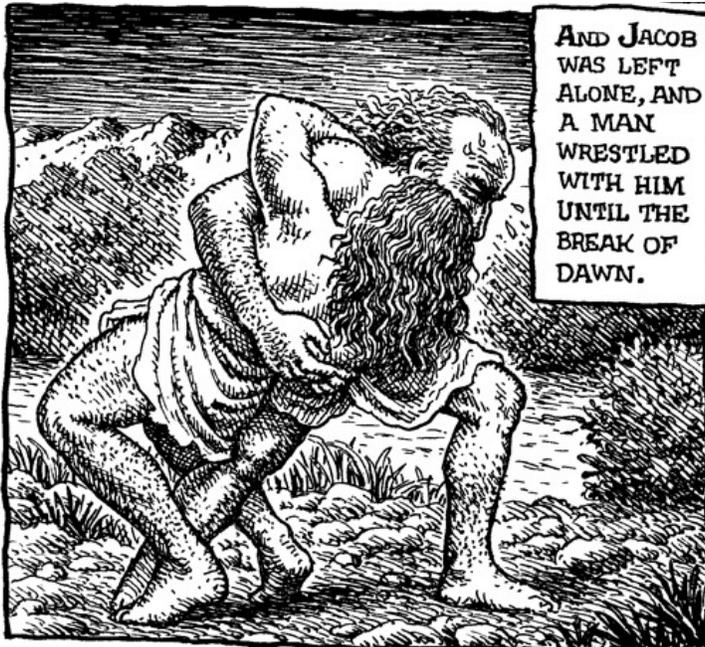
Throughout human history, God often uses a play on a person's name. Jacob meant, *chiseler*. God, Who is wrestling Jacob, will now rename him. Renaming Jacob will be equivalent to giving him a blessing.

"This is who you used to be; this new name is the person that you should be."

**R Crum Genesis 32:22–27** (a series of graphics); from [Exhibition Walkthrough: R. Crumb's Book of Genesis](#); accessed September 16, 2017 (this may no longer be up).

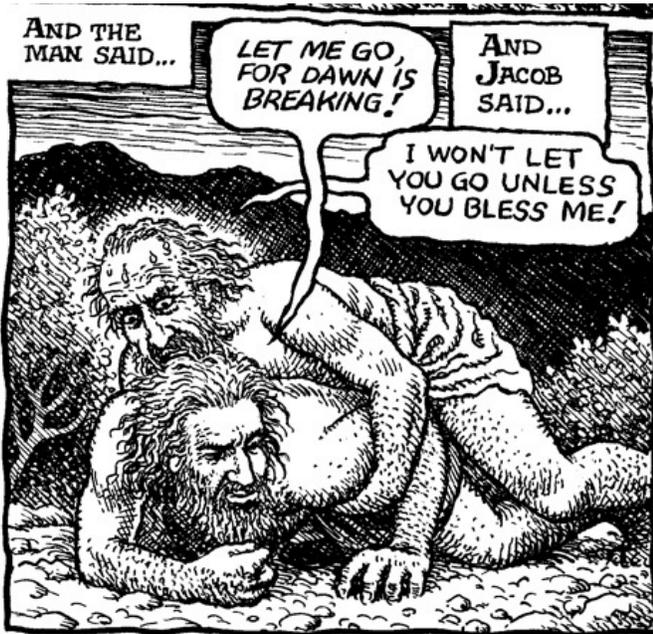
AND HE  
ROSE THAT  
SAME NIGHT  
AND TOOK  
HIS TWO  
WIVES AND  
HIS TWO  
SLAVEGIRLS  
AND HIS  
ELEVEN BOYS  
AND HE  
CROSSED OVER  
THE JABBOK  
FORD. AND  
HE TOOK  
THEM AND  
BROUGHT  
THEM ACROSS  
THE STREAM,  
AND HE  
BROUGHT  
ACROSS ALL  
THAT HE HAD.





AND JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE, AND A MAN WRESTLED WITH HIM UNTIL THE BREAK OF DAWN.

AND HE SAW THAT HE HAD NOT WON OUT AGAINST HIM AND HE TOUCHED HIS HIP-SOCKET AND JACOB'S HIP-SOCKET WAS WRENCHED AS HE WRESTLED WITH HIM.

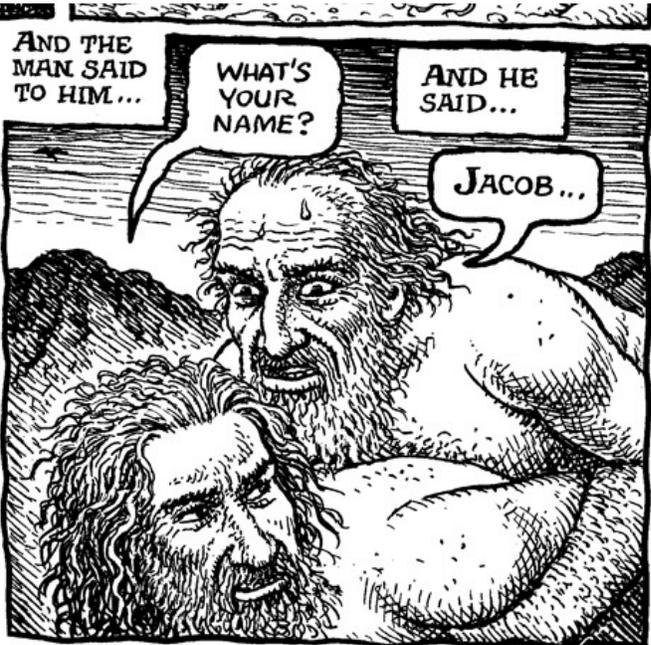


AND THE MAN SAID...

LET ME GO, FOR DAWN IS BREAKING!

AND JACOB SAID...

I WON'T LET YOU GO UNLESS YOU BLESS ME!



AND THE MAN SAID TO HIM...

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

AND HE SAID...

JACOB...

R Crumb used to write and draw hippie comic books; and, at some point in time, he decided to draw the book of Genesis. Insofar as I know, based upon what I have read, Crumb has not yet believed in Jesus.

Genesis 32:27 He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, "Jacob." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 32:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לא or לו) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-guh-KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to be told, to be said, to be called</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ôwd (וְעַד) [pronounced gôhd]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
With the negative, this means <i>never again, no more, not...anymore, not again, no longer</i> .			
shêm (שם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'îm (אם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
Together, kîy 'îm (כי אם) [pronounced kee-eem] act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and therefore should be rendered <i>but, except, except that, unless</i> and possibly <i>only</i> . However, these particles are not used in a limiting way <i>if</i> they follow an oath, a question or a negative. Then they can be rendered <i>that if, for if, for though, that since, for if, but if, indeed if, even if; except for, but</i> .			
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

## Genesis 32:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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The NET Bible: *You have fought. The explanation of the name Israel includes a sound play. In Hebrew the verb translated "you have fought" (תִּרְחַץ, sarita) sounds like the name "Israel" (יִשְׂרָאֵל, yisra'el), meaning "God fights" (although some interpret the meaning as "he fights [with] God"). The name would evoke the memory of the fight and what it meant. A. Dillmann says that ever after this the name would tell the Israelites that, when Jacob contended successfully with God, he won the battle with man (Genesis, 2:279). To be successful with God meant that he had to be crippled in his own self-sufficiency (A. P. Ross, "Jacob at the Jabboq, Israel at Peniel," BSac 142 [1985]: 51-62).<sup>428</sup>*

**Translation:** He then said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but [it will be] Israel,..."

God, who has wrestled Jacob and has permanently injured Jacob, tells him that his name will no longer be *Jacob* (which means *supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel*); but that his name will now be *Israel*. *Israel* means *God prevails; contender; soldier of God*. The first ¾<sup>th</sup>s of this name is the Qal imperfect of *sârâh*, which is found below. It means *to contend [with]; to persist, to exert oneself, to persevere*. The tail-end of *Israel* means *God*. This is what Jacob has been doing—he has been wrestling with God, he has been contending with God. If anything, this describes his life up to that point (and, for the most part, this never changes).

It is not Jacob's sin nature which has prevailed here, but his Godly nature, his spiritual side. God had to physically hurt him in discipline, but Jacob prevails because he holds God to His promises. God must bless him because God has promised that to Jacob.

Hosea's commentary on the life of Jacob goes like this: Hosea 12:2–6 *The LORD has an indictment against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways; He will repay him according to his deeds. In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God. He strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us—the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His memorial name: "So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God."* (ESV; capitalized) I may want to evaluate this passage, verse-by-verse.

In the Hebrew, *Israel* is *Yis'ra'êl* (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced *yis-raw-ALE*] and it is closely related to the words *yâshar* (יָשַׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAR*] (and this means *moral, uprightness, straightness*)<sup>429</sup> and *sârâh*<sup>430</sup> (הִרְשָׁה) [pronounced *saw-RAW*] and this word means *to persevere, prevail*. The latter word is found in this verse and in Hosea 12:4–5. Because this word is found so little in Scripture, its meaning is tougher to ascertain (and this may not be the last word on it). However, as we see in Hosea 12:4–5, Jacob began fighting the world (in this case, his brother) from the time that they were in the womb together, up until that day. Jacob was always in contention with someone and he continually used human viewpoint and his ability to manipulate in order to wrestle Esau's possession from him. Jacob spend so much of his life trying to outsmart others. However, as long as he operated in the realm of the flesh, he did not prevail. However, this time, after Jesus Christ broke his hip, he held on and kept on holding on, holding God to His promises. His situation got so hopeless here, that not only was he waiting for Esau to come and kill him (which he expected—otherwise, he would not have moved his family), and now Jesus Christ comes and kicks his butt. He has got nowhere else to turn to except to demand that God fulfill His promises to him by blessing him. So, finally, in this most hopeless of hopeless situations, Jacob prevails (remember, he is wrestling the Lord Jesus Christ; how can he hope to prevail?). He recognizes Who he has been fighting all these years and now will not let our Lord go without His blessing. His blessing—His Word—will give Jacob that assurance that he needs to keep him until morning.

<sup>428</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

<sup>429</sup> We know that this was partially what *Israel* connotes, as the Bible often refers to Israel with the poetic name *yêshûruwn* (יְשׁוּרוּן) [pronounced *yesh-oo-ROOM*]

<sup>430</sup> Yes, this is the name that you think it is

Genesis 32:26–28 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.”

### Genesis 32:28a: The name *Israel* (various commentators)

Forerunner Commentary: We find the first mention of Israel in Genesis 32:28: “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.’” God first uses the name “Israel” to identify Jacob, the progenitor of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Forerunner Commentary: From this point forward the Bible uses “Jacob” and “Israel” interchangeably, even in the same sentence. Notice Genesis 48:2: “And Jacob was told, ‘Look, your son Joseph is coming to you’; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.”

Forerunner Commentary: Genesis 48 contains the account where Joseph comes to see his sick and dying father and brings along his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (verse 1). After recounting God's promise to him, Israel summons the two boys so he can bless them (verse 9). As part of that blessing, Israel says in verse 16, “The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (emphasis ours). God through Jacob places the name Israel on the sons of Joseph, not Judah, giving us our first glimpse of God's view.<sup>431</sup>

Benson: The word Israel means a prince with God.<sup>432</sup>

James Burton Coffman: Although most scholars give the meaning of “Israel” as “Prince of God,” Josephus declared that it means “One that struggled with the divine angel.” Moreover, William Whiston, the noted translator of Josephus' works affirmed that: “This may be the proper meaning of Israel. It is certain that the Hellenists of the first century, in Egypt, and elsewhere, interpreted Israel to be a man seeing God.”<sup>433</sup>

David Guzik: The name Israel is a compound of two words: sarah (meaning, “fight,” “struggle,” or “rule”) and el (meaning, “God”). Some take the name Israel to mean, “He who struggles with God” or “He who rules with God.” But in Hebrew names, sometimes God is not the object of the verb but the subject. Daniel means “God judges” not “he judges God.” So this principle shows us Israel means, “God rules.”<sup>434</sup>

Gary Everett: Gesenius the Hebrew name “Israel” (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל) (H3478) means, “contender, soldier of God.” Strong says it means, “he will rule as God.” BDB says it means, “God prevails.” PTW says it means “one who prevails with God.” Strong says it is derived from two Hebrew words: (הָרָץ) (H8280), which means “to prevail,” and (אֱלֹהִים) (H410), meaning, “God.” —

Gary Everett: There appear to be two general interpretations as to the meaning of the name “Israel”. It has a literal meaning of “struggling with God,” and the figurative interpretation of “a prince with God.”

Gary Everett: As with all of the names that God gives his servants in the Old Testament, their meaning can be found within the context of the passage. Genesis 32:28, as well as Hosea 12:3–4, reveals that his name comes from the fact that Jacob had power over the angel and prevailed. Thus, his name seems to care the more literally meaning.

Gary Everett: Hosea 12:3–4, “He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us;”

<sup>431</sup> From **Forerunner's Commentary**; Genesis 32:28.

<sup>432</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:27–28.

<sup>433</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional citation there.

<sup>434</sup> David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:27–29.

## Genesis 32:28a: The name *Israel* (various commentators)

Gary Everett: *We know that Jacob wrestled with an angel and thus prevailed over the angel by his strength. But what does Genesis 32:28 mean when it tells us that Jacob has prevailed over men? Perhaps we find the meaning in Hosea 12:3–4 when it tells us that Jacob “took his brother by the heel in the womb” that Jacob prevailed over his brother Esau.*<sup>435</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *[The Angel] then said to Jacob, “Your name will be called no more Jacob, but Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל, God’s fighter, from הָרָשָׁת to fight, and לָא God); for you have fought with God and with men, and have prevailed.”*<sup>436</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *The asking of the name in such circumstances is to seek the character of the person. Jacob meant ‘he who clutches’ and refers to the supplanting of the man Esau. Israel means ‘he who strives with God’ or ‘God strives’. This change of name marks the culmination of the change whereby ‘the grasper’ becomes the one who is determined to fulfil his purpose within the will of God.*

Pett continues: *[It is] Not that he is yet perfect. But his life has taken on a new direction. He is now a man of God, ‘he who strives with God’, and his future is secure within the sovereign purposes of God, ‘God strives’. Thus is he now ‘Israel’. And this change of name is the guarantee of his future hopes.*<sup>437</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *This name change seems to be the key to the interpretation of the entire account. Israel means “may El preserve” (BDB 975) or if JUSSIVE, “let El contend” (cf. Hosea 12:3-4). It was not Jacob’s strength, but God’s purpose. One’s name was very important to the Hebrews and denoted a person’s character.*

Utley continues: *Another option for the name “Israel” (יִשְׂרָאֵל, BDB 975) is from יִשְׂרָאֵל ("Jeshurun," BDB 449, cf. Deut. 32:15; Deut. 33:5; Deut. 33:26; Isaiah 44:2), which means “upright one.”*<sup>438</sup>

E. W. Bullinger: *Israel = “God commands, orders or rules”. Man attempts it but always, in the end, fails. Out of some forty Hebrew names compounded with “El” or “Jah”, God is always the doer of what the verb means (compare Dani-el, God judges).*<sup>439</sup>

Matthew Poole: *Israel signifies a prince or prevailer with God; or, a prince of God, i.e. a great prince and conqueror. You have in some sort conquered both God in this conflict and men, Laban, Esau, etc.*<sup>440</sup>

Whedon: *The word is compounded of לא, God, and רָשָׁת, from הָרָשָׁת, akin to רוּשׁ and רָשָׁת, in which are combined the ideas of prince and power. The common version beautifully and forcibly presents both meanings, as a prince hast thou power. The oft-occurring word רָשָׁת, sar — prince, noble, chief — is of the same root. We deem it best in every rendering of the verb to preserve the idea of princely power.*<sup>441</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *“Israel” is the proper noun יִשְׂרָאֵל (יִשְׂרָאֵל) (yis-raw-ale), which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed .*<sup>442</sup>

<sup>435</sup> Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett’s Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>436</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:26–30 (slightly edited).

<sup>437</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:27–29 (slightly edited).

<sup>438</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

<sup>439</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>440</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28 (slightly edited).

<sup>441</sup> *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:28.

<sup>442</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

Keil and Delitzsch: *But while Abram and Sarai, from the time when God changed their names (Genesis 17:5 and Genesis 17:15), are always called by their new names; in the history of Jacob we find the old name used interchangeably with the new. "For the first two names denoted a change into a new and permanent position, effected and intended by the will and promise of God; consequently the old names were entirely abolished. But the name Israel denoted a spiritual state determined by faith; and in Jacob's life the natural state, determined by flesh and blood, still continued to stand side by side with this. Jacob's new name was transmitted to his descendants."*<sup>443</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *The name of "Israel" has been found, as is generally believed, in the inscription of the Egyptian king, Merneptah (circ. 1230 B.C.), as Ysir'r; and in Assyrian inscriptions as Sirlai.*<sup>444</sup>

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:26–28 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail."

### ISRAEL (the name) (by Dr. Bob Utley)

- I. Surprisingly the name's meaning is uncertain (BDB 975, KB 442).
  - A. El Persists
  - B. Let El Persist (jussive)
  - C. El Preserves
  - D. Let El Contend
  - E. El Strives
  - F. He who strives with God (word play Gen. 32:28)
  - G. Reliable (IDB, vol. 2, p. 765)
  - H. Successful
  - I. Happy
- II. Usages in the OT
  - A. Jacob's name (supplanter, heel grabber, BDB 784, KB 872, cf. Gen. 25:26) is changed after wrestling with the spiritual personage at the river Jabbok (cf. Gen. 32:22-32; Exod. 32:13). Often the meanings of Hebrew names are sound plays, not etymologies (cf. Gen. 32:28). "Israel" becomes his assigned name (e.g., Gen. 35:10).
  - B. It came to be used as a collective name for all of Jacob's twelve sons (e.g., Gen. 32:32; 49:16; Exod. 1:7; 4:22; 28:11; Deut. 3:18; 10:6).
  - C. It came to designate the nation formed by the twelve tribes before the exodus (cf. Gen. 47:27; Exodus 4:22; 5:2) and after (cf. Deut. 1:1; 18:6; 33:10).
  - D. After the united monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon the tribes split under Rehoboam (cf. 1 Kings 12).
    1. the distinction starts even before the official split (e.g., II Sam. 3:10; 5:5; 20:1; 24:9; 1 Kgs. 1:35; 4:20)
    2. designates the northern tribes until the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 722 b.c. (cf. 2 Kings 17).
  - E. Used of Judah in a few places (e.g., Isaiah 1; Micah 1:15-16).
  - F. After the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles it became again the collective name for all of Jacob's descendants living in Palestine (e.g., Isa. 17:7,9; Jer. 2:4; 50:17,19).
  - G. Used of laity in contradistinction from priests (cf. 1 Chr. 9:2; Ezra 10:25; Neh. 11:3).

From [http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/special\\_topics/israel.html](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/special_topics/israel.html) accessed February 23, 2019.

<sup>443</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:26–30 (slightly edited).

<sup>444</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:28.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



**Genesis 32:28** (a graphic); from [Faithful Sermons](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

Do you see how this defines the entire history of Israel? Israel will wrestle against God throughout almost their entire history—throughout the night. Israel is thick-headed, determined, and stubborn; yet God will prevail; and when daylight comes, God will bless all Israel.

Do you see how this is analogous to our own existence? We are also thick-headed, determined and stubborn. Prior to our coming to Him, we wrestle against God—we oppose Him in any way

that we can; yet, by morning, He will prevail and, as a result, we will be greatly blessed.

Now, don't misunderstand me: what happened here is literal and historical; however, this does not mean that God is not teaching us by analogy (remember how often Jesus used parables to teach?). One of the great analogies of Scripture is when God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son—this incident literally happened in exactly the way that the Bible tells us that it happened. However, it also tells us that God would send His only Son, His firstborn, to die as a sacrifice for us. The substitutionary death of the scapegoat in Genesis 22 is the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. God sees to it that actual historical events which have taken place and are recorded in Scripture also teach us (and Israel) about God's plan.

When Abram was called by God Abraham, he never returned to his old name. Jacob, on the other hand, will be called *Jacob* and he will be called *Israel*. What's the difference? Abraham spent much of the rest of his life in fellowship. Jacob was different. He had good days; but then, he had a lot of bad days. He will not appear to have a consistent life until he is living in Egypt—something that will occur many years in the future from this point.

Jacob/Israel describes the life of the believer in general. There is the Jacobian nature—scheming, angry, self-absorbed, placing his will over God's; and then there is the Israeli nature—in fellowship, at peace with God, and subject to the will of God.<sup>445</sup>

The human author of this portion of Genesis (who is Jacob) no doubt appreciates that, there are times when he is abiding within the plan of God and other times when he is in rebellion against God. The Divine Author certainly recognizes that this is the pattern for all believers; and the pattern for nation Israel as well (there are times when Israel is quite conformed to God's will and other times when it is hard to imagine a people being more obstinate). Jacob, with his two names, describes the future of nation Israel—one day, they are with God and blessed; and the next day, they are stoning one of God's prophets.

In the New Testament, Simon will be given the name *Peter* by the Lord. His new name will mostly stick to him, even though Peter has some spectacular failures.

Genesis 32:26–28 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail."

<sup>445</sup> Albert Barnes should be credited with first asking this question and then discussing it. *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28–30.

## Genesis 32:28a: Jacob is renamed Israel (various commentators)

Arthur Pink: *The circumstances under which Jacob formally received his new name are worthy of the closest attention. He was, as we have seen, in great distress. News had come to hand that Esau, accompanied by four hundred men, was on the way to meet him. That for which he had labored so hard and so long to obtain in Padan-Aram seemed about to be wrested from his hands; his wives and his children appeared to be in imminent danger, and his own life in peril. As a precautionary measure he had sent his family over the brook Jabbok, and now he was left alone more desolate than when twenty years before he had left his father's house. Night had fallen, when suddenly a mysterious stranger appeared, and in the darkness grappled with him. All through the night this strange conflict continued.*<sup>446</sup>

Stephen Armstrong: *Jacob's new name comes and goes in the narrative of Genesis. Unlike Abram, who never used his old name again, Jacob's old name is still commonly used in the story.*<sup>447</sup>

James Burton Coffman: *The great spiritual crisis that Jacob passed through here was memorialized by the bestowal upon him of a new and glorious name, a boon which only God could give. The Heel-catcher has now become the "Prince of God." "The Israel of God" has signified the ultimate of human blessing and privilege from that memorable night until the present day!*<sup>448</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Only when the flesh is touched and shriveled does Jacob receive the name Israel ("a prince with God"). By nature he was Jacob, but by the grace of God he becomes Israel.*<sup>449</sup>

MacLaren: *Jacob is not always called Israel in his subsequent history. His new name was a name of character and of spiritual standing, and that might fluctuate, and the old self resume its power; so he is still called by the former appellation, just as, at certain points in his life, the apostle forfeits the right to be 'Peter,' and has to hear from Christ's lips the old name, the use of which is more poignant than many reproachful words; 'Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you.' But in the last death-bed scene, when the patriarch lifted himself in his bed, and with prophetic dignity pronounced his parting benediction on Joseph's sons, the new name reappears with solemn pathos.*<sup>450</sup>

J. Vernon McGee: *He is not Jacob anymore — the one who is usurper, the trickster — but Israel, "for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed." Now the new nature of Israel will be manifested in the life of this man.*<sup>451</sup>

Morgenstern takes the opportunity of this name change to make a different sort of application: *Man is a child of two worlds, Genesis 2:7. His body is of the dust, but his spirit is the Breath of God, in-breathed by God Himself, For twenty years these two natures had striven with each other [in Jacob]. This struggle is typical. There is no assurance that good will triumph of itself; it must be supported by strength of will and determination for the right, which endure for all time and under all circumstances. Men become changed, blessed by the very evil powers with which they have striven, No longer the old Jacob, but now the new Israel, Yet man never remains unscathed. Victory over evil is never gained in the darkness of the night. So with the dawn Jacob became a new man, with an appropriate new name, 'Champion of God.' Then he crossed the river.*<sup>452</sup>

Since I do not recognize this grand change of character in Jacob, let me suggest that all of this is potential, but not necessarily real. That quote continues to virtually gush about Jacob's transition from *cunning and craft* to *real and true*; but I thought that to be a bit much.

<sup>446</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

<sup>447</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/Genesis\\_33.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/Genesis_33.pdf) accessed April 8, 2019.

<sup>448</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019.

<sup>449</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>450</sup> Alexander MacLaren, D. D., Litt. D., *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>451</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32) (slightly edited).

<sup>452</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

## Genesis 32:28a: Jacob is renamed Israel (various commentators)

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Unlike Abraham, who received his new name once for all, and was never afterwards called by the former one, Jacob will hence be called now by the one, and now by the other, as the occasion may serve.*<sup>453</sup>

Gary Everett: *Jacob had been a hard worker (Genesis 31:40). A man who works hard takes much pride in his physical strength. Now, with a weak thigh, he became less mobile, and more dependent upon the Lord. This physical weakness allowed him to sit down and spend much time meditating on the God of Abraham and Isaac and how his forefathers lived their lives. With this weakness came a transformation in Jacob's character. With this transformation came a new name. He would now be known as Israel.*

Everett continues: *Why would God give Jacob this name? Because Jacob must now learn to totally trust in God. His thigh was limp and his physical strength was gone. The only strength that he will ever know the rest of his life will be the strength that he finds in trusting God. Jacob was about to meet his brother and for the first time in his life, he was facing a situation that he could not handle in his own strength and cunning. He has been able to get himself out of every other situation in his life, but this time, it was different. He was going to have to trust God or die, and Jacob knew this. His name was now Israel, a mighty one in God. Jacob would have to now find his strength in God, because he had no strength to fight in the flesh.*<sup>454</sup>

Everett then contends that Scriptures never record Jacob making a foolish decision again. In terms of his well-known deceptions, we do not find that reoccurring. However, we will find many times where we can question Jacob's spiritual life and mental attitude.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The old name was not to be abandoned; but, referring as it did to a dishonorable part of the patriarch's history, it was to be associated with another descriptive of his now sanctified and eminently devout character.*<sup>455</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The change of name indicates that Jacob has grown to spiritual maturity and has oriented himself to the grace of God. Jacob oriented himself to the grace of God in the sense that he has learned that he did "not" have to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the birthright instead of Esau but that the blessing of the birthright was based upon God's grace meaning it was gift that he did "not" earn or deserve.*<sup>456</sup>

I certainly agree that some growth had taken place, but I would not be quite ready to call that spiritual maturity.

Very often, when a name was changed, the new name indicated the new spiritual nature of the individual. Jacob's new name, *Israel*, could mean *prince with God* or *struggling with God*. It seemed to depend upon what day it was as to which name applied.

Whereas, Abram, from his name change forward, was known as Abraham; Jacob's name change did not always stick. I believe that this indicates Jacob's uneven spiritual life.

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Genesis 32:26–28 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail."

<sup>453</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:28 (suggestive comments).

<sup>454</sup> Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 32:25.

<sup>455</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>456</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:27–28: Why was Jacob renamed Israel? (The Bible Query)

**Q:** In Gen 32:27-28, why was Jacob renamed Israel?

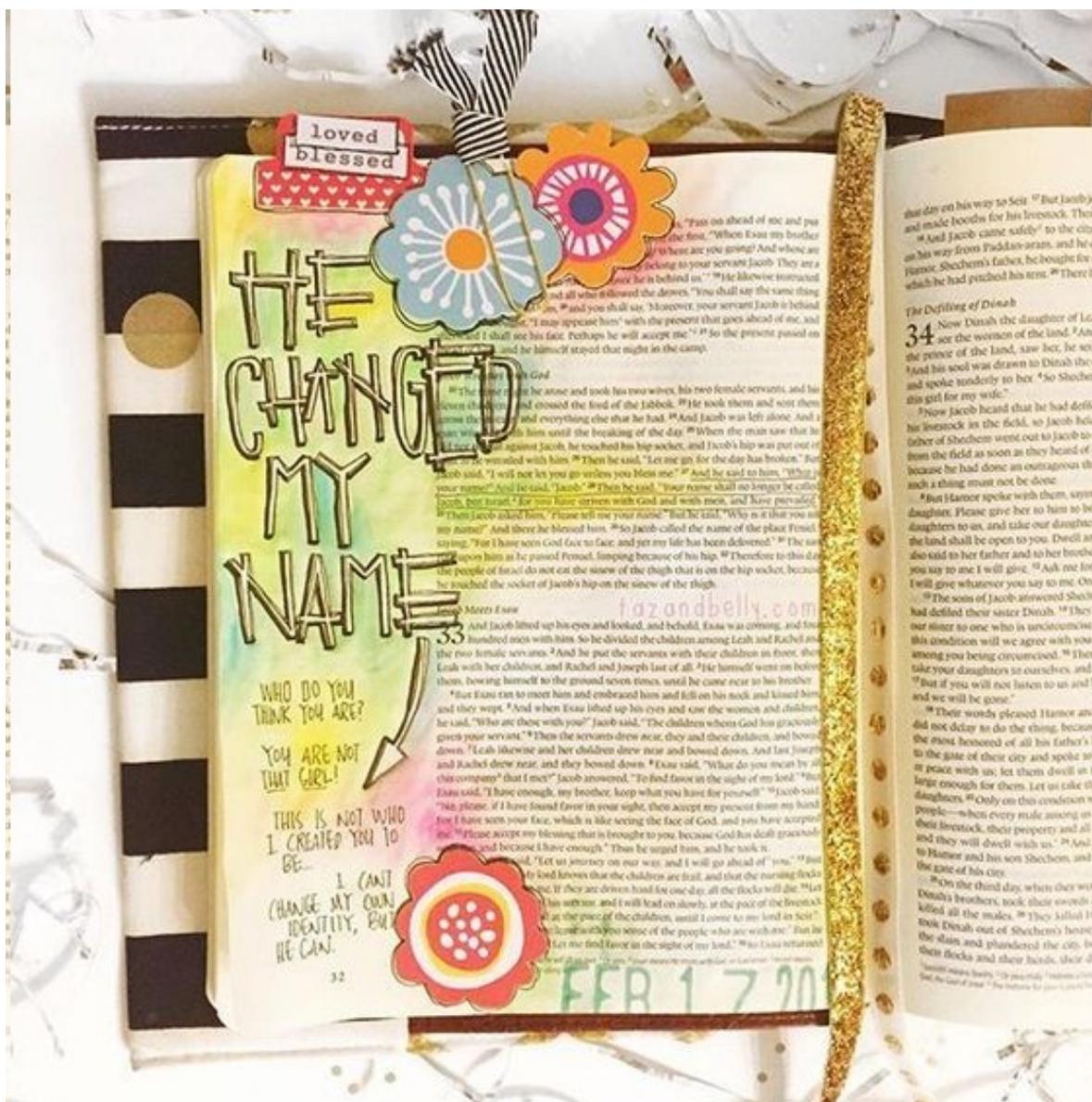
**A:** While the Bible does not say there are two possibilities, and both may be true. The act of renaming showed that God is in control of their whole life, even their name, and that they were a different person, with a different destiny, because of God. I suppose when we get to heaven we can just ask Abraham, Peter, and Saul of Tarsus about this.

Names had great meaning in those times, and Israel apparently means "God perseveres" or else "He perseveres with God."

*Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:27–28.

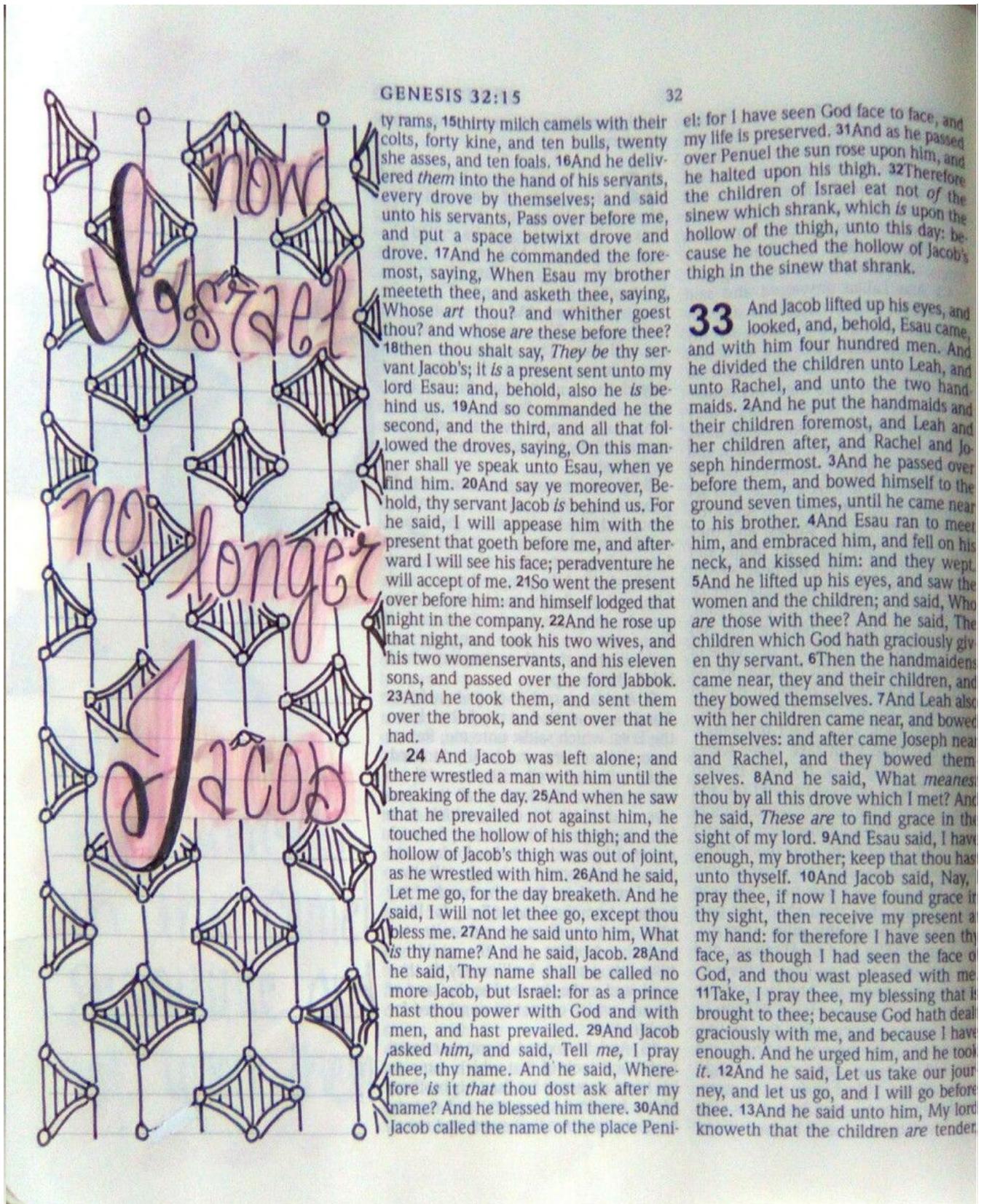
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He Changed My Name by Kristin → Taz + Belly (Bible Journaling); from [Pinterest](#); accessed March 7, 2019.

Genesis 32:28 Linda Rea (Bible journaling); from [Pinterest](#); accessed March 7, 2019.



Genesis 32:28b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
sârâh (שָׂרָה) [pronounced <i>saw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to contend [with]; to persist, to exert oneself, to persevere</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8280 BDB #975
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
’Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
’ānāshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW- sheem</i> ]; also spelled ’îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâkôl (לָכִי) [also yâkôwl (לוֹכִי)] [pronounced <i>yaw- COAL</i> ]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407

Clarke: *More literally, You have had power with God, and with man you will also prevail.*<sup>457</sup>

**Translation:** ...for you contend with Elohim and with men and you will prevail.”

Jacob, throughout his life, has been at odds with God and has contended with God (and with men—principally is brother Esau and his Uncle Laban); and he will prevail. It is not because Jacob is some great person—we already know that he is not—but that he is the beneficiary of God’s grace. He neither earns nor deserves all that God blesses him with.

<sup>457</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28.

**Genesis 32:28 (NKJV)** (a graphic); from **Christine's Bible Study**; accessed March 7, 2019.

Jacob has screwed up on many occasions, in his opposition to God; and in his continual attempt to work other people for his own gain. However, he will prevail because God is with him and because of God's promises to Abraham. God is telling Jacob, "You are not prevailing because you have outsmarted everyone around you; you are prevailing because I am in your life." Jacob's name is now Yis'ra'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced *yis-raw-ALE*], which means, *God prevails; contender; soldier of God*. Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975. "You have prevailed," God tells Israel, "not because of your goofy schemes, but because I have prevailed."



Wenstrom: *The name yisra'el, "Israel" memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. The statement "you have striven with God and with men" refers to Jacob's problems with Isaac, Esau, Laban, and his wives, which were in reality problems with God since God permitted these people to come into his life to draw him closer to God.*<sup>458</sup>

That was God's intent. However, what we do in this life is not always in accordance with the will of God. Jacob certainly is a personification of that.

Robert Dean, speaking from the perspective of Genesis 28, when Jacob is about ready to leave the land: *So he [Jacob] leaves the land here, goes to Haran, he has his various episodes there with Laban where they try to out-connive each other, and he is constantly manipulating, and when Jacob finally comes back to the land he is wrestling with God. We see that he wins that wrestling match, he is blessed by God, and he is given a new name: prince with God. From that point on we never see the Scriptures deal with him or relate these episodes with him as this conniving swindler trying to get the best deal from everybody kind of person. So there is a progress of spiritual growth there, and after that he reaches a level of spiritual maturity.*<sup>459</sup>

To be clear, it is hard to call Jacob spiritually mature, but he does show some slow but steady spiritual growth.

Genesis 32:26–28 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail."

Below will be the work of many commentators of the Word.

<sup>458</sup> From **Wenstrom.org** accessed September 1, 2015.

<sup>459</sup> From **Dean Bible Ministries**; accessed June 2, 2017.

## Genesis 32:28b: “You have fought with God and with men, and you have prevailed”

E. W. Bullinger: *prevailed = succeeded. He had contended for the birthright and succeeded (Gen\_25:29-34). He had contended for the blessing and succeeded (27). He had contended with Laban and succeeded (31). He had contended with "men" and succeeded. Now he contends with God and fails. Hence his name was changed to Isra-el, God commands, to teach him the greatly needed lesson of dependence upon God.*<sup>460</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *The name of “Israel” [indicates that...Jacob had prevailed in his contest with Laban; now, also, the promise of deliverance from Esau is contained in the past tense, “have striven and hast prevailed.”...The past and the future are embraced in one thought.*<sup>461</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed: this is given as a reason of his name Israel, which signifies a prince of God, or one who as a prince prevails with God; which confutes all other etymologies of the name.*

Gill continues: *[T]his transaction was designed to fortify Jacob against the fear of his brother Esau; and from whence he might reasonably conclude, that if he had power with God, and prevailed to obtain what he desired of him, he would much more be able to prevail over his brother, and even over all that should rise up against him, and oppose him; and this may not only be prophetic of what should hereafter be fulfilled in the person of Jacob, but in his posterity in future times, who should prevail over their enemies, and enjoy all good things by the favour of God: for it may be rendered, “you have behaved like a prince with God, and with men”, or, “over men you will prevail”*<sup>462</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *Or, according to the LXX, Vulgate, Houbigant, Dathe, and Rosenmuller, “because you have power with God, you will also prevail with men.” There is a beautiful antithesis between the two terms, with אֱלֹהִים, Elohim, God, the Almighty, with אַנְשֵׁי, anashim, weak, feeble men, as the word imports; seeing you have had power with the Almighty, surely you will prevail over perishing mortals.*<sup>463</sup>

Examples of Jacob prevailing with man: Genesis 25:31 27:33–36 31:24, 36–55 33:4.<sup>464</sup>

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Genesis 32:26–28 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.”

## Genesis 32:28: Contrasting the names of Jacob and Israel (various commentators)

Guzik then adds: *From this point on, he will be called Jacob twice as often as he is called Israel. Apparently, there was still plenty of the “old man” left in Jacob.*<sup>465</sup>

E. W. Bullinger: *Jacob = contender (Genesis 25:22). Used of the natural Jacob and his natural seed. Israel used for spiritual Jacob and his spiritual seed.*<sup>466</sup>

<sup>460</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>461</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:28 (slightly edited).

<sup>462</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28 (slightly edited).

<sup>463</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>464</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>465</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:27–29.

<sup>466</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28.

## Genesis 32:28: Contrasting the names of Jacob and Israel (various commentators)

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *The name of Jacob was changed to that of Israel. He is no more supplanter (Jacob), but prevailer with God (Israel). He had now put off the old man, and put on the new man; and this change in his character is signified by a new name.*<sup>467</sup>

Hawker: *No more Jacob, which signifies a supplanter; but Israel, which means a Prince. And do not all the spiritual seed of Jacob change their name when their nature is renewed? Isaiah 62:4; Revelation 3:12.*<sup>468</sup>

Robertson: *[He is] No longer Jacob the supplanter, but Israel the Prince of God—the champion of the Lord, who had fought with God and conquered.*<sup>469</sup>

These two, among others, see the change in Jacob as dramatic and practically overnight.

Speiser: *[B]oth Jacob and Israel are treated here symbolically, to indicate the transformation of a man once devious (Jacob) into a forthright and resolute fighter.*<sup>470</sup>

Lange: *There is no trace in his after-history of the application of his wisdom to mere selfish and cunning purposes. But the new name confirms to him in a word the theocratic promise.*<sup>471</sup>

Whereas, Jacob does less scheming (his last schemes being his breeding scheme to outsmart Laban; and then his escape from Haran); yet, he is far from perfect in subsequent years (the same holds true for his children). Furthermore, as has already been pointed out, when Abram was renamed *Abraham*, he never returned to that old name. The same is not true of Jacob.

Jamieson presents a more accurate understanding: *In Scripture the name indicates the nature of the office; here the change of a name denoted the exaltation of person and of dignity. Jacob was raised to be a prince, and a prince with God! A royal priesthood was conferred upon him; the privilege of admission into the Divine presence, and the right of presenting petitions, and of having them granted. And all this was granted to him, not as an individual merely, but as a public personage—the head and representative of those who in after-times should possess like faith and a similar spirit of prayer. Nothing could be more dissimilar than Israel's real dignity and his outward condition—an exile and a suppliant, scarcely escaped from the hands of Laban, and seemingly about to perish by the revenge of his brother—yet possessing an invisible power that secured the success of his undertakings.*<sup>472</sup>

Clarke: *From this time Jacob became a new man; but it was not till after a severe struggle that he got his name, his heart, and his character changed. After this he was no more Jacob the supplanter, but Israel - the man who prevails with God, and sees him face to face.*<sup>473</sup>

Clarke speaks in ideal terms; however, this does not describe the remainder of Jacob's life.

Whedon: *No more Jacob, but Israel — No more the supplanter; no more the self-seeker, filled with all artifice, and cunning, and deceit. This was the grand crisis and turning-point in Jacob's life and history. Hereafter he shall be called Israel, princely contender with God.*<sup>474</sup>

<sup>467</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–32.

<sup>468</sup> Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 32:27–28.

<sup>469</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:28 (suggestive comments).

<sup>470</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>471</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>472</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>473</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>474</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:28.

Many instances of changing a person's name in the Bible: Genesis 17:5, 15 33:20 35:10 Num. 13:16 2Samuel 12:25 2Kings 17:34 Isaiah 62:2–4 65:15 John 1:42 Revelation 2:17.<sup>475</sup>

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### Genesis 32:28: Nation Israel takes its name from Jacob (various commentators)

C. I. Scofield: *Both names are applied to the nation descended from Jacob. When used characteristically "Jacob" is the name for the natural posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; "Israel" for the spiritual part of the nation.*<sup>476</sup>

Whedon: *This was the new name by which the chosen people should be chiefly known among themselves, and in their sacred books. Israel, rather than Hebrews, and rather than Jews, shall be their covenant name.*

Whedon continues: *In this new name is suggested the glorious attainments and prerogatives of the true spiritual sons of God. They become “a kingdom of priests,” (Exodus 19:6,) or, according to Revelation 5:10, “a kingdom and priests.” In every case, the leading thought is that of princely power before God and from God.*<sup>477</sup>

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Jacob is renamed in Genesis 32:28 and in Genesis 35:9–10. Some point to this as evidence of multiple authors for the book of Genesis. That is, they believe that different people recorded Jacob's life, and then these stories were pieced together, albeit, imperfectly.<sup>478</sup>

### Did God rename Jacob twice? (From Bible Query)

Q: In Gen 32:22-32, was Jacob renamed to Israel here, or was Jacob renamed to Israel in Gen 35:9-10? (A liberal Christian mentions this as evidence that multiple authors wrote Genesis.)

A: Genesis 32:22-32 is very detailed, and tells how Jacob wrestles with God, and is renamed Israel. Genesis 35 gives a summary of Jacob's life, and two verses, 35:9-10 mention Jacob being renamed so that we can place where the narrative in Genesis 32 occurred. Yes, these two verses are repetition, but this is helpful to the story, not an inadvertent inclusion of something twice. Today, when people write, they often repeat what they say in the body of an essay in the conclusion, but that does not mean the different parts of the essay were by multiple authors.

As has been pointed out, *Abraham* became *Abram's* new name immediately. He is never called *Abram* ever again. However, the same thing is not true of Jacob. Even though Jacob was in the chosen line, he fell backwards on many occasions.

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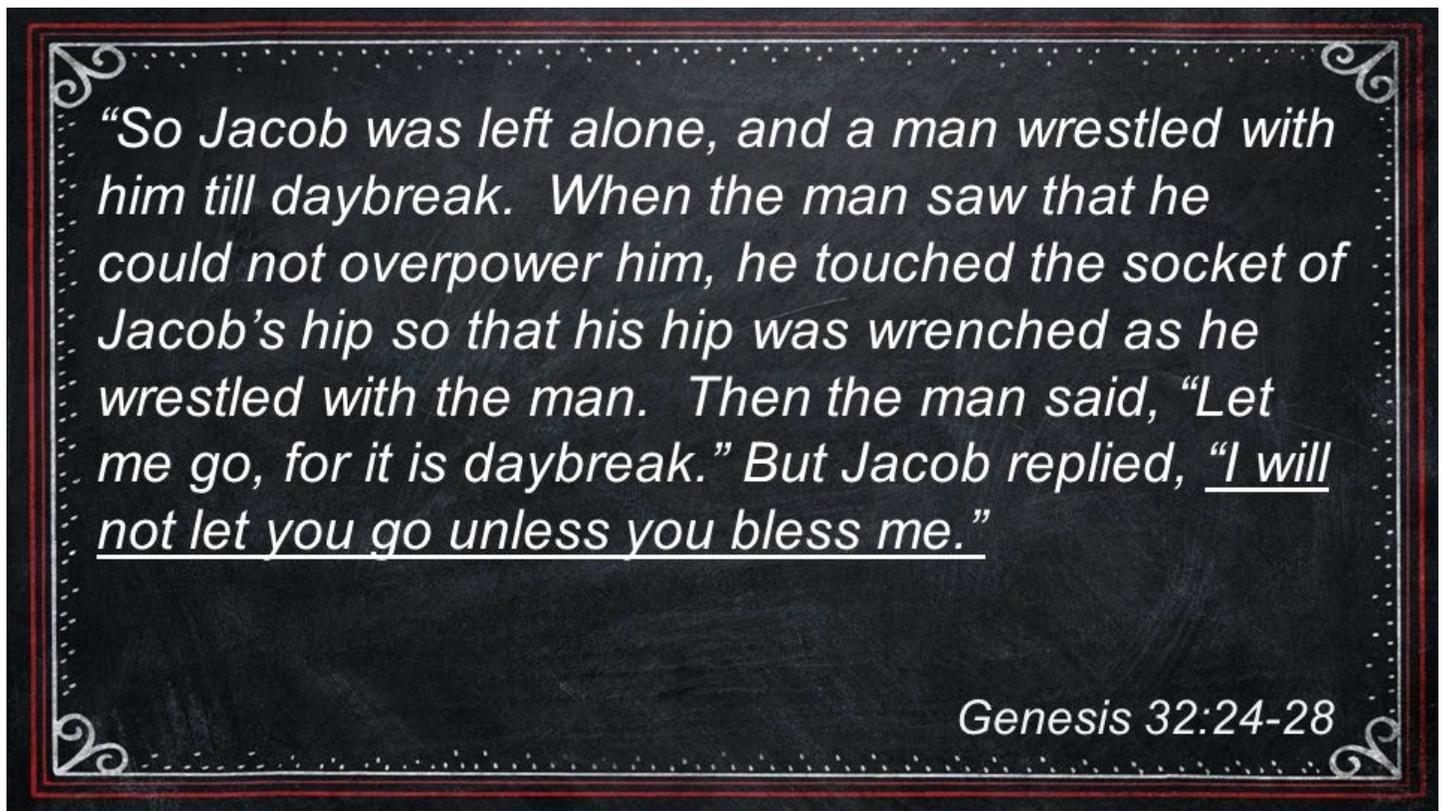
<sup>475</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>476</sup> C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:28.

<sup>477</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:28.

<sup>478</sup> This is the false JEPD theory.

Genesis 32:24–28 (a graphic); from [Slide Player](#) (slide 20); accessed March 8, 2019.



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Genesis 32:24b–28 Now a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated when he wrestled with him. Then he said, "let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go until you have blessed me." So he said to him, "what is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." and he said, "your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel; because you have fought with God and with men and have won." (Ron Snider)

### Summary Genesis 32:24b–28 (by Ron Snider)

1. Jacob has arranged things so that he is alone on the north side of the Jabbok river.
2. The fact that he is alone, and then immediately engaged in a wrestling match points to the supernatural character of his opponent.
3. His opponent is the Lord in theophany, he wrestles with the second person of the Godhead.
4. Jacob is somewhat of an enigma, since he is consumed with fear at the prospect of facing Esau, and then he is willing to fight to the death.
5. The man is called an angel in Hosea 12:2-4.
6. The angel of YHWH appeared as a man and engaged Jacob in a wrestling match.
7. Many, if not most, interpreters do not want to make this a physical match, but some sort of soulful struggle as Jacob engaged in prayer.
8. The obvious statement of vs 25 demands a physical contest.
9. The Lord's strength was infinite and he could of overcome Jacob at any time, as is evident in vs. 25.
10. Nevertheless, He perfectly matched Jacob strength for strength and move for move.
11. This match was without officials, and lasted the entire night.

### Summary Genesis 32:24b–28 (by Ron Snider)

12. It was rough and evenly matched so that neither opponent ever could pin the other.
13. It should be clear that no one would be a physical match for God.
14. Why did God not pin Jacob and overcome him??
15. It certainly was not due to a lack of strength, know-how or ability.
16. The answer lies in the doctrine of volition.
17. This contest was designed to show Jacob that his true conflict was with the Lord Himself, and not with Esau or anyone else.
18. Jacob has violated every rule and used every opportunity to advance himself in life, just as he tried every trick that night.
19. Examples include:
  - a. Taking advantage of Esau's hunger.
  - b. Taking advantage of Isaac's blindness.
  - c. Using his physical strength to impress Rachel.
  - d. Using his charm and tears to gain her compassion.
  - e. The rod episode.
  - f. Using Laban's absence to sneak away.
  - g. Using humble language and gifts to attempt to appease Esau.
  - h. Sending everyone over to face the wrath of Esau while he brought up the rear.
20. In the early part of his life, he used his tricks to advance himself, now he uses them to preserve himself.
21. He is engaged now in a match which he can never win, no matter how tricky or tenacious he is.
22. This is the lesson which Jacob must learn, you cannot overcome the Lord with the STA or its devices.
23. Toward the end of the match, a touch from the Lord put an end to Jacob's wrestling career.
24. In what was an otherwise even match, one touch dislocated Jacob's thigh from his pelvis.
25. Nevertheless, Jacob was tenacious and although he was in much pain, he would not give up.
26. This is indicative of Jacob's spiritual journey, adversity and pain did not stop him from seeking the best that God had to offer.
27. The demand for Jacob to let him go implied that He did not want to be seen by Jacob in the light.
28. Jacob immediately recognizes the import of this comment and now knows his opponent to be Divine.
29. Jacob, as he has all his life, doggedly pursues God's blessing, and states that he will not let go until he is blessed.
30. His entire life has been a quest for blessing, but often under operation energy of the flesh.
31. The Lord asks Jacob what his name is, not because He did not know or because He needed to acquire information.
32. This question is designed to focus Jacob on his character of deceiver or supplanter.
33. What he had pursued through his own efforts was now going to be his via grace.
34. He tells him that his name will now become Israel, which means one who fights with or for God.
35. This entire match has been staged to show Jacob that it is God whom he is fighting against under his self-will.
36. The reason for this name is given in the final part of vs 28 in the statement about fighting with God and men.
37. In spite of his self-willed character, in spite of his conflicts with Esau and Laban, in spite of his own STA, Jacob hung in there and made it.
38. He was tenacious and positive and would not give up until he got God's blessing, since he considered that the most important thing in life.
39. Because he was positive, God provided what his volition desired.
40. But like the fact that he did not overpower him in the wrestling match, God did not ever overpower Jacob's volition during his spiritual struggles.
41. He allowed him to maladjust and pursue things under the STA and the permissive will.
42. But because he was positive, God had to provide what was necessary to get him to maturity.
43. The putting of the bone out of joint indicates the DD which came upon Jacob for his activities.
44. This is documented in Heb. 12:12-13

### Summary Genesis 32:24b–28 (by Ron Snider)

- a. the hands and feet have to do with our DG production.
  - b. weak and feeble indicates that the believer is not putting forth the necessary energy to stay in spiritual shape.
  - c. It indicates a life in which you are not fastidious in regard to the STA, and are weak due to STA domination.
  - d. Straight paths refers to the course of our lives, the choices we make in general.
  - e. Straight paths are easier to walk on, and refer to a life which is not controlled by the STA, and a niche which is simplified.
  - f. The limb which is lame refers to an STA weakness which hampers the believer.
  - g. This is an area of self-will or failure which can bring discipline if it is not checked.
  - h. The lame limb will be put out of joint, a figure for DIVINE DECREE.
  - i. Be healed refers to applying doctrine to the area which you have been letting slide.
  - j. If the limb out of joint does not solve the problem, the bones may be broken, indicating DD of a more severe nature.
  - k. If you do not respond to this the SUD is ahead.
45. His new name would serve to remind him that he was one who fought through all obstacles until he prevailed.
  46. Jacob's life is characterized by seeking God's blessing and
  47. Finally he prevails with God, as he doggedly clings to Him alone, the ability of his flesh having been annulled.
  48. He achieves the blessing he had so eagerly pursued through his own strength, which is now given through grace.
  49. This is the lesson of Jacob, we do not have to resort to operation energy of the flesh to gain any of God's blessings, these come in grace.
  50. All our struggles to get anything in terms of blessing only complicate our niche and hinder God's
  51. Jacob, like all, must be shown that it all depends on God and His grace, not our abilities or ingenuity.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

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Genesis 32:28 He then said, "You name will no longer be called Jacob, but [it will be] Israel, for you contend with Elohim and with men and you will prevail." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 32:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâ'al (שאל) [pronounced <i>shaw-AHL</i> ]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand [require]; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
Ya'ăqôb (יעקב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

## Genesis 32:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâgad (נגד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>tell, make conspicuous, make known, expound, explain, declare, inform, confess, make it pitifully obvious that</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
The hê at the end is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
nâ' (אנא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
shêm (שמ) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027

**Translation:** Jacob asked and said, "Tell me, please, Your Name."

There are a number of exchanges here which are difficult to understand. Jacob knows that this is not some random guy who stopped to wrestle with him. And so he asks God's Name.

This is an interesting question and it occurs again in Exodus, where Moses is speaking to God's manifestation as the burning bush and Moses asks, "Who should I say has sent me?"

The NET Bible: *In primitive thought to know the name of a deity or supernatural being would enable one to use it for magical manipulation or power (A. S. Herbert, Genesis 12-50 [TBC], 108). For a thorough structural analysis of the passage discussing the plays on the names and the request of Jacob, see R. Barthes, "The Struggle with the Angel: Textual Analysis of Genesis 32:23-33," Structural Analysis and Biblical Exegesis (PTMS), 21-33.*<sup>479</sup>

## Genesis 32:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>479</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

## Genesis 32:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Lâmed + mâh together literally mean <i>for why</i> . They can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence. BDB also offers the rendering <i>lest</i> . Gesenius, perhaps for this passage alone (1Chronicles 15:13), offers the rendering <i>on account of [that] which, because that</i> .			
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
The NET Bible: <i>The question uses the enclitic pronoun "this" to emphasize the import of the question.</i> <sup>480</sup>			
shâ'al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand [require]; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027

**Translation:** But He said, "Why [is] this [that] you ask for My Name?"

However, rather than say, "I am" or "I am that I am," God says, "Why are you asking Me for My name?"

Moses had a reason to ask God's name when in the Midian desert. He was going to speak to the Hebrew elders, and he needed to identify who he was speaking for. Does Jacob have a reason or does he know what his reason is?

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail." Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name." But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?" Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

<sup>480</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

## Genesis 32:29b: Jacob asks the Name of God (a discussion)

It seems reasonable that Jacob would ask, “Am I actually wrestling with the Living God?”

D. C. Krumreacher: *The Lord had asked Jacob how he was called, not as if He did not know it, but in order to give him a name more in accordance with his present state of grace. Jacob, meanwhile, feels emboldened to ask his antagonist His name.*

Krumreacher continues: *He was usually called “Elohim”—the Most High. God Himself had said to Abraham, “I am the El Shaddai, the Almighty or All-sufficient God.” He was also called simply El, the Strong One.*<sup>481</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *and he said, why do you ask after My name? which is both a reproof of his curiosity, and a denial of his request; signifying that he had no need to put that question, it was enough for him that he had got the blessing.*<sup>482</sup> Gill apparently takes a portion of this from Matthew Poole.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The request was denied that he might not be too elated with his conquest nor suppose that he had obtained such advantage over the angel as to make him do what he pleased.*<sup>483</sup>

I am still digesting that point of view.

Whedon: *Tell me... Your name — In the loftiest attainments of soul—struggle with God this is the profoundest prayer that can be uttered. It is a rising above human desires, a ceasing even to ask for blessings, and a yearning to know the sacred name. It is equivalent to, Reveal to me Your nature; or, as in Exodus 33:18, “Show me Your glory.” Such was Manoah’s prayer. Judges 13:17.*<sup>484</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob’s purpose in asking the name is so that he can worship and appreciate what God is doing in the correct way (compare Judges 13:17–18). He is asking, ‘what are you revealing yourself to be?’ He knows that this is Yahweh, but he has never had this kind of experience before. Yahweh had been the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac. He had been El Shaddai, the Almighty God in His sovereignty over the nations in the wider covenant. What is He now to be to Jacob? He is seeking an even greater special relationship with God.*<sup>485</sup>

Perhaps the idea is, Jacob should know enough to recognize Who this is that he is wrestling with. This is the God Jacob has wrestled with all of his life.

Or, more likely, Jacob knows Who this is, knows that he is wrestling with God, and he wants that confirmed. I suggest this point of view, because Jacob will later ask for a blessing. That would make little sense if Jacob understood this to be some guy wandering about the desert.

Jacob asks the Name of this Man wrestling him, and He responds, “Why do you ask My name?” This response seems to mean, “Do you not know Who I am? You have been fighting Me—wrestling Me—all of your life, and yet you don’t know Me?”

This understanding helps to explain why God allowed Jacob to know Him as *the God of Bethel* back in Genesis 31:13.

It could be that Jacob is simply asking for affirmation of what he believes to be true—that he is wrestling with God.

<sup>481</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:29.

<sup>482</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:29 (slightly edited).

<sup>483</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:29.

<sup>484</sup> *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:29 (slightly edited).

<sup>485</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:27–29.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

We discussed this previously [here](#); and are going back over it again below.

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.” Jacob asked God, “Tell me please what is Your Name.” But He answered, “Why are you asking Me for My Name?” Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

### Genesis 32:29: Who is this wrestler? (Various commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *This mysterious person is called an angel (Hosea 12:4) and God (Genesis 32:28, Genesis 32:30; Hosea 12:5); and the opinion that is most supported is that he was “the angel of the covenant.”*<sup>486</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *God had met him in the form of a man: God in the angel,...not...a created angel, but in the Angel of Jehovah, the visible manifestation of the invisible God.*<sup>487</sup>

From College Press Bible Study: *Who was the “man” who wrestled with Jacob? Lange writes: “Some have absurdly held that he was an assassin sent by Esau. Origen: The night-wrestler was an evil spirit (Ephesians 6:12). Other fathers hold that he was a good angel. The correct view is that he was the constant revealer of God, the Angel of the Lord. Delitzsch holds ‘that it was a manifestation of God, who through the angel was represented and visible as a man.’*<sup>488</sup>

David Guzik: *As the following verses show, this was no mere man. This is another “special appearance” of Jesus in the Old Testament before His incarnation in Bethlehem. This was God in human form.*<sup>489</sup>

Arthur Pink: *“And there wrestled a man with him.” In Hosea 12:4 this “man” is termed “the angel”; that is, we take it; “the Angel of the Covenant,” or, in other words, the Lord Jesus Himself in theophanic manifestation. It was the same One who appeared unto Abraham just before the destruction of Sodom... So here in Genesis 32, at the close of the conflict between this “Man” and our patriarch, Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face.” (Gen. 32:30).*<sup>490</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *The wrestler seems to differentiate himself from God [in Gen. 32:28 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.”—ESV], although in Genesis 32:30 [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.”] Jacob realizes he has somehow been with Deity.*<sup>491</sup>

Utler also writes: *[A]s the morning drew on, he began to realize that he wrestled not with flesh and blood, but with Jehovah’s angel.*<sup>492</sup>

This Wrestler is called a man in v. 24, because that was his appearance. He is called God in vv. 28 and 30. Later, when this is discussed in Hosea 12:4–5, He is referred to as an Angel. So we may reasonably assume that He is the Angel of God (Who is God), but in the form of a man.

<sup>486</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–25.

<sup>487</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:26–30.

<sup>488</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>489</sup> *David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:24–25.

<sup>490</sup> From [http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings\\_Genesis/genesis\\_34.htm](http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_34.htm) accessed March 10, 2019.

<sup>491</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:22–32.

<sup>492</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:24.

## Genesis 32:29: Who is this wrestler? (Various commentators)

Jacob later refers to this Wrestler as *the Angel Who redeemed me from all evil* (Genesis 48:16).

Dr. Bob Utley: *YHWH appears to Jacob several times (cf. Genesis 28:10-22; Genesis 32:22-31; Genesis 35:9-13; Genesis 46:2-4) and each time it is the character and promises of God that are emphasized. The key element is not Jacob (or his acts), but God and His covenant promises.*<sup>493</sup>

I must say that I find it surprising that there are so many weird theories about this wrestling match when it is clear that this is God fighting with Jacob. Perhaps people thought about that, but could not make sense of that, and so rejected the premise.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

This has been quite the enigmatic chapter—particularly at the end. Jacob, after situating his family on the other side of one or two streams of water, spends the rest of his night, alone, wrestling with the Angel of God. He is injured in this fight, but he will not let the Angel go until He blesses him. The Angel of God did bless Jacob and He gave Jacob a new name.

I believe that the Bible is filled with real, historic narratives. However, God the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of Scripture, did not include every narrative of every person's life, but He chose specific ones. We are to learn divine truth from the narratives the Holy Spirit has chosen. They are more than historic events; they are narratives with meaning.

### Pulling it all together; explaining Jacob, the wrestling and his new name

Jacob is wrestling with God—emblematic in many ways of his life up to this point—and God gives in and says, “Your name is now *Israel*.” One set of meanings of the verb contained in this name is, *to struggle, to fight; to persevere*. At the end of the name is *Él*, which means *God*. So, what is Jacob doing? He is struggling with God, he is fighting with God, he is persevering with God. This describes his life up to this point. And, right now, he is wrestling with God—hurt and in pain, but he won't let God go. He demands God's blessing. So, God, after giving Jacob this new name, says to him, “Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have fought with God and with men, and [you] have prevailed.” (Genesis 32:28b; WEB)

All of his life, Jacob has struggled with various men: Esau, his brother; Laban, his uncle; Laban's sons—and we might even argue, he has had some struggles with his own father. But Jacob's fight has not been with just men; we have seen over and over again how he struggled against God, using his own sneaky, manipulating schemes to get what he wanted.

God just told him, “You have prevailed with man and with God.” So, is Jacob prevailing because he is a really good wrestler? Is he prevailing because he has just given the greatest, most emotional prayer ever, in the form of a wrestling match? Neither of these. Jacob is in the line of Abraham and Isaac. He is in the line of blessing; he is an important piece in the chosen line, in the line of grace. Therefore, he insists on grace and blessing from God *and he gets it!*

This ought to rock your world as a believer. Even though most of us understand that salvation is completely and totally by grace, that Jesus Christ did all of the work and we can, at the most, accept this work of God. But then, after attaining salvation, so many of us act as if we deserve God's blessing during our Christian lives because we are such damned good Christians! God is lucky to have us. Well, we know what Jacob is like; we have studied his life, and he is not going to be proclaimed believer of the year. Yet, Jacob still demands God's blessing and God gives it to him. Now, that's grace.

<sup>493</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:24–.

## Pulling it all together; explaining Jacob, the wrestling and his new name

Now, what of the two meanings of the name *Israel*? It means *struggling with God*; but it also means *prince of God*. Jacob, just like many of us, reveals his two natures—when he *struggles with God* and when he is a *prince of God*. In fact with Jacob, too often it was the former. But—preview of coming attractions—near the end of his life, Jacob will be very much a *prince of God* (and he will be greatly honored at that time as well).

One more thing—Jacob’s injured leg—what’s that all about? That is divine discipline. But God gave Jacob grace, despite the divine discipline.

That is the grace that we, as believers, want.

Also related is the people who took Israel’s name, the descendants of Jacob (all those descended from Jacob would make up nation Israel). As a people, despite the great grace given them by God, they also faltered. Recall when Jesus said, “**O Jerusalem, You who stones the prophets.**” There will be many periods of time when nation Israel reveals the same instability that Jacob had.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.” Jacob asked God, “Tell me please what is Your Name.” But He answered, “Why are you asking Me for My Name?” Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

### A slightly different explanation of Jacob’s wrestling match (William Wenstrom, Jr.)

The Son of God appeared as a man at night to illustrate this to Jacob and to the reader that Jacob’s problems with people were in fact [his] problems with God.

In the same way that Jacob thought he was wrestling just a mere man when in reality he was wrestling with God so Jacob erroneously thought that his struggles in life were with his father Isaac, his twin brother Esau and his uncle Laban when in reality they were with God.

Jacob’s entire life could be characterized as a wrestling match with both God and men. The first manifestation of this wrestling match was in the womb of his mother Rebekah where both he and his twin brother were crushing each other (See Genesis 25:22). The actions of Jacob at birth grabbing the heel of his brother Esau was the second manifestation of this wrestling match (See Genesis 25:26).

Another manifestation of Jacob’s struggles with men was when he exploited Esau’s hunger by getting him to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup (See Genesis 25:28-34). Then, there was Jacob at the instigation of his mother Rebekah deceiving his father Isaac who was blind at the time in bestowing the blessings of the birthright to himself rather than his brother Esau (See Genesis 27).

This was followed by Jacob’s problems with Laban who was brought into Jacob’s life to discipline him so as to break his sinful patterns of deceitfulness and treachery (See Genesis 29:21-28). This discipline came in the form of Laban deceiving Jacob by sending Leah and not Rachel into his tent on his wedding night when he had just worked seven years for Rachel. This discipline succeeded as manifested in Jacob’s thoughtfulness and consideration of Esau’s feelings and his desire to offer Esau restitution for cheating him out of the blessing of the birthright (See Genesis 32:13-20).

Jacob’s wrestling match with God and man also manifested itself in the love life of Jacob where he chose Rachel to be his wife because of her physical beauty rather than based upon her character (See Genesis 29:10-20). This physical attraction blinded Jacob as to the true identity of his right woman, which was Leah who was not as beautiful as Rachel. As a result of this poor decision Jacob had to deal with Leah and Rachel competing with each other in order to gain his affection and love (See Genesis 29:31-30:24).

## A slightly different explanation of Jacob's wrestling match (William Wenstrom, Jr.)

So we can see that the wrestling match is indicative of Jacob's life up to the birth of Joseph. I say that this wrestling match with God and people was indicative of Jacob's life up to the birth of Joseph because when Joseph was born, at the end of the fourteen years of service for Laban, we see Jacob demonstrates a tremendous act of faith in dealing with a problem with Laban.

From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019. Wenstrom explores more of Jacob's history there.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.” Jacob asked God, “Tell me please what is Your Name.” But He answered, “Why are you asking Me for My Name?” Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

## Genesis 32:29: The wrong understanding of Jacob and his spiritual growth

Let me first offer the most common mistaken theory of all, that Jacob is suddenly mature, he's got it together, and it took this wrestling match to knock some sense into him.

J. Vernon McGee typifies this approach: *First, we saw him at his home and then in the land of Haran where he was a man of the flesh. Here at Peniel, at the Brook Jabbok, we find him fighting. After this, and all the way through down into Egypt, we see him as a man of faith. First a man of the flesh, then a man who is fighting and struggling, and finally a man of faith.*<sup>494</sup>

McGee's theory here is not so much weird, as many other commentators believed this—it is just wrong. Spiritual growth does not occur with a one-shot experience. If it did, why doesn't God simply appear to everyone of us and wrestle us until we are unable to fight anymore?

God inflicts some divine discipline on Jacob here and gets his attention; and, for a short while, Jacob is going in the right direction. This will last until the middle of Genesis 33 where he will lie to Esau. “I'll be right behind you,” Jacob tells his brother, and then goes west rather than south. This wrestling match gets Jacob as far as about a half a day before he stumbles again.

God knocked Saul of Tarsus, how him off his horse but he did not suddenly become a spiritual giant. After Jesus spoke with Saul, gave him the name Paul, there was time given over for Paul to grow spiritually. He knew the Scriptures; but he had not been correctly applying them. In a very short time (I don't recall the time frame—a year, perhaps?), Paul was ready for a public ministry representing Jesus Christ.

I only used McGee here, but this was the basic view of almost every commentator. “God knocks some sense into Jacob, and now he is spiritually mature.” Wrong! God wrestling Jacob and dislocating his hip lasted for less than 12 hours of guidance.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.” Jacob asked God, “Tell me please what is Your Name.” But He answered, “Why are you asking Me for My Name?” Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

<sup>494</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

Because of the difficult nature of this chapter—particularly this wrestling match—not everyone figured it out. In fact, some theories were quite bizarre. It should be pointed out, in their defense, that many of these men approached the interpretation and understanding of Scripture as almost a one-shot deal. So many of these commentators, when they began writing, were not able to endlessly revise their thinking, as I am able to do on a computer. And many of them did far many more books than I will do in my lifetime (I may finish with a third or a half of the Bible by the end of my life). Some of the men I quote from wrote commentary on every book of the Bible.

### Genesis 32:29: The weird theories (various commentators)

Benson: *The angel suffered himself to be conquered, to encourage Jacob's faith and hope against the approaching danger: nay, he even imparted strength to him to maintain the conflict. For it was not in his own strength that Jacob wrestled, nor by his own strength that he prevailed, but by strength derived from Heaven, by which alone he had power over the angel.*

So, the strength from the angel gave Jacob the strength to defeat the angel?

Benson continues, explaining how the hip injury was a part of this: *This was to humble him, and make him sensible of his own weakness, that he might ascribe his victory, not to his own power, but to the grace of God, and might be encouraged to depend on that grace for the deliverance he was so much concerned to obtain.*<sup>495</sup>

The Study, in the Bible Illustrator, seems to think that this wrestling match is akin to coming boldly to God in prayer; *every believing soul must draw nigh to God, reverently, it is true, but not timidly or distrustfully. The command is to "come boldly to a throne of grace." We must come not as though we more than half questioned whether there is any God, or, if there be, whether He cares anything about us, and will hear our prayer; but with all the heart believing "that He is, and is the Rewarder of those that diligently seek Him."*<sup>496</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch seemed to indicate that this was not a real experience, but I don't know what they are saying it was: *This remarkable occurrence is not to be regarded as a dream or an internal vision, but fell within the sphere of sensuous perception. At the same time, it was not a natural or corporeal wrestling, but a "real conflict of both mind and body, a work of the spirit with intense effort of the body" (Delitzsch), in which Jacob was lifted up into a highly elevated condition of body and mind resembling that of ecstasy, through the medium of the manifestation of God.*

Keil and Delitzsch continue: *As the idea of a dream or vision has no point of contact in the history; so the notion, that the outward conflict of bodily wrestling, and the spiritual conflict with prayer and tears, are two features opposed to one another and spiritually distinct, is evidently at variance with the meaning of the narrative and the interpretation of the prophet Hosea.*<sup>497</sup>

G. Ch. Aalders: *Some scholars hold that this was a struggle with a demon of some kind.*<sup>498</sup>

George M. Lamsa: *Jacob was not wrestling with an angel, but with his brother Esau.*<sup>499</sup>

Peake alleged that Jacob wrestled with "a local deity ... one of the river gods (pagan)," trying to prevent anyone's crossing the river.<sup>500</sup>

Similarly, R. Smith, D. D.: *The answer which Jacob obtained to his prayers. God blessed him there. He obtained a gracious answer.*<sup>501</sup> Several more people took that approach.

<sup>495</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:25.

<sup>496</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:26.

<sup>497</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:26–30.

<sup>498</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional citation there.

<sup>499</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional citation there.

<sup>500</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional citation there.

<sup>501</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:26.

## Genesis 32:29: The weird theories (various commentators)

Most commentators side with Dr. John Gill: *[This Wrestler was] the Son of God in an human form; who frequently appeared in it as a token and pledge of his future incarnation: and "this wrestling" was real and corporeal on the part of both; the man took hold of Jacob, and he took hold of the man, and they strove and struggled together for victory as wrestlers do.*<sup>502</sup>

Some Jewish literature claims that Jacob was fighting the prince of angel of Esau, named Samael. They do not see it as a theophany.<sup>503</sup>

Jerome sees this struggle as a *long and earnest prayer. Such prayer involved meditation on the divine presence, confession of sin and a deep yearning for communication with the divine.*<sup>504</sup>

Adam Clarke went all sci-fi at this point, discussing the body, what happens to the body, why there is not really a body (of the opposing Wrestler): *If angels, in appearing to men, borrow human bodies, as is thought, how can it be supposed that with such gross substances they can disappear in a moment? Certainly they do not take these bodies into the invisible world with them, and the established laws of matter and motion require a gradual disappearing, however swiftly it may be effected. But this is not allowed to be the case, and yet they are reported to vanish instantaneously. Then they must render themselves invisible by a cloud, and this must be of a very dense nature in order to hide a human body. But this very expedient would make their departure still more evident, as the cloud must be more dense and apparent than the body in order to hide it. This does not remove the difficulty.*<sup>505</sup>

Clarke's discussion is much more involved than that. But, I find it fascinating that, he suggests that one possibility is that the body poofs like that of a just-killed vampire on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (or perhaps his argument is, it *can't* happen this way). Clarke wrote about 200 years prior to that show, by the way.

Based upon the fact that nothing like this is even faintly discussed, I lean more toward these being real experiences with bodies which are real—that is, Jacob is not imagining that he is wrestling the Lord Jesus Christ; he is actually wrestling Him. What happens to the body at the end is not discussed in Scripture, so whether it poofs or changes into a non-physical form or whatever, we don't know. I don't see speculation as leading us anywhere on this particular topic. However, I have to give credit to Clarke for even thinking about such a thing. My guess is, no other commentator every gave this any thought before Clarke. And he surprisingly spent a half-page or more discussing this topic.

Speaker's Commentary: *The reason of this act of the angel was very probably lest Jacob should be puffed up by the 'abundance of the revelations.' He might think that of his own strength, and not by grace, he had prevailed with God; as St. Paul had the thorn in the flesh sent to him lest he 'should be exalted above measure.'* 2Corinthians 12:7.<sup>506</sup>

Jacob has not received an abundance of revelations. He has received several; but not enough, I don't believe, to become puffed up.

Clarke on asking the name of the Angel and being refused: *It is very likely that Jacob wished to know the name of this angel...but this might have led him into idolatry, for the doctrine of the incarnation could be but little understood at this time.*

If this is God, then worshiping Him cannot be idolatrous; nor would we end up with Jacob somehow falling into angel worship as a result.

<sup>502</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>503</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred Brauch; InterVarsity Press; ©1996; p. 132.

<sup>504</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred Brauch; InterVarsity Press; ©1996; p. 132.

<sup>505</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>506</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:25.

## Genesis 32:29: The weird theories (various commentators)

Then Clark writes: *And he blessed him there - gave him the new heart and the new nature which God alone can give to fallen man.*<sup>507</sup>

There is every indication that Jacob has believed in the Revealed God for a very long time. We are given a soul without scar tissue at salvation; but we don't get to repeat that experience.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The question arises, at what point in the life of Jacob did he come out from under divine discipline and begin to walk in fellowship with God by operating in faith? The turning point in Jacob's life came when he stopped fighting God and men and began to walk by faith was after the fourteen years of service to Laban.*<sup>508</sup>

Wenstrom's theory is not so weird as it is poorly time-synched. First of all, recall that, after those 14 years of service for his wives, Jacob tried that breeding scheme to beat out Laban—a strictly human viewpoint approach to Laban cheating him—and God allowed Jacob to prosper anyway.

There are at least two things which suggest that Wenstrom has not synched Jacob's spiritual growth with the proper events: (1) If Jacob has gotten everything straightened out, starting back with the payment of 14 years labor for his two wives, then God fighting Jacob 7 years later does not make much sense. (2) Jacob is going to be somewhat of a bitter man for much of his life after this (but he will recover upon his move to Egypt). Throughout his entire life, until Egypt, Jacob has many missteps. He has clearly advanced, but his life is constantly a wrestling match with God.

Maybe others did consider this, as Josephus refers to him as a *phantasm or spectre*; Maimonides suggested this angel was in *the imagination of Jacob; or done in the vision of prophecy.*<sup>509</sup>

I don't mean to make too light of some of these interpretations; this is/was a very difficult passage to interpret.

Believe it or not, I left several theories out. I had no idea these theories would run this long.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, “Send Me away, for the dawn comes.” But Jacob replied, “I will not send You away unless You bless me.” He asked him, “What is your name?” and he answered, “Jacob.” He then said, “You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail.” Jacob asked God, “Tell me please what is Your Name.” But He answered, “Why are you asking Me for My Name?” Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

## Genesis 32:29b: Why does He not tell Jacob His Name (various commentators)

Dr. Bob Utley: *"Please tell me your name" In the Ancient Near East the name of a spiritual being was closely guarded because of the possible use of that name in curses, oaths, and rituals. This is surely not the issue in biblical texts (cf. Judges 13:17-18). In biblical texts YHWH reveals His name to His people (cf. Exodus 3:13-15). However, its meaning is not always comprehended (compare Exodus 6:3 with Genesis 4:26). As Judges 13:18 states, the name is too "wonderful" for humans to comprehend.*<sup>510</sup>

I am not sure that Dr. Utley really explained this here.

<sup>507</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>508</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>509</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24.

<sup>510</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:29.

**Genesis 32:29b: Why does He not tell Jacob His Name (various commentators)**

College Press Bible Study: *He did not tell him His name: not merely, as the angel stated to Manoah in reply to a similar question (Judges 13:18), because it was incomprehensible to mortal man, but still more to fill Jacob’s soul with awe at the mysterious character of the whole event, and to lead him to take it to heart.*

College Press Bible Study: *What Jacob wanted to know, with regard to the person of the wonderful Wrestler, and the meaning and intention of the struggle, he must already have suspected, when he would not let Him go until He blessed him; and it was put before him still more plainly in the new name that was given to him with this explanation, ‘Thou hast fought with Elohim and with men, and hast conquered.’ God had met him in the form of a man: God in the angel, according to Hosea 12:4–5, i.e., not in a created angel, but in the Angel of Jehovah, the visible manifestation of the invisible God.<sup>511</sup> I didn’t get that either.*

EG offers this: *‘Why ask to know My identity, seeing you already know it?’<sup>512</sup>*

David Guzik: *The Man probably refused to tell Jacob His name because He figured Jacob should already know it, and it turned out that Jacob did know exactly who this was.<sup>513</sup>*

Dr. Peter Pett: *God does not want to introduce to Jacob a new conception of Himself. There is no need for a change of relationship. He wants to be known by the names by which He was known of old. He wants continuation not change. He is the God of Abraham and he wants Jacob to realise that he is to continue the old covenant and purposes, not become involved in new ones as a result of God revealing more of His inner nature. He is still the God of Bethel. Jacob knows all he needs to know about Him.*

Pett continues: *He had revealed Himself as El Shaddai, the Almighty God, to Abraham when sealing the wider covenant (Genesis 17:1), for then a new covenant was involved. Not that the name was new, it was the significance that was new. He had revealed Himself as Yahweh, the One Who is, and Who will be what He wants to be. He would reveal Himself as the ‘I am’, revealing the essential nature of the name Yahweh, when He delivered Israel and established His covenant with them. Again it would not be the name that was new, but the significance of the name. But Jacob is to continue the covenants given to Abraham under the names of Abraham’s God.<sup>514</sup>*

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**Genesis 32:29c**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

<sup>511</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.*

<sup>512</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.*

<sup>513</sup> *David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:27–29.*

<sup>514</sup> *Dr. Peter Pett; Commentary Series on the Bible; from e-sword, Genesis 32:27–29.*

## Genesis 32:29c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
The NET Bible: <i>The verb here means that the Lord endowed Jacob with success; he would be successful in everything he did, including meeting Esau.</i> <sup>515</sup>			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>him, it; he; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

**Translation:** Nevertheless, He blessed him there.

God then blesses Jacob right there. We do not know exactly what occurred, whether these were words or what. I could see this as simply being a repetition of the blessings which God has given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Then God blesses Jacob. Recall that Jacob gained the blessing of his father based upon deception. However, here, God will bless him, knowing all there is to know about him.

Genesis 32:29 Jacob asked and said, "Tell me, please, Your Name." But He said, "Why [is] this [that] you ask for My Name?" Nevertheless, He blessed him there. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, "Send Me away for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You name will no longer be called Jacob, but [it will be] Israel, for you contend with Elohim and with men and you will prevail." Jacob asked and said, "Tell me, please, Your Name." But He said, "Why [is] this [that] you ask for My Name?" Nevertheless, He blessed him there. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail." Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name." But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?" Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail." Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name." But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?" Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

<sup>515</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

## Genesis 32:29c: And He blessed him there (various commentators)

David Guzik: *Surely, this was the blessing of being defeated by God. It was the blessing of the passing of the old (Jacob) life, and the coming of a new (Israel) life. It may also have had to do with the great idea of the blessing of Abraham, and meeting Jacob's immediate needs for security in the midst of fear. Whatever Jacob needed, God's blessing provided at the moment.*<sup>516</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Having settled the issue of His name He now 'blesses' Jacob. He confirms that the covenant promises will go on through him and that his future is certain. The deceitful way in which he obtained his first blessing is now forgotten. He is a new man.*<sup>517</sup>

Verse-by-verse Ministries: *This is the place God has delivered Jacob*

- All his wealth is gone, all his family, all his servants
- He is alone and wounded
- No scheming will solve the problem and he has no hope apart from God
- And so he calls to God clinging to Him for grace

*The irony is this has always been Jacob's situation, though he didn't see it that way.*<sup>518</sup>

Whedon: *He blessed him there* — *In what particular form or manner, besides the giving him the new name, we are not told. But Jacob's prayer for a blessing was answered. At the same time an implied rebuke was administered for his asking after the angel's name.*<sup>519</sup>

God has blessed Jacob throughout his life, despite his not deserving any of it. What Jacob needs to do, at this point forward, is claim this blessing given to him by God. Perhaps Jacob thought that he was getting just a little more blessing because he held onto the Angel of God, but that was not the case. God did not begrudgingly give Jacob a skosh more blessing because he insisted on it. Jacob already had the blessing; he just needed to live like he had it. Jacob's faith needed to be in the promises and blessings of God.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

This wrestling match very much describes our own lives as believers in Jesus Christ. We are all born with a sin nature and we choose between being controlled by the Holy Spirit or by the old sin nature. The key is, 1John 1:9. When we have no unconfessed sin in our life, we are spiritual, controlled by God the Holy Spirit. When we sin, we lose fellowship with God, we are no longer controlled by the Holy Spirit, and we are therefore carnal (controlled by our sin nature). When we name our sins to God, we are restored to fellowship and restored to the control of the Holy Spirit.

The unbeliever is always controlled by his sin nature; although he may choose to obey the **laws of divine establishment** (it is possible for a believer to be out of fellowship and yet conform to the laws of divine establishment).

Gen. 32:24–26 **And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 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. Then He said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless you bless me."**

Gen. 32:27 **And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."**

<sup>516</sup> David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:27–29.

<sup>517</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:27–29.

<sup>518</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>519</sup> Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:29.

Gen. 32:28 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."

Gen. 32:29 Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask My name?" And there hbe blessed him. (ESV; capitalized)

### Genesis 32:24–29: General Discussion of the Wrestling Match (commentators)

Murphy says we should take this literally: *We do not pretend to define with undue nicety the mode of this wrestling. And we are far from saying that every sentence of Scripture is to be understood in a literal sense. But until some cogent reason be assigned, we do not feel at liberty to depart from the literal sense in this instance. The whole theory of a revelation from God to man is founded upon the principle that God can adapt himself to the apprehension of the being whom he has made in his own image. This principle we accept, and we dare not limit its application further than the demonstrative laws of reason and conscience demand.*<sup>520</sup>

College Press Bible Study: *The reader, of course, should not try to spell out details that the author himself glimpsed as if through a haze. But there can surely be no doubt as to the far-reaching implications of the encounter. Its outcome is ascribed to the opponent's lack of decisive superiority.*<sup>521</sup>

College Press Bible Study collects and quotes from a myriad of commentators:

L. M. Grant: *Now God designed matters so that Jacob was left alone. It was time that Jacob was wrestled with, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. No doubt this was the Lord Himself in bodily form, which required an unusual miracle. Certainly the Lord could have subdued Jacob immediately, yet the wrestling continued for hours. However, this was intended to be a significant lesson for Jacob, and for us. The Lord had actually been wrestling with jacob all his previous life, and Jacob had not surrendered: he continued to struggle against God's dealings with him. How could he properly learn until he had yielded himself to God? His planning, then praying, then going back to his planning was only consistent with his previous character of self confidence rather than confidence in God. He was struggling, yet hardly realized his struggle was against God.*<sup>522</sup>

Jamieson: *an unknown person appeared suddenly to oppose his [Jacob's] entrance into Canaan. Jacob engaged in the encounter with all the mental energy, and grasped his opponent with all the physical tenacity he could exert; till the stranger, unable to shake him off or to vanquish him, touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh—the socket of the femoral joint—which was followed by an instant and total inability to continue the contest. I have a problem with the wrestler showing up with the intention of keeping Jacob out of Canaan.*

Knobel: *No one writer in the Pentateuch so represents God under the human form of things as this one.' Jacob...has surely brought God, or the Angel of the Lord, more completely into the human form and likeness than had ever occurred before. The man with whom he wrestles is obviously not only the angel, but the type also of the future incarnation of God.*

J. Vernon McGee: *God had to cripple Jacob in order to get him, but He got him. This man Jacob refused to give in at first — that was typical of him. He knew a few holds, and he thought that after awhile he would be able to overcome. Finally, he found out he couldn't overcome, but he would not surrender. And so what did God do? Certainly, with His superior strength, in a moment God could have pinned down Jacob's shoulders — but He wouldn't have pinned down his will. Jacob was like the little boy whose mama made him sit in a corner in his room. After awhile she heard a noise in there, and she called to him, "Willie, are you sitting down?" He said, "Yes, I'm sitting down, but I'm standing up on the inside of me!" That is precisely what would have happened to Jacob. He would have been standing up on the inside of himself — he wasn't ready to yield.*<sup>523</sup>

<sup>520</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>521</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>522</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>523</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) accessed March 10, 2019 (Ch. 32).

## Genesis 32:24–29: General Discussion of the Wrestling Match (commentators)

J. Vernon McGee, who is generally an excellent Bible teacher, takes an incorrect view of this encounter: *[This is] the high point in the life of Jacob, which was his encounter with God. On that night "a man" wrestled with him, and the "man," not Jacob, did the wrestling. Jacob was not looking for another fight. He has Uncle Laban in back of him and Brother Esau ahead of him, and the last time he saw both of them they were breathing out threatenings against him. This man Jacob is not in a position to take on someone else. Therefore, the "man" took the initiative; He was the aggressor. He was, as we have seen, the preincarnate Christ. Jacob resisted Him until the touch of God crippled him. Then, recognizing at last who He was, Jacob clung to Him until He blessed him. From this point on we will begin to see a change in Jacob. As we follow his life in the chapter before us, we will think that we have met a new man.*<sup>524</sup>

Allow me to strongly disagree here. You would think that Jacob's physical encounter with God would be the high point of his life, but it is not. Remember, he and the Preincarnate Christ were struggling this entire time, and God did not win against Jacob (Jacob remained very strong willed against God throughout).

Jacob will, when he comes to Egypt, a much greater man than we find here or in the next chapter. Interestingly enough, we will have to infer that from the text—it will not be stated outright. But, that Jacob, as a man, makes an individual mark upon nation Egypt and the people of Egypt will be clear and unequivocal. We may reasonably assume that his mark was spiritual; not because he was a great guy who got on with everyone.

OTS: *Dividing all his possessions at the River Jabbok in preparation for meeting Esau, he [Jacob] turned to God in prayer. He humbly acknowledged that he was unworthy of all the blessings that God had bestowed upon him. But in the face of danger he pleaded for deliverance. During the loneliness of the night he wrestled with a man. In this strange experience, which he recognized as a divine encounter, his name was changed from 'Jacob' to 'Israel.' Thereafter Jacob was not the deceiver; instead he was subjected to deception and grief by his own sons.*<sup>525</sup>

The Expositor's Bible Commentary: *This wrestling therefore was by no means actually or symbolically prayer. Jacob was not aggressive, nor did he stay behind his company to spend the night in praying for them. It was God who came and laid hold on Jacob to prevent him from entering the land in the temper he was in, and as Jacob. He was to be taught that it was not only Esau's appeased wrath, or his own skilful smoothing down of his brother's ruffled temper, that gave him entrance; but that a nameless Being, Who came out upon him from the darkness, guarded the land, and that by His passport only could he find entrance. And henceforth, as to every reader of this history so much more to Jacob's self, the meeting with Esau and the overcoming of his opposition were quite secondary to and eclipsed by his meeting and prevailing with this unknown combatant.*<sup>526</sup>

The Expositor's Bible Commentary: *All this self-confidence culminates now, and in one final and sensible struggle, his Jacob-nature, his natural propensity to wrest what he desires and win what he aims at, from the most unwilling opponent, does its very utmost and does it in vain. His steady straining, his dexterous feints, his quick gusts of vehement assault, make no impression on this combatant and move him not one foot off his ground. Time after time his crafty nature puts out all its various resources, now letting his grasp relax and feigning defeat, and then with gathered strength hurling himself on the stranger, but all in vain. What Jacob had often surmised during the last twenty years, what had flashed through him like a sudden gleam of light when he found himself-married to Leah, that he was in the hands of one against whom it is quite useless to struggle, he now again begins to suspect. And as the first faint dawn appears, and he begins dimly to make out the face, the quiet breathing of which he had felt on his own during the contest, the man with whom he wrestles touches the strongest sinew in Jacob's body, and the muscle on which the wrestler most depends shrivels at the touch and reveals to the falling Jacob how utterly futile had been all his skill and obstinacy, and how quickly the stranger might have thrown and mastered him.*

<sup>524</sup> From [https://archive.org/stream/01\\_Genesis/01-GENESIS\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt) (Genesis 33); accessed April 18, 2019.

<sup>525</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>526</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

## Genesis 32:24–29: General Discussion of the Wrestling Match (commentators)

Expositor's Bible Commentary continues: *All in a moment, as he falls, Jacob sees how it is with him, and Who it is that has met him thus. As the hard, stiff, corded muscle shrivelled, so shrivelled his obdurate, persistent self-confidence. And as he is thrown, yet cleaves with the natural tenacity of a wrestler to his conqueror; so, utterly humbled before this Mighty One whom now he recognises and owns, he yet cleaves to Him and entreats His Blessing. It is at this touch, which discovers the Almighty power of Him with whom he has been contending, that the whole nature of Jacob goes down before God. He sees how foolish and vain has been his obstinate persistence in striving to trick God out of His blessing, or wrest it from Him, and now he owns his utter incapacity to advance one step in this way, he admits to himself that he is stopped, weakened in the way, thrown on his back, and can effect nothing, simply nothing, by what he thought would effect all.*<sup>527</sup>

Where the Expositor's Bible Commentary goes astray is, claiming that Jacob rises up as a Prince, disarmed of all weaponry. He is not completely turned around; his thinking is not yet straight. He had two human viewpoint approaches—the separation into two camps and the multiple gifts to Esau—and he will go ahead with those approaches this day. We also know that this is not a brand-new attitude for Jacob, because he leaves the wrestling match with an injured hip.

God is there; God is with Jacob. But it will take more than a single wrestling match to turn Jacob around. Whereas, most of Abraham's life was one of obedience; most of Jacob's life is one of rebellion. God allows Jacob to move forward; God does not remove His blessing from Jacob; but Jacob will walk with a limp for the rest of his life because of this encounter with God.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Gen. 32:24–26 And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 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. Then He said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless you bless me."

Gen. 32:27 And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

Gen. 32:28 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."

Gen. 32:29 Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask My name?" And there hbe blessed him. (ESV; capitalized)

## Genesis 32:24–29: Conclusions or take-aways from this wresting (commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *This passage forms the climax of Jacob's history. It records the occasion on which his name is changed to Israel, and describes his personal meeting with the Divine Being, whose blessing he obtains. The religious significance of the story turns upon (1) the sudden mysterious wrestling by night; (2) Jacob's persistence in his demand for a blessing; (3) the blessing given, and symbolized by the new name, Israel; (4) the physical disability, a memorial of acceptance and spiritual victory, and a symbol of the frailty of earthly strength, in the crisis of life, when God meets man face to face.*<sup>528</sup>

<sup>527</sup> Expositor's Bible Commentary; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>528</sup> The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:22–32.

### Genesis 32:24–29: Conclusions or take-aways from this wrestling (commentators)

J. Clifford, D. D. sees this as a turning point in the life of Jacob: *What is the significance of this terrific conflict? It means this assuredly. Jacob having gone to God in quaking fear, God holds him and will not let him go; goads and harrows his soul, till his heart swells and is ready to break; urges him to such a relentless and soul-consuming struggle with his self-will that he feels as though he is held in the grip of a giant and cannot escape. He resists, he struggles, he writhes, and in his furious contortions is at last lamed and helpless, and therefore compelled to trust himself and his all to God.*

Clifford continues: *Jacob wrestled against God, but at last yielding, his soul is suffused with the blessedness of the man whose trust is in the Lord. Faber asks, with mingled beauty and force, "What is it will make us real?" and answers, "The face of God will do it." It is so. Israel is a new creation: Jacob is dead. Dark as the night was, Jacob passed through it, saw the face of God at day-dawn, and became himself, met his brother with serenity, and spent the rest of his days in the love and service of God.*<sup>529</sup>

James Burton Coffman was typical in his evaluation of this wrestling match: *This tremendous episode also carried with it a deep spiritual awakening on the part of Jacob. He was defeated and powerless to continue, but he clung to God and would not let go until he received the blessing. It is written that "he prevailed"; but how did he do so? He won by surrender, by confessing his unworthiness in the admission of his name (Heel-catcher), and by pleading for the blessing which could come only from the grace of God. That is precisely the way that the saints of all ages have triumphed. Cling to the Lord, and never let go! "Here Jacob received the final lesson that humbled and broke down his self-will, and convinced him that he would not snatch the blessing from God's hand, and that he must accept it as a gift of God's grace."*<sup>530</sup>

College Press Bible Study: *[T]he description now embodies three distinct aetiologies: (1) The basis for the name Israel; the change of names is itself significant of an impending change in status (as with Abraham and Sarah: see Genesis 17:5; Genesis 17:15 2) the origin of the name Penuel, for which a basis is laid in Genesis 32:21-22 by their fivefold use of the stem pny (von Rad 3) the dietary taboo about the sciatic muscle. Any one of these motifs would suffice to color the whole account. One may conclude, accordingly, that the encounter at Penuel was understood as a test of Jacob's fitness for the larger tasks that lay ahead. The results were encouraging. Though he was left alone to wrestle through the night with a mysterious assailant, Jacob did not falter. The effort left its mark—a permanent injury to remind Jacob of what had taken place, and to serve perhaps as a portent of things to come.*<sup>531</sup>

Robert Dean: *[Jacob] has gone through these stages of spiritual advance and it is here that everything is going to change. We know that because at the end of this episode God gives him a new name, Israel, which means he who wrestles with God and he has prevailed against God. But in his prevailing against God, what happens? God wins.*

Robert Dean continues: *There is this ironic twist that take place in this episode. God at the very end just touches. It is a word that can mean to smite or to strike or to hit, but it also means just to lightly touch. It is not a word which tells us what the power of the touch was, and since it is God it doesn't have to be anything powerful, He can just touch that hip joint and displace it and Jacob is going to be crippled for the rest of his life as a constant reminder of who is ultimately in charge of his life. What God is showing Jacob is that Jacob has to be in complete submission to God's authority in his life before God is going to give him the blessing.*

<sup>529</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:24.

<sup>530</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 9, 2019. Additional citation there.

<sup>531</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

## Genesis 32:24–29: Conclusions or take-aways from this wrestling (commentators)

Dean continues: *It is at this point that Jacob recognizes that he must be in complete and total dependence upon God. And we never again see in the life of Jacob that old cunning manipulator that we have seen up to this point. This is a transforming event and time in Jacob's life. This is when he moves into a new level of spiritual maturity and dependence upon God. So this whole wrestling match is designed to be a picture, a training aid, as it were, for Jacob and for us of the reality that we, too, have to come to this point where just as Jacob meets God face to face and recognizes that he must make God the ultimate authority in his life, we have to come to that same point as well.*

Dean concludes: *So with this we see that Jacob realizes that God is his strength, his protection, is source of security, and he is now able to relax and to meet Esau without relying upon his own schemes and manipulations. This is where we see a major turning point in the life of Jacob as he becomes Israel, and then that name, Israel, becomes significant, and later on throughout the prophets it is interesting to see how when the nation is being obedient to God frequently (but not always) the term Israel is emphasized, but when they are out of fellowship in rebellion they will be called Jacob. For example, the period of the Tribulation, which is a judgment on the nation, is not known as a time of Israel's trouble but a time of Jacob's trouble.*<sup>532</sup>

Many commentators believe that Jacob showed a great and sudden spiritual growth spurt during this evening.<sup>533</sup> Let me suggest that, Jacob had a little more faith, after seeing the camp of the angels and wrestling with God; but that he would falter on many occasions after this.

Having an experience is not enough for a person to advance in a dramatic fashion. These two events, no doubt, gave Jacob a kick in the pants (pushing him in the right direction); but a person needs doctrine for him to believe and act upon.

Dr. Thomas Constable: *We need to be right with God before we can be right with our brothers.*<sup>534</sup> This is why Jacob encounters God before meeting Esau. This would be their first meeting in 20 years, since Jacob left Canaan, in part for fear of his life.

M. Dods, D. D.: *Jacob was not aggressive, nor did he stay behind his company to spend the night in praying for them. It was God who came and laid hold on Jacob to prevent him from entering the land in the temper he was in, and as Jacob. He was to be taught that it was not only Esau's appeased wrath, or his own skilful smoothing down of his brother's ruffled temper, that gave him entrance; but that a nameless Being, who came out upon him from the darkness, guarded the land, and that by His passport only could he find entrance.*<sup>535</sup>

Jamieson, based upon Hosea 12:4 (**He strove with the Angel and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us—...** ESV; capitalized) writes: *In short, this wrestling was a symbolic act, designed to show Jacob that he had no hope of conquering his powerful foe by stratagem, reliance on his own strength—as his lameness indeed proved—or by any other means than a firm, unwavering trust in the word of that covenant God who had promised (ch. Genesis 28:13-15), and would establish him in, the possession of Canaan as an inheritance to his posterity. 'Hosea clearly teaches that Jacob merely completed, by his wrestling with God, what he had already been engaged in from his mother's womb—viz., his striving for the birthright; in other words, for the possession of the covenant promise and the covenant blessing' (Delitzsch).*

Some commentators suggest that Jacob *wept and sought His grace* as a reference to really, really intense prayer. I would suggest that his weeping was related more to the harm done to his thigh than to some sort of emotional jag.

<sup>532</sup> From [Dean Ministries](#), accessed March 6, 2019.

<sup>533</sup> There were perhaps another dozen or two which made these comments which I did not include.

<sup>534</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>535</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:24.

## Genesis 32:24–29: Conclusions or take-aways from this wrestling (commentators)

MacLaren: *What, then, was the meaning of this struggle? Was it not a revelation to Jacob of what God had been doing with him all his life, and was still doing? Was not that merciful striving of God with him the inmost meaning of all that had befallen him since the far-off day when he had left his father's tents, and had seen the opened heavens, and the ladder, which he had so often forgotten? Were not his disappointments, his successes, and all the swift changes of life, God's attempts to lead him to yield himself up, and bow his will? And was not God striving with him now?*<sup>536</sup>

Kurtz: *All along Jacob's life had been the struggle of a clever and strong, a pertinacious and enduring, a self-confident and self-sufficient person, who was sure of the result only when he helped himself—a contest with God, who wished to break his strength and wisdom, in order to bestow upon him real strength in divine weakness, and real Wisdom in divine folly.*<sup>537</sup>

Donald S. Fortner: *On the night of his wrestling with the Lord, when Jacob was humbled, broken, and made to confess His name, the Lord God was with him. Jacob says, "God was with me in the way which I went!" Jacob was the object of God's everlasting love, the eternally chosen object of his grace (Romans 9:11-13). God was with him in his mother's womb. God was with him in his youth. God was with him when he fled from his father's house. God was with him when he broke his thigh and broke his spirit. God was with him in Laban's house. God was with him when he returned home again. And on his death bed, old Jacob confessed more fully than ever that the Lord God had been with him all his days (Genesis 48:15-16). He had lost Rachel; but God was with him. He had endured famine; but God fed him. He had lost Joseph; but the Lord God was with him. At the time he said, "All things are against me;" but now he eats his words. He now realized that God had never been more fully for him! Now [on his deathbed] he says, "The Lord God redeemed me from all evil." If you are a believer, this will be your verdict upon your life at the end of your days - "God was with me!" He hath "redeemed me from all evil". Every believer's life is from beginning to end, an unceasing experience of God's grace!*<sup>538</sup>

The wrestling match simply is Jacob's continual battles with God; between Jacob's will and God's.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Gen. 32:24–26 And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 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. Then He said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless you bless me."

Gen. 32:27 And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

Gen. 32:28 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."

Gen. 32:29 Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask My name?" And there hbe blessed him. (ESV; capitalized)

Gen. 32:30–32 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." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. 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.

<sup>536</sup> Alexander MacLaren, D. D., Litt. D., *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:9–12.

<sup>537</sup> *Expositor's Bible Commentary*; Edited by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll; ©1887-1896; public domain; from e-sword, Genesis 32:1–32.

<sup>538</sup> From *Discovering Christ In Genesis*: © Copyright 2007, Donald S. Fortner (by e-sword) Genesis 32 (slightly edited).

### Genesis 32:24–32: Is Jacob wrestling a literal angel? (The Bible Query)

Q: In Gen 32:24-32, was Jacob wrestling with a literal angel, or was he just wrestling with an issue?

A: Nothing indicates we can add to Scripture that this was not a real angel.

See Now That's A Good Question p.571-572 for more on the following three points:

1. Taking the Bible literally is the only honest way to interpret it
2. Taking the Bible literally does not mean to impose a wooden, concrete literalism
3. Taking the Bible literally means to interpret the book as it was written.

While the Jews Josephus and Philo interpreted Jacob's wrestling as a dream, dreams do not leave hip joints permanently out of socket.

Q: In Gen 32:24,27, since Jacob wrestled with a man, who turned out to be an angel or God, is God an angel or man?

A: God can appear as even a burning bush, but that does not make God a plant. While still being everywhere, God can also have a localized presence as anything He desires.

*Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24–32, 24, 27.

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### Genesis 32:24–32: Do Christians have a weak God? (The Bible Query)

Q: In Gen 32:24-30, is the Allah [God] of Christianity so weak that He takes all night to wrestle Jacob, as a Muslim mentioned?

A: First of all it was God's angel (whom Jacob called a man), not God Himself who wrestled. Jacob said He saw God face to face, but Jacob only encountered God through the angel. Regardless though, God sent this angel, who had the power to crush Jacob.

## Genesis 32:24–32: Do Christians have a weak God? (The Bible Query)

If a father wrestles his strong-willed two year old, and even let's the two year old win at times, that does not make him a weak father. In like manner, God's intention was to contend with Jacob's stubbornness, not to destroy Jacob and his tenacity. God wanted to bring Jacob to an understanding of who he was, not kill him. Imagine how great it would be if your body was the same except that it was 100 times stronger. You could excel at athletics, break through walls, and run very fast. However, every time you tried to pick up a flower, you crushed it, every time you held a little child's hand you broke it, and every time you held your spouse, they went to the hospital. Maybe just having your muscles be 100 times stronger is not so good after all. God is all-powerful, but God also has gentleness and finesse. God is infinitely times more powerful than us, but God has greater control over His own strength than we do of ours. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) gives an example of how the Almighty is gentle: "The LORD your God is you, his is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

In 1 Kings 19:11-13 God tells Elijah he will experience the presence of the Lord. It was not in the ensuing powerful wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in a gentle whisper. So to summarize, Christians worship a God who is gentle without being any less the Almighty.

I have to say that I am quite disappointed with this answer. The first part of the answer seems silly, simply because how could Jacob wrestle an angel to a draw? The first part of this answer should have been edited out. Usually, Bible Query does a good job with these sorts of questions, but not this time.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that the Scriptures state that the Lord did not prevail against Jacob does "not" impugn God's omnipotence but rather as we will note does effectively portray the power of persevering in prayer with God.*<sup>539</sup>

When we pray according to God's will, then even God cannot deny this request. This does not mean that Jacob is a great person or that he really gives out some powerful prayers. He can demand blessing from God, despite his many shortcomings.

*Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:24–32.

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Genesis 32:26–29 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail." Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name." But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?" Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

Possibly, the trickiest balance for the believer to achieve is that between letting God do for you and doing for yourself. God does not expect every believer to sit on a park bench and wait there for God to send food and cash his way, each and every day. On the other hand, when it comes to things like, getting vengeance on your enemies, that is on God. We might define this as Jacob's most difficult problem. There are many times when he tries to do God's job—to receive blessings from his father. Jacob did not have to do anything out of the ordinary for this to happen. He did not have to pretend to be his brother; he did not have to get his brother to sell his birthright for a mess of porridge. This would be the blessing of God to him—undeserved, nothing required of Jacob to do. Where Jacob could legitimately receive this blessing is directly from God.

This wrestling match with God was all about Jacob doing one thing, when he ought to have done another. This put him at odds with God over and over again.

When it comes to our prayers to God, there is no wrestling match. Jacob does not reveal, by this wrestling match, that you must be willing to fight God in order to have your prayers answered. This does not mean that a prayer

<sup>539</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

warrior must be a prayer warrior in every sense of the word. Jacob is wrestling with God, not because this is intensive prayer, but because Jacob time and time again puts himself in opposition to God and God's plan. Despite Jacob's constant opposition, *what he prayed for* was legitimate. God had to grant his prayer requests for that reason.

I have read quite a number of people who try to explain these various events of Jacob's life—his encounters with God—and so many of them seem to come up short to me. Therefore, let me try to give a better bird's eye view of Jacob, his life and his spiritual progression in life.

### The progression of Jacob's spiritual life

1. Jacob, from very early on, had an interest in the spiritual heritage of his family. He twin brother Esau seemed to be less interested.
2. When Esau was hungry, Jacob took that opportunity to exchange food for Esau's appetite. Quite obviously, Esau had to be on the verge of starving in order to do this; but Jacob would not give him food unless Esau agreed to give Jacob his birthright.
  - 1) The oldest son has the birthright.
  - 2) Because of Abraham and Isaac, it is clear that there is a very important spiritual birthright for this family.
  - 3) Jacob seemed to be very interested in this birthright; Esau less so.
3. Later, Jacob deceived his father and pretended to be Esau, in order to gain the blessing of his father Isaac, who believed that he was on the verge of death.
  - 1) Isaac, who was half blind, believed that he would die soon, and he was going to give his end-of-life blessing to Esau. The sort of blessing was taken very seriously by this people.
  - 2) Isaac was Rebekah's favorite son and Esau was Isaac's favorite son. For this reason and because Esau was the oldest, Isaac was going to give Esau an end-of-life blessing which was the best. In order to celebrate this, Esau was to go out hunting and to kill a wild animal for them both to eat.
  - 3) Rebekah hears about this and convinces her adult son, Jacob, to pretend to be Esau.
  - 4) The plan was, she would make the meat for Esau, but season it in such a way as to taste like wild game (possibly venison). Jacob was to make himself up as close to Esau as possible, and bring this meal to Isaac. The end result was, they would eat this meal and then Isaac would give this very significant end-of-life blessing to Esau.
  - 5) The plan went off without a hitch, and Isaac gave Jacob a clearly exclusive blessing, recognizing him as the preeminent brother.
  - 6) Afterwards, Esau comes on the scene with a recently-killed wild animal; and Isaac is beside him because he has already given this great blessing to the other son.
  - 7) All parties agreed to the importance of this blessing, so Isaac cannot just call out, "Do over" and give the original blessing to his favorite son, Esau.
  - 8) Esau blows a gasket over all this and makes known his plans to kill Jacob.
  - 9) Rebekah warns her son Jacob; and helps to arrange for him to leave that area and to move to Haran in order to find a wife there. All of this was very logical, as Rebekah did not like the women that Esau had married.
  - 10) She could not let on that she was the perpetrator of this deception, given that neither Isaac nor Esau knew that this was her idea to begin with.
  - 11) So, Jacob leaves suddenly for Haran, but the idea is for him to find a decent wife there from among their relatives. He would eventually marry two first cousins.
4. On Jacob's way out of Canaan, he has the vision of the angels going up into heaven at that spot. I say vision, but it is likely that what Jacob was really happening. But the whole idea was, his leaving Canaan was legitimate, but that God would want him back.
5. Jacob does go to Haran and he works for his uncle, who is far more duplicitous than Jacob is. Jacob falls in love with one daughter, but ends up marrying the other because of his uncle duplicitous nature. Jacob then marries both sisters and was a good worker for Laban (his uncle), but continually faced Laban's dishonest approach (we have two examples of this—the marriage to both sisters and the continual changing of Jacob's wages).

## The progression of Jacob's spiritual life

6. God appears to Jacob and tells him to return to Canaan, and Jacob does. Given what he says to his wives, it appears that he himself is at the end of his rope in dealing with his father-in-law (his Uncle Laban); and, it turns out, his wives agree with him.
7. Rather than level with everyone and leave as a result of what God has told him to do, Jacob sneaks away, worried that his father-in-law might take back much of his wealth (that is my reading of it).
8. So, Jacob is still not operating with complete obedience to God.
9. Upon his return, Laban chases him down, both men air their grievances, and then part company, essentially burning this bridge behind them.
10. Jacob ought to know enough, based upon all that has happened, that he need not worry about Esau.
  - 1) It is God who told Jacob to return to Canaan.
  - 2) Esau has 400 men, but they appear to be a part of his entourage; they were not gathered in order to do anything to Jacob.
  - 3) Jacob is still afraid, even though, based on spiritual reasons, he should not be.
11. Finally, this takes us to the end of Genesis 32, where Jacob wrestles with the Angel of God.
  - 1) This is Jesus Christ in His Preincarnate state.
  - 2) This wrestling match very much describes Jacob's life. He is continually at odds with God, never able to fully trust Him; and always looking for a human viewpoint solution.
  - 3) Jacob being unable to sleep represents a lack of trust.
  - 4) The moving of his wives and children to a remote location this evening represents a lack of faith in God.
  - 5) This fight with the angel will end up, in the long run, increasing Jacob's confidence in God. He will meet Esau, and right behind him will be his wives and children. So, slowly but surely, Jacob is showing some confidence in God and some spiritual growth. However, this is not a great peak of spiritual growth that Jacob has reached.
12. Jacob is still not spiritually mature.
  - 1) Although Jacob meets and gets along with Esau, he makes it sound as if he is going to go live with Esau, but he chooses not to. I believe that he should have told this to Esau directly. Genesis 33
  - 2) In Genesis 34, his sons will behave reprehensively, indicating a lack of good solid spiritual training.
  - 3) His sons will also sell the second-youngest son into slavery later out of jealousy. Again, this shows a lack of spiritual training. Genesis 37
  - 4) Everything which happens after this point which is bad, Jacob moans and groans about it, acting as if his own sons made these bad things happen (he does not realize that his favorite son was sold by them into slavery).
13. Jacob's understanding of his inheritance is flawed:
  - 1) God has given these things to Jacob as a matter of grace. Jacob did not earn them or deserve them. The land grant, the promises made about Jacob's seed, etc.—this is completely a result of God's sovereignty.
  - 2) Jacob cannot gain these things by trading with Esau when Esau is in a weakened state.
  - 3) Jacob cannot have access to the promises of God because he has deceived his father.
  - 4) Jacob does not have these promises because he was able to bribe his brother Esau into not hating him.
  - 5) Jacob cannot even force God to bless him in a wrestling match.
  - 6) M. Dods, D. D. writes: *Jacob... was going forward to meet Esau under the impression that there was no other reason why he should not inherit the land but only his wrath, and pretty confident that by his superior talent, his mother-wit, he could make a tool of this stupid, generous brother of his. And the danger was, that if Jacob's device had succeeded, he would have been confirmed in these impressions, and have believed that he had won the land from Esau, with God's help certainly, but still by his own indomitable pertinacity of purpose and skill in dealing with men. Jacob does not yet seem to have taken up the difference between inheriting a thing as God's gift, and inheriting it as the meed of his own prowess. To such a man God cannot give the land; Jacob cannot receive it. He is thinking only of winning it, which is not at all what God means, and which would, in fact, have annulled all the covenant, and lowered Jacob and his people to the level simply of other nations*

## The progression of Jacob's spiritual life

*who had to win and keep their territories at their risk, and not as the blessed of God. If Jacob is then to get the Jand, he must take it as a gift, which he is not prepared to do.*<sup>1</sup>

14. At the end of Jacob's life, when he is in Egypt, it appears that his faith in God is restored and it appears that he will become spiritually mature in Egypt.

Even though God renames Jacob *Israel*, he will be called both *Jacob* and *Israel* after that. Whereas he grandfather Abraham seemed to reach maturity and remain there, Jacob appears to have had his ups and downs (mostly downs).

<sup>1</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Gen. 32:24.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 32:26–29 He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes." But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me." He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob." He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail." Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name." But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?" Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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## After the Wrestling Match

Jacob fully recognizes with Whom he has been wrestling:

**And so calls Jacob a name of the place *Peniel*, "For I have seen Elohim faces unto faces and so is delivered my soul."**

Genesis  
32:30

**Jacob called the name of that place, *Peniel*, [saying,] "For I have seen Elohim face to face and my soul is delivered."**

**Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: "I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!"**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so calls Jacob a name of the place <i>Peniel</i> , "For I have seen Elohim faces unto faces and so is delivered my soul."
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob called the name of the place Peniel: because I have seen <u>the Angel of the Lord</u> face to face, and my soul hath been saved.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob called the name of the place Peniel; for he said, I have seen <u>the Angels of the Lord</u> face to face, and my soul is saved!
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob called the name of the place Phaniel, saying: I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub called the name of the place Peniel: <u>for, he said</u> , "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob called the name of that place Peniel; <u>for he said</u> , I have seen an angel face to face, and my life is preserved.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob called the name of that place, the Face of God; for, <i>said he</i> , I have seen God face to face, and my life was preserved.

Significant differences: There is some additional text in the targums and in the Aramaic.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jacob gave that place the name of Peniel, saying, I have seen God face to face, and still I am living.
Easy English	So Jacob called that place Peniel. He said 'I saw God face to face. And I did not die.' Peniel means 'face of God'.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	So Jacob named that place Peniel. He said, "At this place, I saw God face to face, but my life was spared."
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob named the place Peniel (God's Face) because, he said, "I saw God face-to-face and lived to tell the story!"
NIRV	So Jacob named the place Peniel. He said, "I saw God face to face. But I'm still alive!"

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	Jacob named the place "Face of God." <sup>3</sup> He said he gave it that name because "I saw the face of God with my own eyes, yet I was allowed to live."
Common English Bible	Jacob named the place Peniel, "because I've seen God face-to-face, and my life has been saved."
New Life Version	So Jacob gave the place the name of Peniel. For he said, "I have seen God face to face, and yet I am still alive."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Jacob named that place, Peniel (Face of God); for he said: 'I've seen God face to face and survived.'
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So Jacob called the place Phaniel, the Face of God; I have seen God face to face, he said, and my life was not forfeit.
Translation for Translators	So Jacob named the place Peniel, <i>which means</i> "God's face", saying "I looked directly at God, but I did not die because of doing that."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob was to call the name of the place Penu-el, I am to have seen the face of he of mighty ones, and being turned before him, my breath was to be rescued.
Conservapedia	Jacob named the place Peniel, saying, "Because I have seen God face to face, and lived to tell about it." <i>Peniel</i> means "face of God."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Jacob, consequently, called the name of that place " Pen-i-El " — that is "God's face" — "for I have seen divinities face to face and preserved my life."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Jacob called the name of the place Pheniel, for I have seen God face to face, and yet is my life reserved.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my soul was saved.
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (The Face of God). For I have seen God face to face and my soul is preserved.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Jacob called the name of the place Penuel [ <i>Penu el</i> , Face of God.], because, I saw God face to face, and my soul is snatched <i>from death</i> .
New American Bible (2011)	Jacob named the place Peniel [ <b>Peniel</b> : a variant of the word Penuel (v. 32), the name of a town on the north bank of the Jabbok in Gilead (Jgs 8:8–9, 17;

1Kgs 12:25). The name is explained as meaning “the face of God,” *peni-'el*], “because I have seen God face to face,” he said, “yet my life has been spared [From Genesis 16:13: **Remained alive**: for the ancient notion that a person died on seeing God, see Gn 32:31; Ex 20:19; Dt 4:33; Jgs 13:22.]” Jgs 13:22

New Jerusalem Bible

Jacob named the place Peniel, 'Because I have seen God face to face,' he said, 'and have survived.'

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

(iii) Ya'akov called the place P'ni-El [face of God], “Because I have seen God face to face, yet my life is spared.”

exeGesés companion Bible

And Yaaqov calls the name of the place Peni El: for I saw Elohim face to face and my soul is rescued.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

So Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning, “I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved.”

Kaplan Translation

Jacob named the place Divine Face (Peniel). [He said,] 'I have seen the Divine face to face, and my soul has withstood it.' See Judges 6:22, 13:22, Isaiah 6:5.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Ya'akov called the shem of the makom (place) Peniel [Face of G-d]: for I have seen Elohim panim el panim, and my nefesh is saved.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

So Jacob named the place Peniel (the face of God), saying, “For I have seen God face to face, yet my life has not been snatched away.”

The Expanded Bible

So Jacob named that place Peniel [<sup>c</sup>sounds like “face of God” in Hebrew], saying, “I have seen God face to face, but my life was saved [spared].”

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (face of God); for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. So it was not only a bodily struggle, but a spiritual wrestling as well which Jacob was obliged to endure. But he stood the test, he persevered until he had received the Lord's blessing, until he saw the face of God turned to him in mercy, until his soul was healed of all its fear and terror.

NET Bible®

So Jacob named the place Peniel [The name Peniel means “face of God.” Since Jacob saw God face to face here, the name is appropriate.], explaining [The word “explaining” is supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.], “Certainly [Or “because.”] I have seen God face to face and have survived [*Heb* “and my soul [= life] has been preserved.”].”

The Pulpit Commentary

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (i.e. "the face of God." Its situation must have been close to the Jabbok. The reason given for its designation follows): for I have seen God (Elohim) face to face, and my life is preserved (cf. Genesis 16:13; Exodus 14:11; Exodus 33:20; Judges 6:22; Judges 13:22; Isaiah 6:5).

The Voice

So Jacob called the place Peniel because as he said, “I have come face to face with God, and yet my life was spared.”

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version

And calling is Jacob the name of the place Peniel, "for I see the Elohim face to face, and rescued is my soul.

English Standard Version

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."

Webster's Bible Translation

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

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob calls the name of the place Peniel: for "I have seen God face unto face, and my life is delivered."

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob named the place Peniel because he saw the face of God and is still alive.

Genesis 32:30a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-ăuh-KOH<sup>BV</sup></i> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
mâqôwm (מִקְוִם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
P <sup>e</sup> nîy'êl (פְּנִיאֵל) [pronounced <i>pehn-ee-ALE</i> ]	<i>facing God; transliterated Penuel, Peniel</i>	proper singular noun; location	Strong's #6439 BDB #819

This is also spelled P<sup>e</sup>nûw'êl (פְּנִאוּאֵל) [pronounced *pehn-oo-ALE*].

**Translation:** Jacob called the name of that place, *Peniel*,...

The name *Peniel* means *to face God, facing God*. Jacob wrestled God and was face to face with Him.

The Hebrew name is P<sup>e</sup>nîy'êl (פְּנִיאֵל) [pronounced *pehn-ee-ALE*], and it means *facing God*; and it is transliterated *Penuel, Peniel*. Strong's #6439 BDB #819. Anytime in the Hebrew, you see that part of a proper noun contains 'êl, that is usually a reference to God.

From Gary Everett: *Eusebius (A.D. 260 to 340) says that this name means, "vision of God."*<sup>540</sup>

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: "I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!"

### Genesis 32:30: Fully understanding the name Peniel (various commentators)

E. W. Bullinger: *Peniel = Hebrew God's face.*<sup>541</sup>

<sup>540</sup> Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>541</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:30.

## Genesis 32:30: Fully understanding the name Penuel (various commentators)

EG: *The name touches upon the essence of Jacob's experience. For Peni'el means 'face of God.' The explanation really says more than 'my life, or soul, was spared.' For natsal means 'delivered' or 'preserved.' God did more than let no harm come to Jacob; He again restored him who otherwise would surely have perished.*<sup>542</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *Penuel, which signifies the face of God, or God has looked upon me, or has had respect to me: there was afterwards a city built here, called by the same name.*<sup>543</sup>

David Guzik: *Jacob named the place Peniel ("Face of God"), because he did know the name of the Man who wrestled with him. He was the same One who wrestled with Jacob all his life.*<sup>544</sup>

I don't know that I agree with Bush on this: *The Christian also has his memorable places: Bethlehem, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Calvary, and the Mount of Olives, are among them. Every Christian has his particular Peniel, in which God revealed himself to him in an especial manner—his closet, the sanctuary, a book, a sermon, a company, a solitary hour, which continue consecrated in his grateful memory.*<sup>545</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *"Peniel" Peniel means "the face of God" (BDB 819). The spelling "Penuel" may be the alternative spelling of an older name for the location.*

Utley then makes an excellent point: *This name surely implies Jacob thought his opponent was YHWH, who could have easily defeated a mere mortal, but allows a contracted context to denote His willingness to work with and on the side of Jacob. He was not an antagonist, but a present help and one who blesses.*<sup>546</sup>

Wesley: *Peniel - That is, the face of God, because there he had seen the appearance of God, and obtained the favour of God.*<sup>547</sup>

Whedon: *Peniel... Penuel — The two words mean the same thing, and differ only by the changing of the vowel-letter 'into i. Elsewhere it is always written Penuel, and possibly the form Peniel is a corruption that has here crept into the text.*

Whedon continues: *The name means face or presence of God, and the deep and lasting impression made on Jacob, as having struggled face to face with God, made this a fitting name of the place.*<sup>548</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett sees the site as already having this name: *The site was called Penuel (Genesis 32:31) and was probably an important pass for fortresses were built there (Judges 8:8 on) and eventually a city. Jacob takes the name and changes it to fit his experience. The two forms differ only in the archaic nominal ending.*<sup>549</sup>

Whedon: *Elsewhere it is always written Penuel, and possibly the form Peniel is a corruption that has here crept into the text.*

Whedon continues: *The name means face or presence of God, and the deep and lasting impression made on Jacob, as having struggled face to face with God, made this a fitting name of the place.*<sup>550</sup>

<sup>542</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>543</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>544</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:30–32.

<sup>545</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:30 (suggestive comments).

<sup>546</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:30.

<sup>547</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>548</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:30.

<sup>549</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>550</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:31.

Interestingly enough, Utey then writes: *This really is a strange ancient account with many unknown aspects, much like Exodus 4:24-26. It would be very unwise to use these ambiguous texts for doctrine or application. They remain a mystery and their interpretation mere modern conjecture.*<sup>551</sup>

On this I disagree. Utey made the excellent point that he did previously. Furthermore, we know that Jacob has been fighting with God much of his life, so quickly and easily drawn to human viewpoint.

Penuel is found here: Genesis 32:31 Judges 8:8–9, 17 1Kings 12:25.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

## Genesis 32:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (ראה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

When found by itself, pânîym, without a preposition preceding it and with a personal possessive pronoun, can be used for doing or saying something to someone, in front of someone or in their presence.

The full set of BDB definitions: 1) *face*; 1a) *face, faces*; 1b) *presence, person*; 1c) *face (of seraphim or cherubim)*; 1d) *face (of animals)*; 1e) *face, surface (of ground)*; 1f) *as adverb of loc/temp; 1f1) before and behind, toward, in front of, forward, formerly, from beforetime, before.*

'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, 'el pânîym (אל פָּנִים) [pronounced eh-paw-NEEM] mean *into his presence, before, in his presence; upon the surface of something.*

<sup>551</sup> Dr. Bob Utey, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:30.

## Genesis 32:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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There are two very similar words in the Hebrew; one which means *unto*; and the other means *God*. Here we have *unto His face [Presence]*; and in the previous phrase we have *a face [Presence] of God*. The slightly different spelling here may be due to taking the name from these two words here.

**Translation:** ...[saying,] “For I have seen Elohim face to face...”

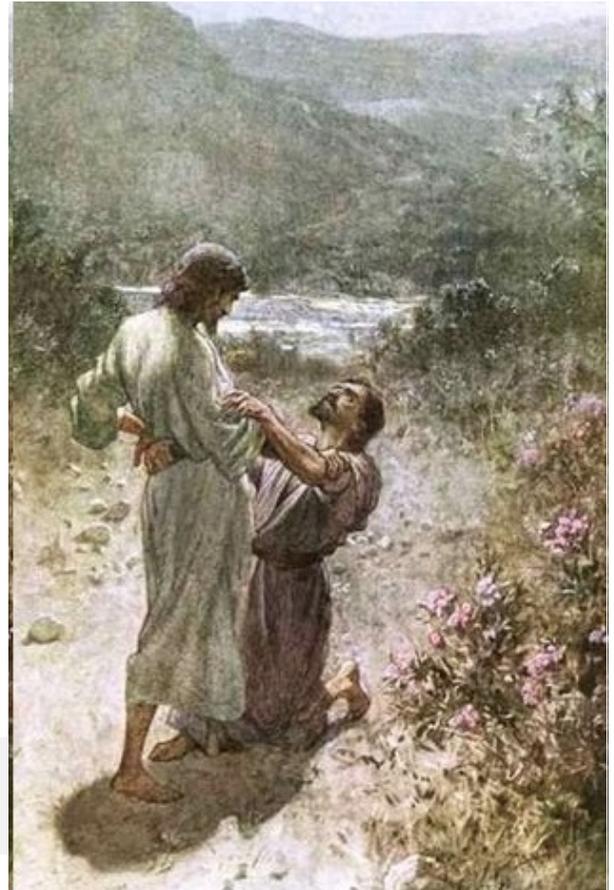
Jacob testifies, “I have seen God face to face.” So he did not really need God to tell him His name—Jacob knows that this is God.

This is the reason that this place has this name.<sup>552</sup> Jacob has seen the face of God and he is still alive.

Benson: *For I have seen God face to face* — Not in his divine essence, for no man ever saw God in that respect, John 1:18; but manifested in a more satisfactory, familiar, and friendly manner, than in dreams or visions.<sup>553</sup>

**Jacob and the Angel at Peniel by William Brassey Hole** (a graphic); from [Janis Cox.com](http://JanisCox.com); accessed March 7, 2019.

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: “I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!”



### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: “I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!”

### Genesis 32:30: “I have seen God face to face.” (Various commentators)

Matthew Poole: *I have seen God face to face*; not in his essence, for so no man ever saw God, John 1:18, nor yet in a dream or vision, but in a most evident, sensible, familiar, and friendly manifestation of himself.<sup>554</sup>

EG: Does not the whole experience, then, sum itself up as a seeing of God and living to tell of it, though sinful nature should perish at so holy a contact?<sup>555</sup>

<sup>552</sup> Even though Dr. Peter Pett suggests that this place had this name to begin with; it is more logical that Jacob gave the name to this place.

<sup>553</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:29–30.

<sup>554</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>555</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

**Genesis 32:30: “I have seen God face to face.” (Various commentators)**

Dr. Peter Pett: *Seeing the face of God did not just mean seeing God. It meant that God’s heart was right towards him. Thus did he know that he was not about to die at Esau’s hand.*<sup>556</sup>

Whedon: *He had there a vision of God such as he had not before, and though now he halted upon his thigh, he was thankful for the preservation of his life.*<sup>557</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The expression “face to face” (panim `el-panim) is used only of direct encounters by human beings with deity. The believer will have a face to face encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ as well at physical death when he will absent from the body but face to face with the Lord.*<sup>558</sup>

Old Testament references to the Presence of God: Genesis 16:13 Exodus 24:10–11 33:14, 19–23 Num. 12:8 Deut. 5:24 34:10 Judges 6:22–23 13:21–22 Isaiah 6:5.

New Testament references to our seeing God: John 1:18 2Corinthians 3:18, Colossians 1:15 2Timothy 1:10 Hebrews 11:27.<sup>559</sup>

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

**Genesis 32:30c**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
nâtsal (נָצַלְ) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>to tear oneself away, deliver oneself; to be torn out or away, be delivered; to be snatched away, to be rescued, to be preserved, to be recovered</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong’s #5337 BDB #664
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	<i>soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong’s #5315 BDB #659

**Translation:** ...and my soul is delivered.”

Jacob knows that his life is rescued or delivered. Instead of being destroyed by God, Jacob is saved.

As we have seen, he is apparently quite nervous about meeting up with Esau, but he has met up with God, face to face and has wrestled him, and he is alive. So Jacob appears to have a renewed amount of courage or confidence in his own situation.

We don’t know—perhaps he needed this courage in order to move forward and to meet Esau. Who knows whether Jacob might have been so filled with fear as to run away at some point. One place where Jacob seems to have renewed confidence is, he appears to have hidden his wives and children earlier in this chapter; but, when

<sup>556</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>557</sup> *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 32:30.

<sup>558</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>559</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

he meets Esau, his family is directly behind him. This suggests that Jacob had the confidence to meet Esau without hiding his family. I believe that he received some additional confidence in God when he wrestled with God.

In addition to this, there would have been the problem of meeting Esau, everything going fine; and then Esau asks, "So, where is your family so I can meet them?" And Jacob says, "Well, I was afraid that you would kill me and them, so I hid them from you." That is a conversation that Jacob will not need to have.

The implication from what Jacob says and writes here is, that he was able to face God and still live gave him confidence to face Esau. Therefore, instead of his family being hidden off away, with 1 or 2 streams of water running before them; they will be right with Jacob when he meets his twin brother.

According to Hosea 12:4–5, Jacob wrestled with the angel (which is Jesus Christ). Peniel (or Penuel) means *the face of God*. Jacob does not ask for a miracle; does not ask how he will be delivered—in fact, he does not, even when face to face with God, ask God to deliver him. He asks for God's blessing. He will hold onto this blessing, which is what he should have done before. He will hold onto this blessing and claim this promise of blessing from God and that will get Jacob through the next 24 hours.

Jacob recognizes that he has been wrestling God, and yet, he is still alive. This has got to have an impact upon a man. You are alive, in your human body, and you meet God face to face; you wrestle with God—and He leaves you alive. This has to make Jacob think and ponder his life.

We will not have this experience, but some of us have had a similar experience, where it is clear that our lives could have ended, but we remain alive. We recognize, perhaps for the first time, that there is just this slender thread that, if it is cut—and that would require very little—our life would suddenly end. Ideally speaking, this ought to make a person a tad bit more introspective. "I'm alive (and maybe I shouldn't be); what is my life for? What is my life all about? Why has God allowed me to live?"

Every time Jacob limps, he needs to remember, "I was face to face with God and He let me live."

Let me suggest that this is the point to which Jacob has matured. He recognizes that, he was face to face with God, and yet God let him live. Jacob is not alive because he outsmarted God, or because he manipulated God, or that he out wrestled God. Jacob is still alive on the basis of God's grace.

Why does God meet Jacob face to face, wrestle and give him a permanent limp, but then, allows Jacob to live? This is the reason that we are all allowed to live, even after failing in a spectacular fashion before God. We can depend upon God's grace. We stand upon the Righteous One, Jesus Christ. Jacob does as well, even though our Lord has not been born yet.

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place, *Peniel*, [saying,] "For I have seen Elohim face to face and my soul is delivered." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: "I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!" (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: "I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!"

### **Genesis 32:30: "My soul has been delivered (saved)." (Various commentators)**

Dr. John Gill: *and my life is preserved: though he had wrestled with one so vastly superior to himself, who could have easily crushed this worm Jacob to pieces, as he is sometimes called; and though he had had such a sight of God as face to faces referring, as is thought, to a notion that obtained early, even among good men, that upon sight of God a man instantly died; though we have no example of that kind.*

## Genesis 32:30: “My soul has been delivered (saved).” (Various commentators)

Gill then suggests the application that Jacob made: *[W]hereas he had met with God himself, and wrestled with him in the form of a man, and yet was preserved, he doubted not that, when he should meet with his brother and debate matters with him, he should be safe and unhurt.*<sup>560</sup>

Guzik further writes: *Jacob also understood it was only by God’s grace and mercy he escaped from this episode with his life.*<sup>561</sup>

Matthew Poole: *My life is preserved; I am now well assured of my safety from Esau, whose approach threatened my life.*

Poole then adds: *[H]e speaks of it with wonder, as others did, that he should see God, and not be struck dead by the glory of his presence.*<sup>562</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *“My life is preserved.” Esau will now not be able to harm the favoured of God. Indeed he will later be able to say to Esau, “I have seen your face as the face of God and you were pleased with me” (Gen\_33:10). He believes that his acceptance by Esau is because of his acceptance by God.*<sup>563</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob inquired from the Lord about His identity because Jacob could not believe that he could have wrestled with God and lived to tell about it, it was beyond comprehension that he could have a wrestling match with the Creator. The Lord’s response to Jacob’s question clearly indicates that Jacob ought to have known who it was who had wrestled with him and spoke to him since in Genesis 32:28, we see that the Lord clearly identifies Himself as Elohim.*<sup>564</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The reason why Jacob could wrestle the Lord and live to tell about it is that the Son of God “condescended” to Jacob. The fact that the Son of God “condescended” means that He descended to a less formal or dignified level, namely He appeared as a human being and waived the privileges of His rank as God and assumed equality with Jacob by manifesting Himself as a human being in order to communicate with Jacob.*

Wenstrom continues: *The Son of God condescended two thousand years ago in Bethlehem when He added to His deity a true, sinless human nature, thus becoming permanently, the God-Man.*<sup>565</sup>

Throughout the Old Testament, there are passages which speak of direct contact with God as being perilous: Genesis 16:13 Exodus 19:21 20:19 24:10–11 33:20 Deut. 5:24 Judges 6:22–23 13:22. Also compare Exodus 33:11 to Deut. 34:10.<sup>566</sup>

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Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: “I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!”

**Direct contact with God:** Now, Exodus 33:20 says that no one can see God and live. But here, Jacob is wrestling with God throughout the night, indicating continued contact. So, which is true? Apart from Jesus Christ, we can have no real contact with God. It would not be unlike having contact with the sun. You cannot even stare at the sun without losing or damaging your vision. It is because your eyes are simply unable to see that sort of

<sup>560</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>561</sup> *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 32:30–32.

<sup>562</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>563</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

<sup>564</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>565</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>566</sup> Most of these passages are from *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:30.

light; just as our bodies could not endure that level of heat. Now, we can look at a picture of the sun; someone could do a scale model of the sun and the planets and we could touch that. But, we cannot have direct contact with the sun in any real way. The same is true of God. God can dial back Who and What He is and reveal Himself as an Angel or a burning bush or as a cloud; and we are able to have limited contact with those things (Jacob could wrestle this angel; the people of Israel in the desert could look at and see the cloud). But, God is holy and righteous; and we cannot approach Him with any amount of sin (and we all have sin). What gives us access to God today is being *in Christ*. God looks at us and He sees His Son. Otherwise, given our sin nature and our actions, we deserve to be blasted.

Even though Jacob previous asked of his Opponent, "Tell me your name," here, it is clear that Jacob knew with Whom he wrestled.

Genesis 32:30 Jacob called the name of that place *Peniel*. He explained it in this way: "I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!"

I probably should have combined vv. 31 and 32; they are related to one another. V. 32 is a tradition that began with the Jews based upon v. 31.

**And so rises to him the sun as which he has passed over Penuel and he is limping upon his thigh.**

Genesis  
32:31

**As the sun arose over him [lit., to him, regarding him], he passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.**

**As the sun began to rise, Jacob passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so rises to him the sun as which he has passed over Penuel and he is limping upon his thigh.
Targum (Onkelos)	And the sun arose upon him as he passed over Penuel, and he went lame upon his thigh.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the sun rose upon him before his time, (the sun) which on his account had set before his time, on his going out from Beersheba, as he crossed over Peniel. And he began to journey, and was lame upon his thigh.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And immediately the sun rose upon him, after he was past Phaniel; but he halted on his foot.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	The sun rose on him as he passed over Peniel, and he limped because of his thigh.
Peshitta (Syriac)	The sun rose upon him just as he left Peniel, and he limped because of his thigh.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the sun rose upon him, when he passed the Face of God; and he halted upon his thigh.
Significant differences:	There is a lot of additional text in one of the targums. The Latin has <i>foot</i> instead of <i>thigh</i> .

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And while he was going past Peniel, the sun came up. And he went with unequal steps because of his damaged leg.
Easy English	The sun rose in the sky as Jacob passed through Peniel. And Jacob could not walk very well because of his hip. The hip is part of the body. It is at the top of the leg.

Names of God Bible He was limping because of his hip. (Therefore, even today the people of Israel do not eat the muscle of the thigh attached to the hip socket because **Elohim** touched the socket of Jacob's hip at the muscle of the thigh.) V. 32 is included for context.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible The sun was rising by the time Jacob left, limping from his injured hip.  
 Contemporary English V. The sun was coming up as Jacob was leaving Peniel. He was limping because he had been struck on the hip, and the muscle on his hip joint had been injured. That's why even today the people of Israel don't eat the hip muscle of any animal. V. 32 is included for context.

The Living Bible The sun rose as he started on, and he was limping because of his hip. (That is why even today the people of Israel don't eat meat from near the hip, in memory of what happened that night.) V. 32 is included for context.

New Berkeley Version The rising sun shone on him as he passed through Peniel and he was limping at the hip.

New Century Version Then the sun rose as he was leaving that place, and Jacob was limping because of his leg.

New Life Version The sun rose upon him as he passed through Peniel. It was hard to walk on his leg.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Well, the sun had risen on him by the time he left *PeniEl*, where he had been stopped by his thigh.

Beck's American Translation The sun rose on him as he passed Penuel, and he limped on account of his hip.  
 International Standard V The sun was rising above Jacob [Lit. *him*] as he crossed over from Peniel, limping due to his wounded thigh.

New Advent (Knox) Bible As soon as he passed beyond Phanuel, the sun rose, and he went limping on one foot; that is why the race of Israel, to this day, will not eat the sinew of the thigh, in which Jacob's strength failed him, the sinew of his thigh that withered when it was touched. V. 32 is included for context.

Translation for Translators The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of what had happened to his hip.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible He was to have passed over Penu-el, and the sun was to come out, even was he to be limping from his thigh.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible And the sun arose on him as he crossed over from Peniel, but he limped on his thigh.

HCSB The sun shone on him as he passed by Penuel—limping because of his hip.  
 Tree of Life Version Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed by Peniel—limping because of his hip.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) The sun rose as he passed through Penuel, limping because of his hip.  
 New American Bible (2011) At sunrise, as he left Penuel, Jacob limped along because of his hip.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible As the sun rose upon him he went on past P'ni-El, limping at the hip.  
 exeGeses companion Bible And as he passes over Peni El the sun rises on him and he limps on his flank.

Kaplan Translation	The sun rose and was shining on him as he left Penuel [Although Jacob named it Peniel, it was later known as Penuel; see 1 Kings 12:25. It is near Sukkoth; Genesis 33:16, Judges 8:8. It is usually identified with Tulul edh dhahab, on the south bank of the Jabbok, near the bend, about 10 miles east of the Jordan. However, from the context here, it seems that Peniel was on the north bank of the Jabbok, where another ancient mount (tel) is found. It may be that Jacob named the northern area Peniel, and then left the southern area, which was later known as Penuel. This is some 15 miles south of Machanaim (see note on Genesis 32:3).]. He was limping because of his thigh.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And as he passed over Penuel the shemesh rose upon him, and he limped upon his hip.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Now the sun rose on him as he passed Penuel (Peniel), and he was limping because of his hip.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And as he passed over Penuel, the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Just as he passed over and away from the place of the night's wrestling, the sun rose upon him, and with its rising the courage which now possessed his heart sent him forth cheerfully to meet his brother Esau. He had probably taken little notice of his injury in the course of the struggle, but now the sprain caused him to wince and to walk lame.
NET Bible®	The sun rose [ <i>Heb</i> "shone."] over him as he crossed over Penuel [The name is spelled Penuel here, apparently a variant spelling of Peniel (see v. 30).], but <sup>81</sup> he was limping because of his hip.
The Pulpit Commentary	And as he passed over Penuel—this some suppose to have been the original name of the place, which Jacob changed by the alteration of a vowel, but it is probably nothing more than an old form of the same word—the sun rose upon him,—"there was sunshine within and sunshine without. When Judas went forth on his dark design, we read, 'It was night,' John 13:30" (Inglis)—and he halted upon his thigh—thus carrying with him a memorial of his conflict, as Paul afterwards bore about with him a stake in his flesh (2Corinthians 12:7).
Syndein/Thieme	And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. {this means Jacob/Israel hurt his hip in the wrestling match with Jesus Christ - Israel will limp for the rest of his life.}
The Voice	The sun began to rise as Jacob passed by Penuel, limping because of his <i>dislocated</i> hip.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and the sun came up to him just as he crossed over Peni'el <sup>[Face of El]</sup> and he was limping upon his midsection,...
	<b>Footnote:</b> - The verse appears to be missing the phrase "he~did~say" prior to "i~did~see."
Concordant Literal Version <i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And irradiating him is the sun as he passes Peniel. Yet he is limping on his thigh. And the sun rose on him as soon as he had passed over Penuel,—he, moreover was halting upon his thigh.
Modern English Version	As he crossed over Peniel, the sun rose over him, and he was limping on his thigh.
World English Bible	The sun rose on him as he passed over Peniel, and he limped because of his thigh.
Young's Updated LT	And the sun rises on him when he has passed over Penuel, and he is halting on his thigh.

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob, once the sun rises, passes over Penuel and finds that he is limping.

## Genesis 32:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
zârach (צָרַח) [pronounced <i>zaw-RAHKH</i> ]	<i>to rise, to come out; to appear; to scatter rays, to shine forth, to break out; to majestically appear; and even, when speaking of a plant, to spring forth</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2224 BDB #280
Apart from the book of Job, this is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>SHEH-mesh</i> ]	<i>sun; sunrise, sun-rising, east, sun-setting, west (of direction); openly, publically</i>	masculine or feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8121 BDB #1039
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced <i>kê</i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'âsher (כֹּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i> ] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, as just; because; according to what manner, in a manner as, when, about when</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
'âbar (עָבַר) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
P <sup>e</sup> nûw'êl (פְּנִיאֵל) [pronounced <i>pehn-oo-ALE</i> ]	<i>facing God; transliterated Penuel, Peniel</i>	proper singular noun; location	Strong's #6439 BDB #819

This is also spelled P<sup>e</sup>nîy'êl (פְּנִיֵאֵל) [pronounced *pehn-ee-ALE*].

In v. 30, the proper name is spelled *Peniel* or *Peniyel*; as it is taken directly from the words found there. However, the common Hebrew name for this place is *Penuel*, found here and in Judges 8:8–9 (3) Judges 8:17 1Kings 12:25 1Chronicles 4:4 1Chronicles 8:25 (which is everywhere this word is found).

**Translation:** *As the sun arose over him [lit., to him, regarding him], he passed over Penuel...*

At this time when Jacob is crossing over or passing through the area when he wrestled with God, the sun is beginning to rise. This will be the day that he meets up with his brother Esau.

To help Jacob remember this night, God injured Jacob—we do not know how long this continued. Some of us are very hard-headed and the only way that God can get through to us is through pain; in this case, possibly a permanent injury. This is because of God's great love for Jacob. He has a perfect plan for Jacob's life and Jacob plays an important role in God's plan. Therefore, God sometimes has to use what would seem on the surface to be harsh measures. As for the tradition of not eating the sinew of the hip, this is a way that the Israelites would recall and tell this story to their children and to their children.

Many commentators make mention of going from the darkness to the sunrise; but, sometimes, a rose is just a rose and no more. Sometimes, the sun rising over Jacob simply indicates that this is a new day, and Jacob has things to do in this day. Was there some confusion in Jacob's life to this point? I think that is reasonable to conclude; and that he had more clarity this next day. All of that is based upon his wrestling, talking and injury where facing up to God. But, we cannot take this too far. Jacob's meeting with Esau will go fine; but Jacob will mislead Esau in the end.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr. probably expressed this sentiment the best: *The sun rising was symbolic of Jacob's spiritual condition at this time and symbolized that Jacob no longer was under divine discipline but rather experiencing fellowship with God. The rising sun suggests that Jacob is living now according to the standards of God's holiness, which is love and he is living in obedience to the Word of God and as a result is experiencing fellowship with God.*<sup>567</sup>

L. M. Grant: *As he passed over Peniel we are told "the sun rose upon him." This is in designed contrast to Genesis 28:11, when he had left Beersheba: "the sun was set." The night of darkness in our lives passes only when the flesh has been crippled (or judged) and we learn to cling only to the Lord. The sun (typical of the Lord Jesus) and we learn to cling only to the Lord.*<sup>568</sup>

Since Jacob's family will be directly behind him when he meets Esau, that suggests that, for some period of time, be it a day or two, he is in fellowship, and has responded to God's guidance.

Notice the phrase *as he passed Peniel* in v. 31. He just named that area Peniel. Now how is he passing it? He went back and got his wives and his children. Jacob is trusting God. As he limps, he trusts God all the more.

The Cambridge Bible: *The name of a town in Judges 8:8; 1Kings 12:25. The site is doubtful, but was evidently not far from the confluence of the Jabbok and the Jordan.*<sup>569</sup>

### Genesis 32:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

The NET Bible: *The disjunctive clause draws attention to an important fact: He may have crossed the stream, but he was limping.*<sup>570</sup>

<sup>567</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>568</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 6, 2019 (slightly edited).

<sup>569</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:31.

<sup>570</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 10, 2016.

Genesis 32:31b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; himself</i> as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied; with the definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
tsâla' (עלצ) [pronounced tsaw-LAHÇ]	<i>limping; being lame</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6760 BDB #854
'al (לע) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
yârek <sup>e</sup> (רקי) [pronounced yaw-REK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>thigh, inner thigh; loin, side, base; shaft; uterus, reproductive system</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3409 BDB #437

**Translation:** ...and he is limping because of his thigh.

Jacob here and forever more will limp because of his thigh. We do not know exactly the nature of this injury—not even the amount of time it will confound him (some believe it to be life-long). In any case, as long as Jacob puts one foot in front of the other, and he endures some pain, that will remind him of his wrestling with God.

In the next chapter, he is going to do things differently from the way he planned originally. Is this permanent limp the reason for that?

Jacob would, possibly for the rest of his life, limp because of his opposition to God. Every time that he limped, he was to remember his own opposition to God, as well as God's blessing of him. There is nothing better for memory than pain. The operative word here is *possibly*; as I do not recall this injury be mentioned again after this chapter. Does that mean it faded away or that it simply became a part of Jacob's reality? We don't know.

Genesis 32:31 *As the sun arose over him* [lit., *to him, regarding him*], *he passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:31 *As the sun began to rise, Jacob passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.* (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:31 *As the sun began to rise, Jacob passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.*

### Genesis 32:31b: Jacob's Limp (various commentators)

Gary Everett suggests: *[Jacob's limping] was symbolic of the character transformation that Jacob has undergone with the name change. This transformation came with a price, the weakening of the flesh, and a greater dependence on the Lord.*

## Genesis 32:31b: Jacob's Limp (various commentators)

Dr. Bob Utley: *Whether this was permanent (later Jewish tradition) or temporary is not certain.*<sup>571</sup>

Murphy, in my opinion, takes this too far: *The wrenching of the tendons and muscles was mercifully healed, yet so as to leave a permanent monument in Jacob's halting gait, that God had overcome his self-will.*<sup>572</sup> I just don't buy in Jacob's self-will as having disappeared.

Joseph Benson: *He halted on his thigh — And many think he continued to do so to his dying day. If he did he had no reason to complain, for the honour and comfort he obtained by his struggle were abundantly sufficient to countervail the damage, though he went limping to his grave.*<sup>573</sup>

E. W. Bullinger: *[Limping is the] sign that it is God who commands, and has real power to overcome. Typical of the national humiliation required before entering on the blessing.*<sup>574</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown understand the injury in this way: *As Paul had a thorn in the flesh given to humble him, lest he should be too elevated by the abundant revelations granted him [2Corinthians 12:7], so Jacob's lameness was to keep him mindful of this mysterious scene, and that it was in gracious condescension the victory was yielded to him. In the greatest of these spiritual victories which, through faith, any of God's people obtain, there is always something to humble them.*<sup>575</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[S]ome think he went limping all his days; others, that he was healed immediately by the angel before he came to Esau; but of either there is no proof.*<sup>576</sup>

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A chiasm is the overall arrangement of a passage (it is logically arranged like a X-a chi). I believe that this is found in Genesis to help with remembering the passage. Sometimes we can read AA', BB', etc., and it makes sense; sometimes we can focus in on the center line as what is important, and then come out from there.

### William Ramey's Chiasm of Genesis 32:22–31

- A Jacob did not cross the Jabbok that night, but remained alone (22-24a)
- B A "man" wrestles with Jacob (24b-25)
- C The "man's" request to Jacob (26a)
- D Jacob requests a blessing (26b)
- E The "man" asks Jacob his name (27a)
- X Jacob's name changed to "Israel" (27b-28)
- E' Jacob asks the "man" his name (29a-b)
- D' The "man" blesses Jacob (29c)
- C' Jacob's response by naming the place "Peniel" (30a)
- B' Jacob says that he has seen God "face to face" (30b)
- A' The sun rose upon Jacob as he crossed over Peniel alone (31)

Editorial note: In commemoration of Jacob's confrontation with God, the descendants of Israel did not eat the sinew of the hip because it was touched in the struggle (32)

<sup>571</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:31.

<sup>572</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 32:31 (suggestive comments).

<sup>573</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:31.

<sup>574</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:31.

<sup>575</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:31.

<sup>576</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:31.

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

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Much of Genesis can be difficult to interpret, as most of it is narrative. Now and again, there is clear commentary on what has gone on (Genesis 19:15 22:15–18); but most of the time, the incidents and narrative are given, without any sort of moral commentary added. Therefore, we take all the relevant material together, with the narrative, and determine for ourselves how to understand what is being taught.

### Wenstrom: What Jacob Learned (or, Should Have Learned)

[Here], Jacob has learned what God's grace is all about, namely, that we cannot merit the blessing of God because of who we are or what we do, that it is a gift and cannot be earned or deserved.

Jacob exploited his brother Esau's hunger and got him to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup because he thought he had to do something to get God to bless him. He disguised himself as Esau in order to deceive his father Isaac who was blind into giving him the blessing of the birthright rather than to Esau because he thought he had to do something to get blessed by God.

Jacob's finally learned that neither Esau or anyone or himself could prevent God from blessing him. He clung to the Lord demanding to be blessed because he now understands that the blessings of God come directly from God and not by cheating and deceiving people.

Jacob had learned through the twenty years with Laban that Esau could neither provide nor prevent the blessing of God and so it was not Esau that stood in the way of Jacob's blessing in the land of Canaan.

On the one hand, it was God Who opposed Jacob and on the other it was Jacob himself, who by means of his deceitfulness and treachery, attempted to produce spiritual blessings through carnal means. Jacob had learned that the blessing of God must be obtained from God himself, and this must be done by clinging to Him in helpless dependence, not by trying to manipulate Him or fighting Esau.

Jacob had learned through the years of divine discipline while living with Laban that he did "not" have to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the birthright instead of Esau but that the blessing of the birthright was based upon God's grace meaning it was a gift that he did "not" earn or deserve.

From [Wenstrom.org](http://Wenstrom.org) accessed September 1, 2015.

### Genesis 32:24–31: Lessons that we are to take from this battle (Arthur Pink)

Many are the important lessons taught in the Scripture we have been examining...: (1) It is natural to the "flesh" to plan and scheme and to desire the ordering of our lives. (2) The mind of the flesh deems itself fully competent to order our life. (3) But God in His faithfulness and love determines to correct this habit in His child. (4) Long does He bear with our self-confidence and self-sufficiency, but He must and will bring us to the end of ourselves. (5) To accomplish this He lays His hand on us, and makes us conscious of our utter helplessness. (6) This He does by "withering" us in the seat of our creature strength, and by writing the sentence of death on our flesh. (7) As the result we learn to cling to Him in our weakness, and seek His "blessing." (8) What a lesson is this! The "flesh" cannot be subdued, but must be "withered" in the very sinew of its power- "because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (9) That which hinders us in our growth in grace is not so much our spiritual weakness as it is confidence in our natural strength! (10) Not until these truths are apprehended shall we cease to be "contenders," and shall we gladly take our place as clay in the hands of the Potter, happy for Him to "command" and order our lives for us. (11) Then will it be with us, as with Jacob- "And He blessed him there." (12) And so will the sequel, too, prove true

## Genesis 32:24–31: Lessons that we are to take from this battle (Arthur Pink)

of us- "The sun rose upon him," for" the path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

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Genesis 32:31 [As the sun began to rise, Jacob passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.](#)

Every time that Jacob walks—as long as he has this injury—he feels pain, his walking is compromised, and he thinks back to his wrestling with God. He thinks back to God blessing him and he thinks back to his name.

We have one final verse in Genesis 32, and this verse is based upon Jacob's wrestling match with God. God touched Jacob's hip and it was thrown out of whack.

Genesis 32:25 [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.](#)

Gen 32:26–29 [Then He said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 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." 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.](#)

Gen 32:30–31 [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." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. \(ESV; capitalized\)](#)

This leads us to a tradition; and the Hebrew people were known for practicing traditions.

**Upon that do not eat sons of Israel tendon of the hip which [is] upon a hollow of the thigh as far as the day the this, for He touched in a hollow of a thigh of Jacob in a tendon of the hip.**

Genesis  
32:32

**Therefore, the sons of Israel do not eat the tendon of the hip, which [is] above the hollow of the thigh til this day, because God [lit., He] injured the hollow of Jacob's thigh at the tendon of the hip.**

**Therefore, it is a tradition of the people of Israel not to eat the tendon of the hip, which is above the hollow of the thigh, until this day, because they recognize that God injured Jacob there at the hollow of his thigh, over the tendon of his hip.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	<a href="#">Upon that do not eat sons of Israel tendon of the hip which [is] upon a hollow of the thigh as far as the day the this, for He touched in a hollow of a thigh of Jacob in a tendon of the hip.</a>
Targum (Onkelos)	<a href="#">Therefore the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day, because He touched the hollow of Jakob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.</a>
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	<a href="#">Therefore the sons of Israel eat not the sinew which shrank, which is in the hollow of the thigh of cattle and of wild animals, until this day; because <u>the Angel</u> touched</a>

and laid hold of the hollow of the right thigh of Jakob, in the place of the sinew which shrank.

Revised Douay-Rheims	Therefore the children of Israel, unto this day, eat not the sinew, that shrank in Jacob's thigh: because he touched the sinew of his thigh and it shrank.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Therefore the B'nai Yisrael do not eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day, because he touched the hollow of Ya'aqub's thigh in the sinew of the hip.
Peshitta (Syriac)	That is why the children of Israel do not eat of the sinew of the hip, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day; because the angel touched the hollow of Jacobs thigh on the sinew of the thigh.
Septuagint (Greek)	Therefore the children of Israel will by no means eat of the sinew which was benumbed, which is on the broad part of the thigh, until this day, because <i>the angel</i> touched the broad part of the thigh of Jacob-- even the sinew which was benumbed.
Significant differences:	Some additional words are added in one of the targums.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	For this reason the children of Israel, even today, never take that muscle in the hollow of the leg as food, because the hollow of Jacob's leg was touched.
Easy English	Even today, the Israelites do not eat the part of an animal joined to the hip. This is because God touched Jacob's hip. The Israelites were the descendants of Israel.
Easy-to-Read Version--2006	So even today, the people of Israel don't eat the muscle that is on the hip joint, because this is the muscle where Jacob was hurt.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Even today the descendants of Israel do not eat the muscle which is on the hip joint, because it was on this muscle that Jacob was hit.
International Children's B.	So even today the people of Israel do not eat the muscle that is on the hip joint of animals. This is because Jacob was touched there.
<i>The Message</i>	The sun came up as he left Peniel, limping because of his hip. (This is why Israelites to this day don't eat the hip muscle; because Jacob's hip was thrown out of joint.) V. 31 is included for context.
NIRV	The sun rose above Jacob as he passed by Peniel. He was limping because of his hip. That's why the Israelites don't eat the meat attached to the inside of an animal's hip. They don't eat it to this day. It's because the inside of Jacob's hip was touched. V. 31 is included for context.
New Simplified Bible	Therefore, even today the people of Israel do not eat the muscle of the thigh (the sinew) attached to the hip socket. This is because God touched the socket of Jacob's thigh at the muscle.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Casual English Bible	The story of what happened that night is the reason God's people of Israel, to this day, don't eat the hip muscle from any animal.
Common English Bible	Therefore, Israelites don't eat the tendon attached to the thigh muscle to this day, because he grabbed Jacob's thigh muscle at the tendon.
New Berkeley Version	For this reason the Israelites to this day never eat the hip-muscle that covers the hip-socket, because He struck Jacob's thigh at the hip-muscle.
New Century Version	So even today the people of Israel do not eat the muscle that is on the hip joint of animals, because Jacob was touched there.
New Life Version	So to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the meat from inside the joint of the thigh, because he touched this part of the joint on Jacob's leg.
New Living Translation	The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel, and he was limping because of the injury to his hip. (Even today the people of Israel don't eat the tendon near the hip socket

because of what happened that night when the man strained the tendon of Jacob's hip.) V. 31 is included for context.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And this is why the children of IsraEl, even to this day, will never eat that part of meat which [God had] numbed (the upper part of the thigh), because that was the part of the thigh on Jacob, which [God's messenger] had numbed.
International Standard V	Therefore, to this day the Israelis do not eat the hip tendon that connects to the thigh socket, because he had injured the socket of the thigh where the tendon connected to Jacob's hip.
Translation for Translators	The muscle on his hip joint had been injured. So to this present time, because of what happened to Jacob, the Israeli people do not eat the muscle/tendon that is attached to the socket of the hips of animals.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Were the sons of Isra-el to eat the sinew, which abated of the hollow of his thigh, even to this day? - It is to have been touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, even the sinew is to be abated.
Conservapedia	For that reason the Sons of Israel do not eat the numbed sinew on the hollow of the thigh, to this day: because the man touched the hollow of the thigh in the numbed sinew.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Therefore the children of Israel do not eat the sinew-nerve from the foot to the thigh until this day, for he struck Jacob in the sinew-nerve at the hollow of the thigh.
HCSB	That is why, to this day, the Israelites don't eat the thigh muscle that is at the hip socket: because He struck Jacob's hip socket at the thigh muscle.
H. C. Leupold	Therefore the children of Israel are not in the habit of eating even to this day the sinew of the hip muscle which is upon the socket joint of the hip, because that He touched the socket joint of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the hip muscle.
NIV, ©2011	Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	That is why to this day the Israelites do not eat the sciatic nerve which is in the hip socket because the sciatic nerve in Jacob's hip had been touched.
The Heritage Bible	Therefore the children of Israel do not eat the failed sinew, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew which failed.
New American Bible (2002)	That is why, to this day, the Israelites do not eat the sciatic muscle that is on the hip socket, inasmuch as Jacob's hip socket was struck at the sciatic muscle.
New Jerusalem Bible	That is why to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh sinew which is at the hip socket: because he had struck Jacob at the hip socket on the thigh sinew.
Revised English Bible	That is why to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew that is on the hollow of the thigh, because the man had struck Jacob on that sinew.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	This is why, to this day, the people of Isra'el do not eat the thigh muscle that passes along the hip socket — because the man struck Ya'akov's hip at its socket.
exeGesés companion Bible	Therefore, to this day, the sons of Yisra El eat not of the sinew which shriveled, which is on the hollow of the flank:

because he touched the hollow of the flank of Yaaqov in the sinew that shriveled.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping on his hip. That is why the children of Israel to this day do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the socket of the hip, since Jacob's hip socket was wrenched at the thigh muscle.

Kaplan Translation

The Israelites [Literally, 'children of Israel.' This is the first time that this expression is used.] therefore do not eat the displaced nerve [Gid ha-nasheh in Hebrew. This is the sciatic nerve, the large main nerve of the lower extremity, running down the back of the leg. Therefore, before the hindquarter of any animal can be eaten, this nerve, with all its branches, must be carefully removed. Since it is very difficult to do this, hindquarters are usually not eaten by Jews. The nerve touched by the angel is seen as the place where evil has strong influence (Zohar).] on the hip joint to this very day. This is because [the stranger] touched Jacob's thigh on the displaced nerve.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

Therefore the Bnei Yisroel eat not of the sinew of the thigh vein (sciatic nerve) which is upon the hip socket, unto this day; because he touched the hip socket of Ya'akov in the sinew of the thigh vein.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible

Then the sun rose as he was leaving that place, and Jacob was limping because of his leg [hip]. So even today the people of Israel do not eat the muscle that is on the hip joint of animals [the sciatic muscle], because Jacob was touched there. V. 31 is included for context.

Kretzmann's Commentary

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. Thus even in later years the Israelites commemorated the wonderful struggle of their ancestor in setting aside this part of the hip of animals as consecrated to the Lord. Special revelations of God's goodness and mercy deserve to be commemorated through the ages by those who have received the benefits following from such visitations.

NET Bible®

That is why to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew which is attached to the socket of the hip, because he struck [Or "because the socket of Jacob's hip was struck." Some translations render this as an impersonal passive. On the translation of the word "struck" see the note on this term in v. 25.] the socket of Jacob's hip near the attached sinew.

The Pulpit Commentary

Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank,—the gid hannasheh, rendered by the LXX. τὸ νεῦρον ὃ ἐνάρκησεν, the nerve which became numb, and by the Vulgate nervus qui emarcuit, the nerve which withered, is the long tendon or sinew nervus ischiaticus (the tends Achillis of the Greeks) reaching from the spinal marrow to the ankle. The derivation of hannasheh is unknown (Gesenius), though the LXX. appear to have connected it with nashah, to dislocate, become feeble; Ainsworth with nashah, to forget (i.e. the sinew that forgot its place), and Furst with nashah, to be prolonged—which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day:—i.e. the day of Moses; though the custom continues to the present time among the Hebrews of cutting out this sinew from the beasts they kill and eat (vide Ainsworth in loco); but, according to Michaelis, eo nemo omnino mortalium, si vel nullo cognationis gradu Jacobum attingat, nemo Graecus, nemo barbarus vesci velit—because he (i.e. the angel) touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

The Voice

And to this day, the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached near the hip socket of any animal, since that is where God struck Jacob when He dislocated his hip.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...therefore the sons of Yisra'el <sup>[He turns E]</sup> will not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the palm of the midsection until this day given that he touched in the palm of the midsection of Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> in the sinew of the hip,...
Concordant Literal Version	Therefore not eating are the sons of Israel the sinew which was benumbed, which is on the palm of the thighbone, till this day, for He touched the palm of Jacob's thighbone at the sinew benumbed.
Darby Translation	Therefore the children of Israel do not eat of the sinew that is over the joint of the thigh, to this day; because he touched the joint of Jacob's thigh -- the sinew.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	For this cause, the sons of Israel eat not of the nerve of the large hip-sinew, which is by the hollow of the thigh, until this day,—because he touched the hollow of the thigh of Jacob, in the nerve of the hip-sinew.
English Standard Version	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.
New European Version	Therefore the children of Israel don't eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.
Third Millennium Bible	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.
World English Bible	Therefore the children of Israel don't eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the hollow of the thigh, to this day, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Therefore the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew which shrank, which is on the hollow of the thigh, unto this day, because He came against the hollow of Jacob's thigh, against the sinew which shrank.

**The gist of this passage:** A tradition in Israel came about where the muscle of the back of the leg of an animal was no longer eaten to commemorate Jacob's leg being hurt.

<b>Genesis 32:32a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i> ]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, ʿal kên (עַל כֵּן) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason</i> . Literally, these words would be translated <i>upon so, upon therefore, upon then</i> .			
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced <i>aw-KAHL</i> ]	<i>to eat; to devour, to consume, to destroy</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37

## Genesis 32:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
I believe that this is the first time the phrase <i>sons of Israel</i> is used where it refers to the descendants of Jacob rather than to his literal sons.			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
gîyd (גֵּיד) [pronounced <i>geed</i> ]	<i>thread; thong; nerve, tendon; sinew</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1517 BDB #161
nâsheh (נֶשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>naw-SHEH</i> ]	<i>vein, nerve in thigh; nerve or tendon passing through the thigh and leg to the ankles</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5384 BDB #674
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah]</i>	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kaph (כַּף) [pronounced <i>kaf</i> ]	<i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3709 BDB #496
These nouns are tied together because of the fact that they are concave.			
yârek <sup>e</sup> (רֵכַע) [pronounced <i>yaw-REK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>thigh, inner thigh; loin, side, base; shaft; uterus, reproductive system</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3409 BDB #437
'ad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i> ]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day; time; today or this day (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

**Translation:** Therefore, the sons of Israel do not eat the tendon of the hip, which [is] above the hollow of the thigh til this day,...

This began a tradition among the Israelites. In recognition of this wrestling match, they would no longer eat a certain portion of the hip of an animal. I have the tendon here, but we do not know exactly what it is that we are speaking about.

Dr. Bob Utley: *"to this day" This phrase is textual evidence of a later editor. The ban on eating this part of an animal is rabbinical, not biblical.*<sup>577</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The expression "sons of Israel" is used here for the first time in the Bible and is a designation for the nation of Israel in Moses' day and is not simply a designation for Jacob's sons.*<sup>578</sup> It would be reasonable for this verse to have been a gloss, added likely by Moses 400+ years later.

Genesis 32:32b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
nâga <sup>c</sup> (נגא) [pronounced naw-GAHG]	<i>to touch, to reach into; to violate, to injure; to come to a person; to strike</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5060 BDB #619
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
kaph (כף) [pronounced kaf]	<i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3709 BDB #496
These nouns are tied together because of the fact that they are concave.			
yârek <sup>e</sup> (רֵךְ) [pronounced yaw-REK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>thigh, inner thigh; loin, side, base; shaft; uterus, reproductive system</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3409 BDB #437
Ya <sup>c</sup> qôb (בְּקַעַי) [pronounced yah- <sup>g</sup> uh-KOH <sup>BV</sup> ]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
gîyd (דָּג) [pronounced geed]	<i>thread; thong; nerve, tendon; sinew</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1517 BDB #161
nâsheh (הַשֵּׁה) [pronounced naw-SHEH]	<i>vein, nerve in thigh; nerve or tendon passing through the thigh and leg to the ankles</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5384 BDB #674

**Translation:** ...because God [lit., He] injured the hollow of Jacob's thigh at the tendon of the hip.

Not eating a specific portion of meat is a recognition of God coming directly to Jacob and wrestling with him.

<sup>577</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 32:32.

<sup>578</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

Genesis 32:32 Therefore, the sons of Israel do not eat the tendon of the hip, which [is] above the hollow of the thigh til this day, because God [lit., He] injured the hollow of Jacob's thigh at the tendon of the hip. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 32:32 Therefore, it is a tradition of the people of Israel not to eat the tendon of the hip, which is above the hollow of the thigh, until this day, because they recognize that God injured Jacob there at the hollow of his thigh, over the tendon of his hip. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 32:32 Therefore, it is a tradition of the people of Israel not to eat the tendon of the hip, which is above the hollow of the thigh, until this day, because they recognize that God injured Jacob there at the hollow of his thigh, over the tendon of his hip.

### Genesis 32:32: What was not eaten by way of tradition (various commentators)

Clarke: *What this sinew was neither Jew nor Christian can tell; and it can add nothing either to science, or to a true understanding of the text, to multiply conjectures. I have already supposed that the part which the angel touched or struck was the groin; and if this be right, the sinew, nerve, or muscle that shrank, must be sought for in that place.*<sup>579</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *This tendon is commonly supposed to be the sciatic muscle, nervus ischiaticus, running from the thigh to the ankle. No mention of this practice of ritual abstinence occurs in the Levitical law; but it is referred to in the Talmud Tract Chullin, cap. vii.*<sup>580</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[T]he sinew of the part that was out of joint, the sinew or tendon that keeps the thigh bone in the socket, together with the flesh that covered it, or the muscle in which it is; or that sinew, others, that contracts itself and gives motion to the thigh bone to work itself: of this the Israelites eat not.*<sup>581</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *the sinew which shrank — the nerve that fastens the thigh bone in its socket.*<sup>582</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Because of this particular injury,] 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.*<sup>583</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *"Sinew" is the noun gidh (גִּיד) (gheed), which refers to the sciatic nerve, i.e. the central nerve of the hip region.*<sup>584</sup>

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Genesis 32:32 Therefore, it is a tradition of the people of Israel not to eat the tendon of the hip, which is above the hollow of the thigh, until this day, because they recognize that God injured Jacob there at the hollow of his thigh, over the tendon of his hip.

<sup>579</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:32.

<sup>580</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:32.

<sup>581</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:32.

<sup>582</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:32.

<sup>583</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:32.

<sup>584</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

## Genesis 32:32: The tradition of Israel not eating the tendon of the hip (comments)

The College Press Bible Study collects several commentators' comments: *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 neighborhood of the hip, which is easily injured by any violent strain in wrestling. 'Upon this day': the remark is applicable still* (K-D, 307). "There is no mention of this ancient food-law elsewhere in the Bible" (JB, 55).

EG: *God did not demand this ritual observance in the Mosaic law, but the descendants of Israel of their own accord instituted the practice because they recognized how extremely important this experience of Jacob was for him and for themselves...Delitzsch tells us that Jewish practice defines it as the inner vein on the hindquarter together with the outer vein plus the ramifications of both.*

College Press continues with the writings of Jamieson: *Josephus (Antiquities, Bk. I, ch. 20, sec. 2) renders it more correctly the broad sinew. 'Jacob himself,' continues that historian, abstained from eating that sinew ever afterwards; and for his sake it is still not eaten by us.' The practice of the Jews in abstaining from eating this in the flesh of animals is not founded on the law of Moses, but is merely a traditional usage. The sinew is carefully extracted; and where there are no persons skilled enough for that operation, they do not make use of the hind legs at all. Abstinance from this particular article of animal food is universally practised by the Jews. and is so peculiar a custom in their daily observance*

Dr. John Gill: *[They abstain from it unto this day: they have a whole chapter in one of their treatises in the Misnah (I), giving rules concerning it; where it is forbidden to eat of it, whether in the land of Israel or out of it; whether in common food or sacrifices, even in burnt offerings it was to be taken out; and whether in cattle of the house or of the field; and both in the right and left thigh.*<sup>585</sup>

L. M. Grant: *The children of Israel were impressed enough by this to take the outward action of abstaining from eating meat from the hollow of the thigh of the animals they slaughtered. but it was only outward. How little in all this history have they learned in spiritual reality to put the flesh in the place of self-judgment.*<sup>586</sup>

Whedon, who lived until 1909, writes: *Even to the present day the Jews religiously abstain from eating this sinew in animals.*<sup>587</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The practice of the Jews in abstaining from eating this in the flesh of animals, is not founded on the law of Moses, but is merely a traditional usage. The sinew is carefully extracted; and where there are no persons skilled enough for that operation, they do not make use of the hind legs at all.*<sup>588</sup>

Knobel: *This custom is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament; the Talmudists, however (Tract, Cholin, Mischna, 7), regard it as a law, whose transgression was to be punished with several stripes.*<sup>589</sup>

Gill writes: *[Whoever eats of it to the quantity of an olive is to be beaten with forty stripes.*<sup>590</sup>

If this punishment is true, it reveals an incredible legalism among the Hebrew people. This is described as a tradition, not as a law of God.

<sup>585</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:32.

<sup>586</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>587</sup> *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:32.

<sup>588</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 32:32.

<sup>589</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>590</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 32:32. Gill actually dwells on more regulations regarding this.

## Genesis 32:32: The tradition of Israel not eating the tendon of the hip (comments)

Verse-by-verse Ministry, commenting 100 or more years later, says that this is no longer a thing: *Moses mentions a Jewish tradition of not eating the ligaments of the hip, though this tradition disappeared from Jewish practice.*<sup>591</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Moses informs the reader that the Israelites in his day made it a rule not to eat the sciatic muscle of slaughtered animals as a reminder to them of this encounter that Jacob had with the Lord.*<sup>592</sup> This is assuming that this verse is a gloss by Moses; which I think is very likely.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *This dietary restriction was never imposed upon them by God but was instituted by Israel since they recognized the importance of what Jacob experienced at Peniel. It would be a reminder to the nation of Israel that when Jacob became weak and was disabled, Israel emerged as victorious.*

Wenstrom continues: *This dietary restriction would be a reminder to Israel to not have confidence in their own strength and ability to deal with problems with other nations. It would be a perpetual reminder or memorial to not depend upon their own power and ability but rather to depend and rely upon the power of God to deal with problems with other nations.*<sup>593</sup> I believe this might be overdoing the intention of the Israelites.

This might be more discussion than this particular topic deserves. This custom is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture, and may have been a tradition which lasted to some point during the Egyptian exile.

The writings of Gill suggest that this tradition either continued for thousands of years, or was revisited at thousand or more years later (Gill lived and wrote in the 18<sup>th</sup> century).

Trapp suggests: *A ceremony indifferent in itself, and good by institution (in remembrance of that famous conquest), might become evil by abuse, if it turned into superstition.*<sup>594</sup>

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Even though, it may appear as though I have milked this topic for all it is worth, there is one more important item to consider:

This verse is a gloss—a verse added after the Scripture was originally written. It had to be added after the time that this became a tradition. Also, notice the designation: *the sons of Israel*. This does not refer to Jacob's literal sons (although they may have begun the tradition) but his grandsons and great grandsons as well (as such a custom is passed down from one generation to the next, it becomes a tradition).

At this point in time, his sons are young; they are all less than 14 years old (20 years in Haran plus 1 year of travel minus 7 years). We are not told what Jacob said to his sons, but his sons would have asked him what had happened (he would be limping). He would be saying more than, "I wrestled with some guy." He would have revealed that this man was God. It is reasonable that his sons, at the next meal that involved meat, chose not to eat the sinew of the thigh. However, for this to become a tradition, it had to take place over a period of many years. That is why I think that v. 32 is a gloss. This does not mean that it is false; it means that this was added many years later, after it became a tradition (I am going with the assumption that Jacob recorded this narrative).

**Genesis 32:32 is a gloss/the JEPD Theory:** Even though this is a gloss, that does not mean that this verse is not a part of the Word of God. It is reasonable to assume that all glosses which found their way into the Word of God become a part of the Word of God.

<sup>591</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis\\_32a.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_32a.pdf) accessed March 2, 2019.

<sup>592</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>593</sup> From [Grace Notes](#); (Genesis 32) accessed March 4, 2019.

<sup>594</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 32:32.

There were God's laws; and there were traditions. There is nothing wrong with some traditions. We in the United States celebrate Independence Day (the 4<sup>th</sup> of July) and other holidays related to our military. The Bible does not prescribe a list of official holidays for believers in the Church Age, as it did for nation Israel.

This long-standing tradition indicates (1) the Jews believe this narrative and (2) this narrative was received early enough in their history to give it credence. For many hundreds of years, the Jews would not eat this part of the thigh; and when asked by the younger generation, *why*, this story of Jacob wrestling God would be recounted. This is how some portions of Scripture were taught, from one generation to the next.

These traditions also suggest a very early date for the writing of the book of Genesis. There are all kinds of false theories about the composition of Genesis and that it occurred at a very late date by a variety of authors (the **JEPD** approach). You *cannot* build tradition for something that happened in 1800 B.C. from a document that is written and circulated in 800 B.C. It would make very little sense, because no one would have that tradition.

If you are unfamiliar with the JEPD theory, there is the claim that there are two sets of documents floating around, one written by the Yahwist, combined ancient legends, myths and poems into a document where the name *Jehovah* is used quite often. The Elohimist wrote down the second document, which was a great many of the traditions popular in the northern kingdom. The Deuteronomist apparently wrote the book of Deuteronomy? And then a priest (or several priests) took these documents and edited them altogether. Well, that is the theory, anyway. So there is no misunderstanding, this theory is based upon nothing substantial. That is, we do not have a Yahwist partial document or anything like that.

The late-dating of the Pentateuch (the claim that it was written a thousand years after the history actually took place), means that everything the Jews believe was suddenly foisted upon them, 1000 years after the fact. One day, there was no Word of God; and, the day after, there was the Word of God with stories about Abraham, Jacob, Moses and the Exodus, etc. And then, when this document shows up out of nowhere, the entire nation of Israel decides to believe that it is the Word of God, as well as being genuine and accurate history. And, to add to this confusion, the Documentary Hypothesis folks teach that there are actually 2 or 3 separate documents floating around, and someone much, much later, mixed them altogether, and then proclaimed this the Word of God. Again, did people know anything about this original documents? And why were they willing to set those documents aside for a brand new integrated document?

Just the idea of having these documents floating around opens up a whole set of questions. Who actually wrote them; when did they write them; were the Jews aware of them; did the Jews ascribe authority to these documents; and if they did ascribe authority to these documents, why were the Jews so willing to suddenly accept an edited version of the same? This would go against every copyist tradition that the Jews had, where they carefully copied the Old Testament manuscripts out letter by letter. This theory means that copyists either preserved the old manuscripts or they didn't. Why would they be so willing to abandon manuscripts that they had preserved for centuries? Or, if they had not been preserving these manuscripts, then how was it possible to sell these new edited manuscripts as the Word of God? This century-old, long-standing theory of where the books of Moses came from (not from Moses) introduces far more confusion than it solves.

And somehow, this late introduction of the Word of God, occurs among a people who, for hundreds of years at least, gathered and read the Word of God publically all over the nation of Israel. This is among a people who are known for their careful protection and dissemination of the Word of God, where they knew the middle letter of every book.

The entire JEPD approach is illogical because it is in conflict with everything that we know about the ancient Jewish culture. They were meticulous about preserving the Word of God; and they, at some point in time, began to read the Word of God aloud publically. I suspect that this occurred very early on—that this tradition goes back to the book of Genesis.

The final few chapters of Genesis are fascinating because there are times when you think you are simply hearing Joseph's viewpoint on everything—and, then, suddenly, the action is away from Joseph, and the things which occur are things only Jacob or his sons would know. Now, if Jacob, as the patriarch, read the first 30+ chapters of Genesis (from memory) and then his two sons stood up—Joseph and Judah—and they traded off narratives, then all of the book of Genesis holds together. Its organization and its chronological order—particularly at the end of the book—makes perfect sense.

This other stuff alleged by the JEPD theory makes much less sense.

Interestingly enough, in our current age of information, it is easier to perpetrate a fraud than it was then. Because of the internet and the way that news is disseminated, the same false information can be repeated and repeated and some people will believe it (primarily, because they are predisposed to believe it). Most famously, the idea that George W. Bush lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in order to get us to go to war in Iraq.<sup>595</sup> This is one of the greatest fictions of my generation, and yet, millions of people believe it (and still believe that today—some of the people reading this right now may believe that).

Another example are the 9/11 Truthers (a misnomer, if there ever was one) believe that one or more of the buildings that collapsed on the attacks of 9/11/2001 were actually caused by explosives surreptitiously set within the buildings prior to the actual attacks. The idea is, the Bush administration (such a bogey man to the left) somehow *coordinated* the destruction of these buildings with the attacks of 9/11. It is as if, no one would have been shocked had planes only flown into buildings; but if more of the buildings collapsed, then that would really get Americans all fired up? To a normal person, this makes absolutely no sense.

Let's look at the lies perpetrated today, and compare them with the theory that the writings of the Old Testament showed up 1000 years too late. A significant number of people today believe that **George Bush lied about WMD's** in Iraq and that someone set explosives in certain buildings in New York City to go off to coincide with the attacks of the hijackers. However, this is not a majority of people in either case (although the **lie** about George Bush **lying** has been quite effective, **politically speaking**).

On the other hand, according to the JEPD theory, nearly all Israel was supposed to accept the forged documents, appearing 1000 years after the fact, which are filled with all of their laws, rituals and traditions (which they would not have had in their entirety). How does it make sense that these documents suddenly appear, and, at the same time, the Israelites have been following the mandates and rituals of these same documents for the previous 1000 years? How did they know about God's laws and the rituals that God required of them, if they did not have these documents in the first place? Or, did they suddenly start following all these rituals and traditions, even though, they never followed them before?

Let's approach this logically: Prior to receiving the false Mosaic documents (the assumption of the JEPD theory) (1) Israel was already following all of the laws and rituals found in those documents; (2) Israel followed some of the laws and rituals found in those documents; (3) Israel had not been following any of the laws and rituals found in those documents. In the case of #1 and #2, how did they know about these laws and rituals if they did not have the documents yet? And, in the case of #3, what sense does it make for Israel to begin following a whole new set of laws and rituals which they never followed before, because someone "found" some documents telling them that they have been following these laws and rituals for hundreds of years? The book of Leviticus is quite complex, with dozens of rituals and feast days and regulations. Does it make sense that one generation before these documents suddenly appear on the scene, are not practicing all of the rituals and feast days; but then, suddenly, in the next generation, they are followed, because these are supposedly the laws of Israel from the beginning? How could the entire nation be duped like this?

<sup>595</sup> The reason most often given is, he wanted to **avenge** his father. However, reasons *why* are rarely given.

My point in all of this is, it is logical and it makes sense for the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy to have been written during the time that these historical incidents occurred. They would have nearly universal acceptance because these people experienced all that was found in those documents (or their parents and grandparents experienced these things). That these books suddenly appeared 1000 years later, how would they have been accepted exactly? What would be the process to convince an entire nation that this was the Word of God, which they had had all of this time?

The religion of Y<sup>e</sup>howah is very different from any other religion. It is based upon thousands of historical incidents. It is based upon a nearly complete contiguous history of God's interaction with the Jewish people. If you remove the historical nature of the Bible, there is very little Bible remaining. If I were to make a wild guess, perhaps 70% or more of the Old Testament is an historic record of some kind. Even some of the psalms have their foundation in historical incidents (often noted in the inscriptions).

The teachings of Islam, Confucius, Buddhism do not require thousands of years of *historical events* in order to stand. In fact, Islam, for the most part, would rather than we did not know anything about the historical person of Mohammed—at least, not at first.

Not nearly as insidious a theory as the JEPD theory, but still problematic in many ways, is the idea that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. He may have been the final editor; but I doubt even that.

There are a number of things which confirm the historicity and traditional understanding of the writing of the Bible (particularly of the early books).

### Reasons Why Genesis Was Written at the Time of These Events

1. The history is accurate, and the names of cities and place as well as the customs of the day correspond to the time period that each chapter is written. We find glosses where they would make sense to find them.
2. One of the great ancient historians, Will Durant—who was not a believer in Jesus nor was he an adherent of Judaism—wrote: *The discoveries here summarized have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of the Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the test of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments or excavations. E.g., potsherds unearthed at Tel Ad-Duweir in 1935 bore Hebrew inscriptions confirming part of the narrative of the Books of Kings. We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.* (From *The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 300; footnote). Durant knows more ancient history than you or I know, and he did not believe the miracles of Scripture. Both of these things make him a credible witness as to the accuracy of the history of the Old Testament. The things that we know about Durant indicate that he is not predisposed to believe Genesis.
3. An accurate history would suggest that these books were written near the period of time that the history took place (and not several hundred years later). People would logically accept the writings, because they actually lived the events found in these writings (or they knew the events from the word of their parents and grandparents).
4. There is an amazing organizational principle to the Bible—particularly noticeable in the book of Genesis—is the continual use of chiasm throughout. This is a very complex way of recording historical events. One was noted most recently a few lessons back, but there are far more than just this one for what we have recently studied. If the book of Genesis was learned and passed along verbally, this chiasmic organization makes a great deal of sense. It gives the memorizer sort of an outline, which is more easily remembered. One who memorizes this book would know both the structure (or outline) of the book; and it would be easier then to fill in the actual text. We would be less likely to find this sort of organization if this text is the product of several manuscripts which are mixed together at a later date.
5. There are remarkable differences in style and vocabulary in the book of Genesis, which testify to a variety of writers. The record left by Abraham is so much different than that left by Isaac or that left by Joseph.

## Reasons Why Genesis Was Written at the Time of These Events

And all of these styles are very different from Genesis 24, which is unique in its style to the Old Testament.

6. There is a development of theology which has commonality; but which is built upon. This is very tricky to have an entire book where theology is built upon theology, and without contradiction. This is known as progressive revelation which, insofar as I know, is unique to the Bible. Progressive revelation means that, each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not contradict, supersede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but builds upon that which is past and upon that which is foundational.
  - 1) The writings of the Koran, which I believe were written in their entirety by one man, contain contradictions, which is to be expected. I think differently today than I did 30 years ago; therefore, there are things which I would state today which would contradict what I wrote 30 years ago. This happened to Mohammed (this is well-attested to; Muslims do not dispute this). So the explanation of current Islamic teaching is, if two passages contradict one another, then the later passage is to be accepted as being the accurate passage.
  - 2) However, this does not occur in the Bible. Even though there are different dispensations in the Bible, there is no contradiction in this. We no longer slaughter animals because (1) this was done in the Age of Israel; and (2) these sacrifices looked forward to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Once these things were fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ, they did not have to be repeated (this is a major theme in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament).
  - 3) In the Church Age, we do dispense with a great many traditions, holidays (feast days) and rituals. All of these things pointed to the day of the Messiah and to His death on the cross. Since we are no longer looking forward to the Messiah dying for our sins, all of those things are set aside. We are no longer looking forward to the Messiah. These laws, traditions and holy days are not forgotten; they are simply no longer observed. Ideally speaking, even New Testament churches should teach these things (which is why most of my work is done in the Old Testament).
  - 4) When I was a young kid, I had a wrestling ring made out of a block of wood, 3" nails and rubber bands; and I had toy soldiers and the like who I renamed and re-purposed as wrestlers. And then, at some point in time, I stopped playing with it. None of that is an inherent contradiction; I just grew up. Things in my life changed as a result of growing up. The New Testament Scriptures do not contradict the Old Testament rituals. The New Testament Jesus fulfills the Old Testament rituals. Just as the adult version of me is a culmination of my life and natural growth, the New Testament Church Age is the *grown-up version* of the Old Testament.
7. There are traditions found throughout Scripture which make sense if these traditions began soon after the historical event to which they refer. It makes a lot sense to talk about a tradition from 1900 B.C., which was originally presented in a document from that time period. It makes less sense for a tradition to begin 1900 B.C., but it is first mentioned in a document written in 900 B.C.

Summing up, all of this makes sense and fits together if the book of Genesis was written by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and others. It makes a lot less sense to be written by different men a millennium later and then woven together by another set of men, and then sold to the public as the original Word of God.

This does not mean that there were not glosses in the book of Genesis. I believe that Genesis was passed down orally for many centuries—and that the men of that era could hear and memorize this amount of material. However, at some point, this book was written down (logically, by Moses). At that time, there may have been some glosses (additional material added). Glosses could have also been added by later *writers* (I don't believe that Genesis was originally written down, but memorized, passed down and added to).

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**Genesis 32:32** Therefore the sons of Israel do not eat of the sinew of the thigh, which is on the hip-socket, until this day, because He touched Jacob's hip-socket, the sinew of the thigh.

The Cambridge Bible: *The Compiler adds this note, which explains the Israelite custom of abstaining from eating the muscle in an animal, corresponding to the muscle, or sinew, in the thigh of Jacob that was touched by God: it was regarded as sacred.*<sup>596</sup>

The meaning of this is somewhat difficult. We must understand two things: (1) God has a point and He sometimes gets His point across in unusual means; (2) Jacob, as the recipient of this wrestling injury should understand this point.

Let me suggest that Jacob has, throughout his life, tried to move forward and get ahead by any means necessary. He will resort to bribes (his soup for the birthright of his brother; much of his herd is sent ahead as a present to Esau to mollify his anger); deception (pretending to be Esau in order to take away the blessing meant for him); and even weirdo mysticism (trying to influence the births of his herds by placing sticks of different sort in front of them when they drink water).

None of this is in accordance with God's plan; none of this is done as per the guidance of God. Jacob sees what he wants and he tries to take it by any means necessary. Now, he was honorable when it came to his marriages; but the breeding incident indicates that Jacob will still do whatever it takes to advance his own personal agenda.

### How Jacob gets ahead in this world using his own approach

1. From a very early age, Jacob appears to have had an interest in his spiritual heritage. This does not mean that he was this great spiritual giant from the beginning; but perhaps, he understood enough to want the benefits which came along with his spiritual heritage.
2. His older twin brother, Esau, seemed to be more a man of the earth and less concerned with spiritual things. This does not mean that Esau was an unbeliever or a worse sinner than Jacob. Jacob, early on, simply saw more value in the spiritual direction of his family.
3. Once when Esau was on the brink of starvation, Jacob gave him a plate of beans (or, whatever) in exchange for his birthright. As the firstborn son (even if he was born just 15 minutes earlier), Esau was to receive the double-portion and the spiritual inheritance which came down through Abraham and Isaac. Esau was willing to trade this away, reasoning that none of it matter if he were dead from starvation.
4. This incident is very illustrative of how Jacob and Esau thought. This was not the proper way for Jacob to receive the birthright of the firstborn; but he apparently saw more value in it than Esau did.
5. Esau later made some bad choices in marriage. We do not ever find out exactly what was wrong with his brides, apart from them being Canaanite. My assumption would be that they did not value the worship of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. Whether they believed in Him or not, we don't know. Their names are found in Scripture.
6. Rebekah sees the Isaac has told Esau to kill some wild animal and that he would give Esau an end-of-life blessing, which was seen as very important and real.
7. Rebekah concocts a plan to had Jacob pretend to be Esau and to take this blessing instead. Her plan works; Isaac is fooled, and Isaac gives Jacob the blessing intended for Esau. Although Isaac was disappointed, he also believed that, his blessing stood, and applied to Jacob.
8. Esau was mad enough to kill Jacob, so Rebekah warned Jacob, and devised a plan for him to immediately lead Canaan to find a good woman to marry (he would go to his uncle's family in Haran to check out his daughters). One reason to get Jacob out of the picture was, Rebekah's scheme is what caused all of this to happen. Only Jacob knew this. Had Isaac or Esau known this, her life would have been forever miserable after that.
9. When in Haran, Jacob falls in love with Rachel, the youngest daughter. (it is not clear if Laban was still in Haran, but I will use that city name for convenience). He decides to marry her and agrees with his Uncle Laban to work 7 years to have her, as Jacob did not have a dowry to give Laban. 7 years later, Laban—a master manipulator like his sister and like Jacob—has Jacob marry the older sister instead (Jacob is unaware of this until the next morning). When he realizes what happened, he goes to Laban—completely beside himself with anger—and Laban simply tells him, "You cannot marry the

<sup>596</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 32:32.

## How Jacob gets ahead in this world using his own approach

younger daughter before the older one. But, I will let you have the younger daughter as well, on credit. You can work 7 more years for me.” And so Jacob did, being outsmarted, outmaneuvered and out-manipulated by his Uncle Laban.

10. When Jacob has served Laban 14 years, he now begins to work for Laban for payment. They agree that Jacob would get all the lambs and goats with odd markings. Jacob tries some goofy scheme to affect the breeding of Laban’s lambs and goats. His scheme does not work; but he still ends up with more animals that Laban wants him to have.
11. Laban keeps changing his payment, and God finally tells Jacob it is time to leave.
12. Jacob makes a half-hearted effort to obey God. He leaves for Canaan, but he does it surreptitiously, and catches Laban unawares (which was Jacob’s intent).
13. You will note in all the Jacob does, not of it appears to be the workings of a spiritual giant. In fact, his attempt to get ahead, time after time, is done by manipulation and trickery.

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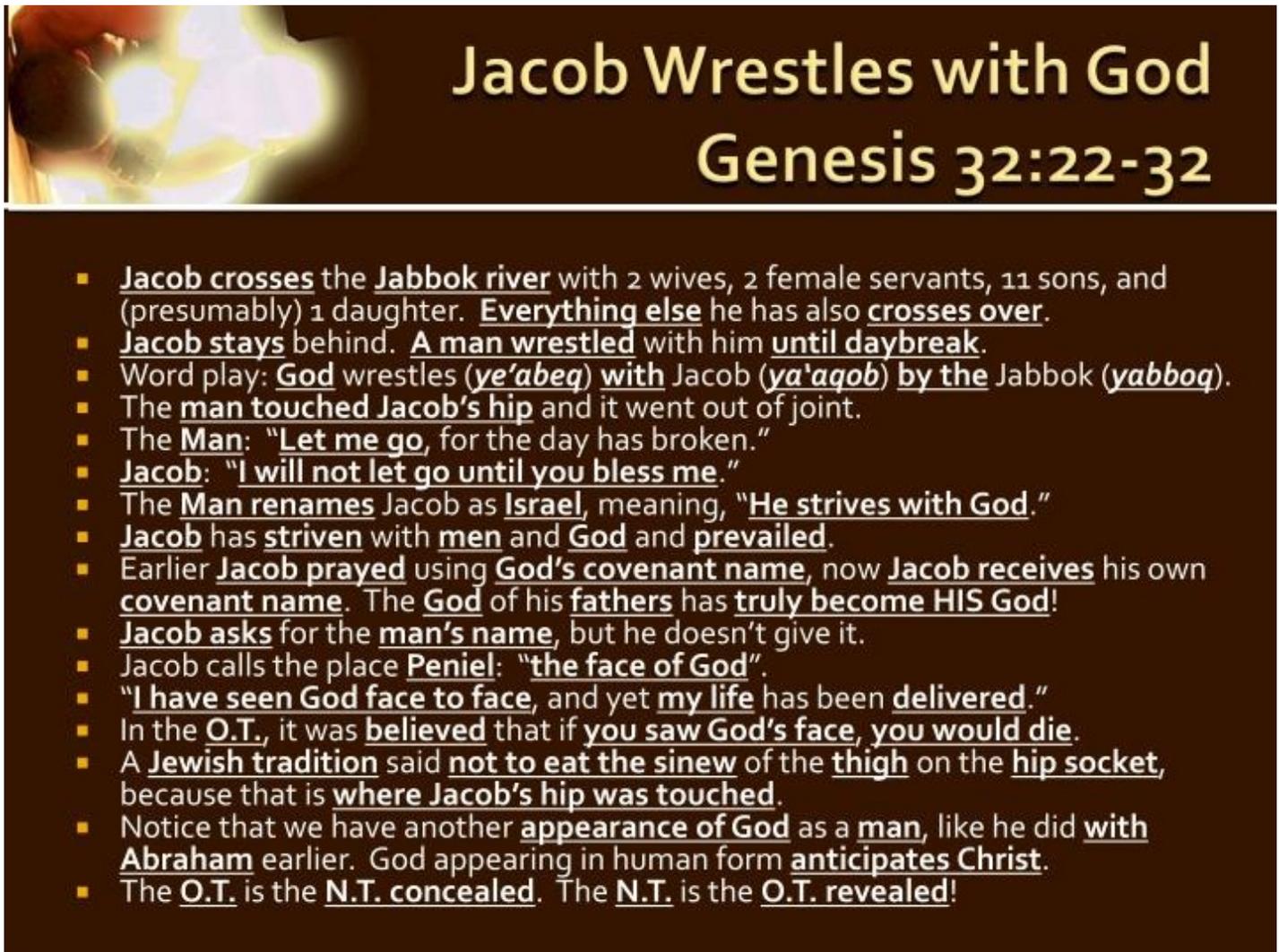
## What are the results of this wrestling match? (Genesis 32:24–32)

1. One of the most important results is, Jacob was given the name *Israel*. Genesis 32:28
2. God told Jacob that he has striven with God and man and he has prevailed. Genesis 32:28
3. This means that, despite all of Jacob’s manipulation and trickery, God still blesses him; he has still prevailed. A lovely illustration of this is Jacob’s breeding scheme. Jacob believed that if his breeding goats and lambs looked at striped almond branches will drinking water, that they would produce the kind of animals that he wanted (and would become his). Even though this clearly did not work, God still was faithful and gave Jacob his due. God did not allow Laban to cheat Jacob.
4. At the very end, God blessed Jacob. Genesis 32:29
5. That particular place was given the name *Penuel*; as Jacob was face to face with God and yet he is still alive.
6. There is the tradition to come of this, about what the Israelites do not eat because of Jacob’s injury. This suggests that they accepted this incident as real early on.

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**Jacob Wrestles with God** (a summary on a slide); from [Slide Serve](#) (Slide 14); accessed March 9, 2019.



## Jacob Wrestles with God

### Genesis 32:22-32

- **Jacob crosses the Jabbok river** with 2 wives, 2 female servants, 11 sons, and (presumably) 1 daughter. **Everything else** he has also **crosses over**.
- **Jacob stays behind. A man wrestled** with him **until daybreak**.
- Word play: **God** wrestles (**ye'abeq**) **with** Jacob (**ya'aqob**) **by the** Jabbok (**yabboq**).
- The **man touched Jacob's hip** and it went out of joint.
- The **Man**: "**Let me go**, for the day has broken."
- **Jacob**: "**I will not let go until you bless me.**"
- The **Man renames** Jacob as **Israel**, meaning, "**He strives with God.**"
- **Jacob** has **striven** with **men** and **God** and **prevailed**.
- Earlier **Jacob prayed** using **God's covenant name**, now **Jacob receives** his own **covenant name**. The **God** of his **fathers** has **truly become HIS God!**
- **Jacob asks** for the **man's name**, but he doesn't give it.
- Jacob calls the place **Peniel**: "**the face of God**".
- "**I have seen God face to face**, and yet **my life** has been **delivered.**"
- In the **O.T.**, it was **believed** that if **you saw God's face**, **you would die**.
- A **Jewish tradition** said **not to eat the sinew** of the **thigh** on the **hip socket**, because that is **where Jacob's hip was touched**.
- Notice that we **have another appearance of God** as a **man**, like he did **with Abraham** earlier. God appearing in human form **anticipates Christ**.
- The **O.T.** is the **N.T. concealed**. The **N.T.** is the **O.T. revealed!**

God has advanced Jacob in his life despite all of the things that he has done, not because of them. God is letting Jacob know here that He could simply touch Jacob, and he would be stopped in his tracks. Jacob will limp for the rest of his life. Perhaps he will realize that God, simply by his touch, could stop Jacob in his tracks; could end his advance. God only allows Jacob to go forward in grace and because of God's promises to Abraham. Jacob has never advanced himself, legitimately or illegitimately.

Genesis 32:32 Therefore, it is a tradition of the people of Israel not to eat the tendon of the hip, which is above the hollow of the thigh, until this day, because they recognize that God injured Jacob there at the hollow of his thigh, over the tendon of his hip.

There have been a number of opinions as to how long this tradition continued. Surely for a few hundred years at least; and at least one commentator found it being observed into the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.

Genesis 32:22–23 Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had.

Genesis 32:24–25 Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh, so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him.

Genesis 32:26–28 Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."

Genesis 32:29–30 Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."

Genesis 32:31–32 Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh. Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip. (Ballinger's translation)

### Genesis 32:22–32 The Wrestling Match (Jack M. Ballinger)

1. The evening following the inevitable meeting with his brother Jacob moves his family across the Jabbok (Arabic el-Zerqa) stream.
2. This is a fast flowing stream that flows westward and empties into the Jordan about 25 miles north of the Dead Sea.
3. This is the general area where Esau's kingdom was located.
4. It seems strange to the reader that Jacob would take his wives and children across the other the Jabbok River when a daylight crossing would be more sensible.
5. His family along with his personal possession forded the Jabbok that night.
6. Evidently his herds had already crossed during the daylight hours.
7. Another strange part of this episode is the fact that after he had safely gotten his family across he returned to the river's northern bank.
8. The answer to his rather strange maneuver is the fact that after retiring for the night (v. 22 "Now he arose that same night...") he was unable to sleep and decided to place his family on the other side so he would not have to concern himself with that the next day, and he could concentrate on his encounter with his brother.
9. The fact that he crossed back over was perhaps due to the fact that he did not want solitude and time to think.
10. Remember that Jacob was in a disturbed state of mind fighting extreme anxiety.
11. In v. 24ff. we have a very brief narration of the wrestling match between him and "a man."
12. The fight/struggle with this stranger continued until daybreak.
13. V.24 presents the fight from Jacob's point of view.
14. The contest is presented in vv. 25ff from Jacob's Opponent's point of view (cf. v.25).
15. He is challenged and assaulted by an unidentified male and he has to fight for his life.
16. The verb "wrestled" (abaq) occurs two times in vv. 24 and 25.
17. It is clearly a play on the personal noun Jabbok (and possible Jacob).
18. It is thought that this verb is a by-form of the verb chabaq ("to embrace").
19. But there was nothing friendly about this encounter.
20. The reference "until daybreak" suggests that this encounter went on for some time (hours).
21. If Jacob arose from his sleep sometime after midnight and then got his family on the other side of the Jabbok, then this encounter could have commenced in the early hours just before dawn.
22. At the outset of this match Jacob was completely unaware as to the identity of his opponent.
23. The sense of v. 25 is this: "When the man realized that he could not win ("prevail") he touched Jacob's hip socket."
24. For the reader who knows the identity of this man the reading of v. 25 seems astonishing.
25. For Jacob it was amazing that this man could merely make incidental contact with this part of Jacob's anatomy and do the damage that was done; namely, "Jacob's thigh was dislocated."
26. A mere touch that dislocates indicates an opponent that possesses supernatural powers.

## Genesis 32:22–32 The Wrestling Match (Jack M. Ballinger)

27. This then was the moment of truth for Jacob.
28. Another surprising aspect of this encounter is the fact that this extremely painful touch did not dissuade Jacob from continuing the fight.
29. This is clearly the implication of v. 26a when the stranger spoke for the first time and said, "[Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.](#)"
30. No explanation is given for this strange statement.
31. What does the dawn breaking have to do with the stranger's desire to be released from Jacob's grasp?
32. It cannot be a desire to keep his identity hid.
33. It cannot be a desire to keep Jacob alive under the principle that no man can see God and live.
34. It is another indication to Jacob as to the identity of his opponent.
35. But Jacob has the nerve to tell his divine opponent that he will not let him go until he blesses Jacob (v. 26b)!
36. What follows in vv. 27 & 28 is the blessing bestowed on Jacob.
37. But for this divine being (Angel of Yahweh) to ask Jacob his name is superfluous.
38. Jacob's name is a reminder of what his character as a believer had been (cf. 27:36 "[Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times?](#)").
39. Cf. also Jer. 9:4 "[Let everyone be on guard against his neighbor. And do not trust any brother; because every brother deals craftily/deceitfully...](#)"
40. The verb *aqab* meaning 'to take by the heel/supplant' by stealth (deceit) is at the root of the name Jacob (3:15 "[shall bruise him on the heel](#)"; Jer. 9:4; Job 37:4 of God not restraining lightning strikes; and Hos. 12:3 "[In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his strength/maturity he contended with God.](#)"; and here for the 5th time in the OT).
41. The noun of the same form mean "heel."
42. The adjective (*aqeb*) means 'overreacher/supplanter, etc.
43. The adjective can simply mean 'consequence' as in Gen. 26:5.
44. Instead of merely blessing him Jacob's opponent changes his name.
45. The text here in v. 28b gives the clue to the meaning of the term Israel.
46. The *el* part is of course 'God' while the *Yishra* part is a play on the verb translated "have striven" (NAS) which is *sharah* 'to fight/struggle.'
47. Again, here we have a play on the name rather than a strict historical etymology.
48. The idea of God fighting with someone should not be problem.
49. Jacob's name given at birth recalls his old self and past.
50. His new name recalls someone who never gave up in his quest to gain divine approbation and the blessing that goes with it.
51. According to Hos. 12:3 Jacob's new name signals a spiritual state or status.
52. Jacob for all his shortcomings stayed the course and over time achieved the goal that is set before each and every believer and that is to attain spiritual maturity (3rd adjustment).
53. For Jacob it was a profound struggle that brought into his life much pain and blessing.
54. The divine personage informs Jacob that his life was marked by a struggle, typified in this fight on the Jabbok shore, in which he prevailed (*yakal* be able, prevail, overcome) over man and God.
55. Spiritual conflict/struggle comes to us all as it even was part of Christ's experience (Rev. 5:5).
56. There is Ph 1 overcoming (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7; cp. 1Jn. 5:4-5) which in Rev. 2:26 is associated with Ph2.
57. The Greek verb is *nikao* meaning 'to win, conquer (as in Nike sports).
58. Whenever Jacob's descendants heard the name "Israel' (God fights) they were reminded of its origin and significance in terms of their history both personally and corporately.
59. The encounter begins and ends on a mysterious note.
60. The man refuses to divulge his name when asked by Jacob (v. 29).
61. The reason is for the refusal is interpreted here as, "[Jacob, don't you know who I am?](#)"
62. This was the same divine being as appeared to Hagar and later to Abraham and Sara in chaps. 16, 21 and 22.
63. This angel appeared to Jacob in the dream in 31:11.

## Genesis 32:22–32 The Wrestling Match (Jack M. Ballinger)

64. So the reason for the hesitancy is because Jacob already knew who the stranger was.
65. The stranger now implicitly identified as God blesses Jacob and disappears into the night just as mysteriously as he appeared (v. 29).
66. Jacob as was the custom of the patriarchs named the place on the north shore of the Jabbok Peniel which means 'face of God.'
67. This was for Jacob a commemoration of the fact that he encountered God face to face and lived.
68. This was a very important aspect of the episode for Jacob as the seeing of God placed a man in mortal danger (cf. Ex. 33:20 "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live.").
69. "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared" (natsal 'to rescue') was a sentiment held by Hagar (Gen. 16:13 "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?").
70. What Jacob and Hagar saw was not the full glory of God as that would have been deadly for any man.
71. That glory was shielded from Moses whose face radiated light for weeks after his experience on the mountain.
72. The name Peniel has an alternate rendering of Penuel reflected in the narrator's rendering in v. 31 where he records Jacob's return to the south shore of the Jabbok stream.
73. The best guess for the exact location for Penuel is Tel edh-Dhahab a Shaki.
74. The rising of the sun marks a new day and a new era for Jacob.
75. Jacob limps pass Penuel (v. 31a) and his disability is a silent witness to his nocturnal encounter.
76. Jacob prevailed in the encounter but God left His mark on him.
77. His injury was designed to show him that he was not self-sufficient and to teach him complete reliance on God and not on his own scheming.
78. God slowed him down physically and otherwise.
79. The final verse of this episode and the custom of not eating the sciatic nerve (nervus ishchiadicus) is not attested to anywhere else in the OT including the later Jewish law.
80. This nerve is the central nerve of the hip region.
81. This custom was not divinely authorized but practiced whenever Jews butchered animals.
82. The removal of the sciatic nerve was strictly speaking tedious and unnecessary but is practiced even today by the strictest of kosher regulations.
83. Jacob moves forward with a new name and a permanent limp.
84. His physical loss is his spiritual gain.
85. The encounter on the Jabbok marked the end of the era of spiritual advancement during the dark days with his uncle Laban.

Jacob moving his family across the Jabbok is not necessarily a strange thing to do. Also, there is no reason to assume that he is north of the Jabbok to begin with (which makes many of his movements subsequent to his fear odd).

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen32.htm> accessed March 2, 2019.

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Genesis 32:29–32 Then Jacob asked him and said, "please tell me your name." but he said, "why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."

Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh. Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip. (Ron Snider)

## Summary Genesis 32:29–32 (by Ron Snider)

1. After Jacob receives his new name, he inquires as to the identity of the man with whom he had been wrestling.

### Summary Genesis 32:29–32 (by Ron Snider)

2. This is not because he did not know that his opponent was Divine, as is evidenced in vs 30.
3. The Lord was not inclined to give him his name.
4. The primary reason was that Jacob already knew who He was.
5. Since the Lord declined to answer the question, we may readily conclude that Jacob did not need any further information.
6. It is evident that the patriarchs had names for God, which God had revealed to them.
7. Jacob is seeking a new revelation of God, by his request for a name.
8. He is told what all must accept, God determines when and where and to whom he reveals himself.
9. Although Jacob is on the verge of maturity, he cannot manipulate God any more than anyone else can.
10. He has wrestled with God and prevailed, but he does not and cannot dictate to God.
11. Beyond this, Jacob needs no new revelation of God to fulfill God's plan for his life, he needs to apply what he knows.
12. After the new name was given to Jacob, the Lord pronounces another more formal blessing on him.
13. It was probably along the lines of Gen. 27:27-29 and 35:10-12.
14. Jacob names the place to commemorate this marvelous event.
15. It is not possible to see God in His essence, Jacob had seen a theophany, the second person appearing in human form.
16. No man can see God in their physical body and live, and no man has seen God's essence at any time. Ex. 33:20ff; Jn. 1:18
17. After the blessing the Lord departed, and just as the sun came up, Jacob was crossing over the Jabbok.
18. He was carrying in his flesh the scars of wrestling with God.
19. He limped from that day forward, his wrestling days were over.
20. Likewise his days of energy of the flesh and spiritual trickery were drawing to a close.
21. His constant limp would be a reminder that God did not need his strength and nothing depended on him, all depended on God.
22. God will take whatever is necessary away from the positive believer if it hinders his advance to maturity. Matt. 18:8-9, 19:16-26
23. It is certainly better for you to recognize your weakness and deal with it than to have God do it for you. ICor. 11:31-32
24. As a new day was dawning physically, a new day was dawning spiritually for the deceiver.
25. The Jews instituted a legalistic observance based on this event which is not commanded or sanctioned by the WOG.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen32.doc> (opens as a Word Document); accessed March 3, 2019

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[www.kukis.org](http://www.kukis.org)

[Exegetical Studies in Genesis](#)

## A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 32:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masorettes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

In the previous chapter, Jacob left Haran, bringing his wives and children with him. Laban caught up with him, but they resolved their differences. Laban returned to Haran and Jacob continued toward Canaan—and toward his twin brother.

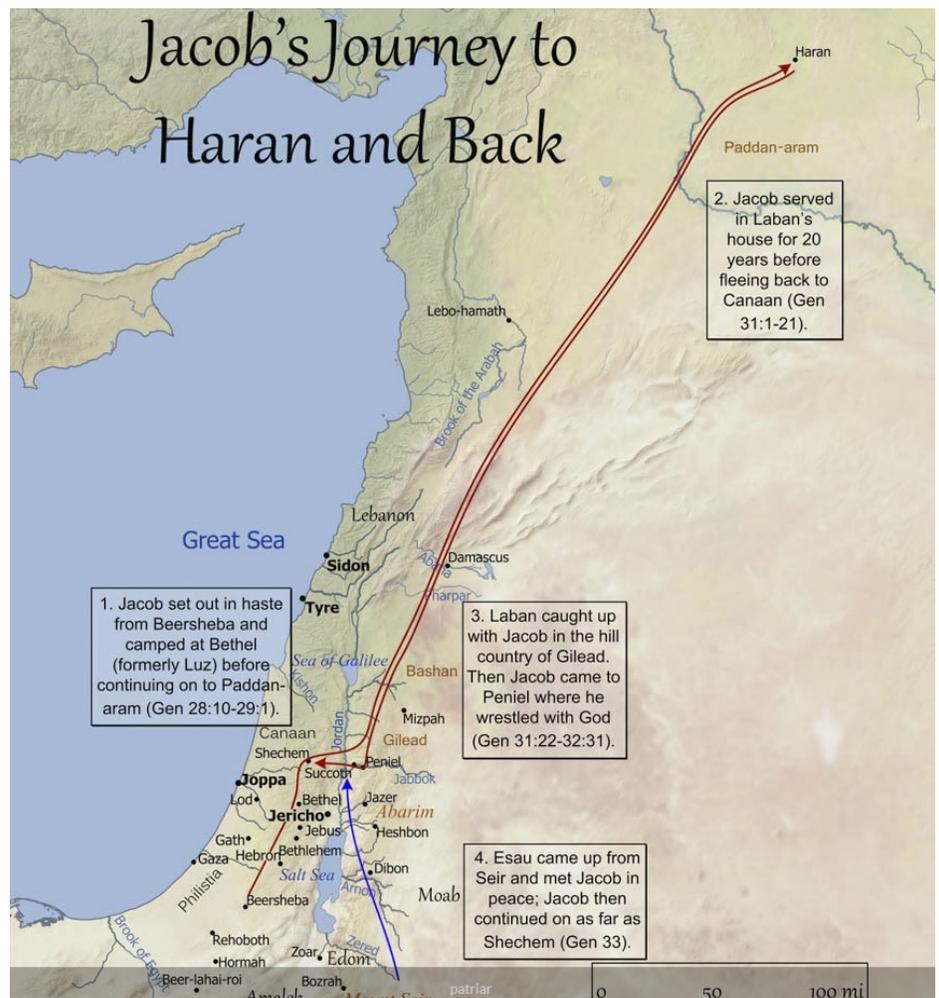
Genesis 32:1 **And Ya'aqob [= Jacob] went on his way, and the messengers of Elohim [= God] met him.**

When *messenger* is in the singular, this often refers to the preincarnate Christ. In the plural refers to angels (sometimes to Christ and some angels with Him).

Genesis 32:2 **And when Ya'aqob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of Elohim." And he called the name of that place Maḥanayim.**

Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced *mahkh-uh-AH-yim*] means, *two camps*; and is transliterated *Mahanaim*. Strong's #4266 BDB #334. There is Jacob's camp and the camp of God.

**Jacob's Journey** (a map); from [Headwaters](#); accessed July 12, 2024.



Genesis 32:3–4 And Ya'aqob sent messengers before him to Ęsaw [= *Esau*] his brother in the land of Sě'ir, the field of Edom and he commanded them, saying, "Say this to my master Ęsaw, 'Your servant Ya'aqob said this, "I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now.

Jacob was expecting to see Esau next. He was not expecting to see God or messengers from God.

Jacob sends some of his own messengers to Esau, hoping that such a meeting will not result in his death.

Esau did not live in Canaan, but in Seir, which is more or less adjacent to Canaan. Edom is a small section in the northern portion of Seir where Esau and his family lives.

Jacob tells Esau, through his messengers, that he has been staying with Laban all of this time. Esau would know who this is (Laban is the brother of their mother).

Genesis 32:5 "And I have bulls, and donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. And I have sent to inform my master, to find favour in your eyes." ' "

Jacob indicates that he has many possessions. This is like opening one's safe deposit box and showing everyone your gold coins (or silver certificates or whatever).

Genesis 32:6 So the messengers returned to Ya'aqob, saying, "We came to your brother Ęsaw, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

The messengers come back to Jacob. Esau did not have to give them any message. There were 400 men with him. He knew that message would be relayed.

Genesis 32:7–8 And Ya'aqob was greatly afraid and distressed. So he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups, and he said, "If Ęsaw comes to the one group and strikes it, then the other group which is left shall escape."

Jacob is worried that his brother will plunder what he has and kill everyone with him. He divides his people and animals into two groups. If the first one is destroyed by Esau, the second will know to try to escape. Obviously, the second group cannot be seen.

Genesis 32:9 And Ya'aqob said, "O Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Yitsħaq, הוהי [= *YHWH*, *Yehowah*] who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives, and I do good to you,'

At this point, Jacob prays. He is reminding God that He told him to leave Haran and return to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 32:10 "I do not deserve the least of all the loving-commitment and all the truth which You have shown Your servant, for I passed over this Yarděn [= *The River Jordan*] with my staff, and now I have become two groups.

Jacob recognizes how unworthy he is before God.

Genesis 32:11 "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Ęsaw, for I fear him, lest he come and shall strike me and the mother with the children.

Jacob prays to be delivered from Esau, that he is not struck down with his family.

Now, remember, God has already promised Jacob a future in the land with his seed (that is, his descendants).

Genesis 32:12 "For You said, 'I shall certainly do good to you, and shall make your seed as the sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.' "

Jacob reminds God what He has promised. Ideally speaking, what God has promised should be good enough; but Jacob will take additional precautions.

Genesis 32:13–15 And he spent the night there, and took what came to his hand as a present for Ęsaw his brother – two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty suckling-camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.

Despite the fact that God told him to return to Canaan and despite the promises God has given him, Jacob decides that the best thing to do is to give much of his wealth to Esau.

Genesis 32:16 And he gave into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Pass over before me, and put some distance between drove and drove.”

The way that Jacob sets this up is, he will send along a number of livestock; then there would be some space, and another group of livestock would come next. It makes his gift to Esau seem greater.

Genesis 32:17 And he commanded the first one, saying, “When Ęsaw my brother meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going? And whose are these in front of you?’...

Jacob tells his servants, “Listen, Esau is going to ask about these animals.”

Genesis 32:18 ...then you shall say, ‘They are your servant Ya‘aqob’s. It is a present sent to my master Ęsaw. And see, he also is behind us.’ ”

Jacob messengers are to tell Esau that these animals are a gift from him to Esau.

Genesis 32:19–20 So he commanded the second, and the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, “Speak to Ęsaw this same word when you find him, and you shall say, ‘Also look, your servant Ya‘aqob is behind us.’ ” For he said, “Let me appease him with the present that goes before me, and after that see his face. He might accept me.”

Jacob is very concerned that Esau still bears a grudge against him.

Genesis 32:21 And the present passed over before him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

Jacob sent the messengers and his livestock ahead, but he hangs back for the night.

Genesis 32:22 And he rose up that night and took his two wives, and his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of Yabboq [= *Jabbok*].

Jacob decides that he wants to separate his family out, that perhaps they might be saved.

Genesis 32:23 And he took them and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had.

He sends them over a stream to the intent of preserving them.

Genesis 32:24 And Ya‘aqob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

This leaves Jacob alone, and a man wrestles with him for the rest of the evening until dawn. He is wrestling with the Lord.

Genesis 32:25 And when He saw that He did not overcome him, He touched the socket of his hip. And the socket of Ya‘aqob’s hip was dislocated as He wrestled with him.

The Lord dislocates Jacob's hip. He will limp for the rest of his life, and remember back to this time because of that.

Genesis 32:26 **And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I am not letting You go until You have blessed me!"**

The Lord is being held onto by Jacob and Jacob says, "I will not let go until You bless me." Jacob finally understands that the key to his blessing is being blessed by the Lord. Nothing else matters. Not what his father said, not what his mother concocted; not his birthright; and not what Laban did to him. Those are all non-issues. It is Jacob's relationship with God that is key to his blessing.

Remember that.

Genesis 32:27 **So He asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Ya'aqob."**

God asks him, "What is your name?" Jacob gives his name.

Genesis 32:28 **And He said, "Your name is no longer called Ya'aqob, but Yisra'el,<sup>a</sup> because you have striven with Elohim and with men, and have overcome."**

<sup>a</sup>Yisra'el means "to strive with Ĕl; to overcome with Ĕl; to rule with Ĕl".

God gives him a new name.

There will be times when the name *Jacob* is used, and that can refer to being hard-headed and obstinate; and when the name *Israel* is used, that can indicate being Authority orientated to God and therefore blessed by God.

Genesis 32:29 **And Ya'aqob asked Him, saying, "Please let me know Your Name." And He said, "Why do you ask about My Name?" And He blessed him there.**

Jacob believes that his struggle here is with God. He wants God to say this and confirm his notion.

Genesis 32:30 **And Ya'aqob called the name of the place Peni'el, "For I have seen Elohim face to face, and my life is preserved."**

Jacob called this place P<sup>e</sup>nîy'êl (פְּנִיֵּאֵל) [pronounced *pehn-ee-ALE*], which means, *facing God*; and it is transliterated *Penuel*, *Peniel*. Strong's #6439 BDB #819

Genesis 32:31 **And the sun rose on him as he passed over Penu'el, and he limped on his hip.**

The sun now comes up and Jacob passes over Penuel, limping along.

Genesis 32:32 **That is why the children of Yisra'el to this day do not eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the socket of the thigh, because He touched the socket of the thigh of Ya'aqob, in the sinew of the hip.**

Throughout the history of Israel, various things would happen, and a tradition would arise from that incident, to mark this historicity of that incident.

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

### Why Genesis 32 is in the Word of God

1. Jacob reveals the inner struggle of the believer; and the almost schizophrenic behavior of some believers in the Lord. This is particularly true in this chapter, which is one of the reasons so many find it to be confusing.

## Why Genesis 32 is in the Word of God

2. Jacob is clearly a flawed character, which is why so many commentators have trouble understanding and explaining him.
3. God goes out of His way to make Jacob's entry into Canaan and seeing his brother easy; but Jacob still struggled, sometimes heeding God's direction and sometimes rejecting it.
4. We find out that the key to the spiritual life is not seeing a miraculous event; such things give us confidence for a very short period of time. The key is having an understanding of Who God is and what He has promised us.
5. We understand Jacob's irrational fear, because he does not trust God; and we understand a little about Esau (which will help us in understanding the next chapter).
6. It is clear that Jacob understands a great deal when he prays to God. The problem is, he does not always have this faith in the promises of God.
7. It should be clear when we compare Jacob's actions to his prayer that he does not always exercise faith in what he should know to be true.
8. The prayer reveals Jacob's thinking right; his present to Esau and his worrying about his encampments reveals that he is not fully invested in God's promises.
9. When God is wrestling with Jacob, He allows Jacob his free will.
10. The breaking or spraining of Jacob's leg is divine discipline, which Jacob deserved.
11. God names Jacob *Israel*; we see that he is not always called *Israel* after this time. That is because Jacob does not always conform to God's will.

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These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

## What We Learn from Genesis 32

1. We find out that angels have a very important place to play in our lives in terms of protection.
2. We took this opportunity to study more about angels and the Angelic Conflict.
3. We see that angels watch us and our lives very much as we might watch a movie on a DVD or a television series.
4. We needed to look again at Jacob's relationship with Esau. From this perspective, we can see many of the mistakes the Jacob made.
5. We consider some of the differences between Jacob and Esau; and perhaps learn more about why God chose Jacob.
6. We examine the difference between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint.
7. We learn a little bit about recognizing God's blessings for us in this life.
8. Many of us can relate to Jacob's fear and confusion.
9. We studied why we should understand both the Old and New Testaments.
10. We spend some time studying documentary hypothesis (the JEPD theory) and how it is an incorrect system.
11. We took the opportunity to contrast human viewpoint thinking with divine viewpoint thinking.
12. We took some time to examine the will of God.

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Many chapters of the Bible look forward to Jesus Christ in some way or another. A person or situation might foreshadow the Lord or His work on the cross (or His reign over Israel in the Millennium). The chapter may contain a prophecy about the Lord or it may, in some way, lead us toward the Lord (for instance, by means of genealogy).

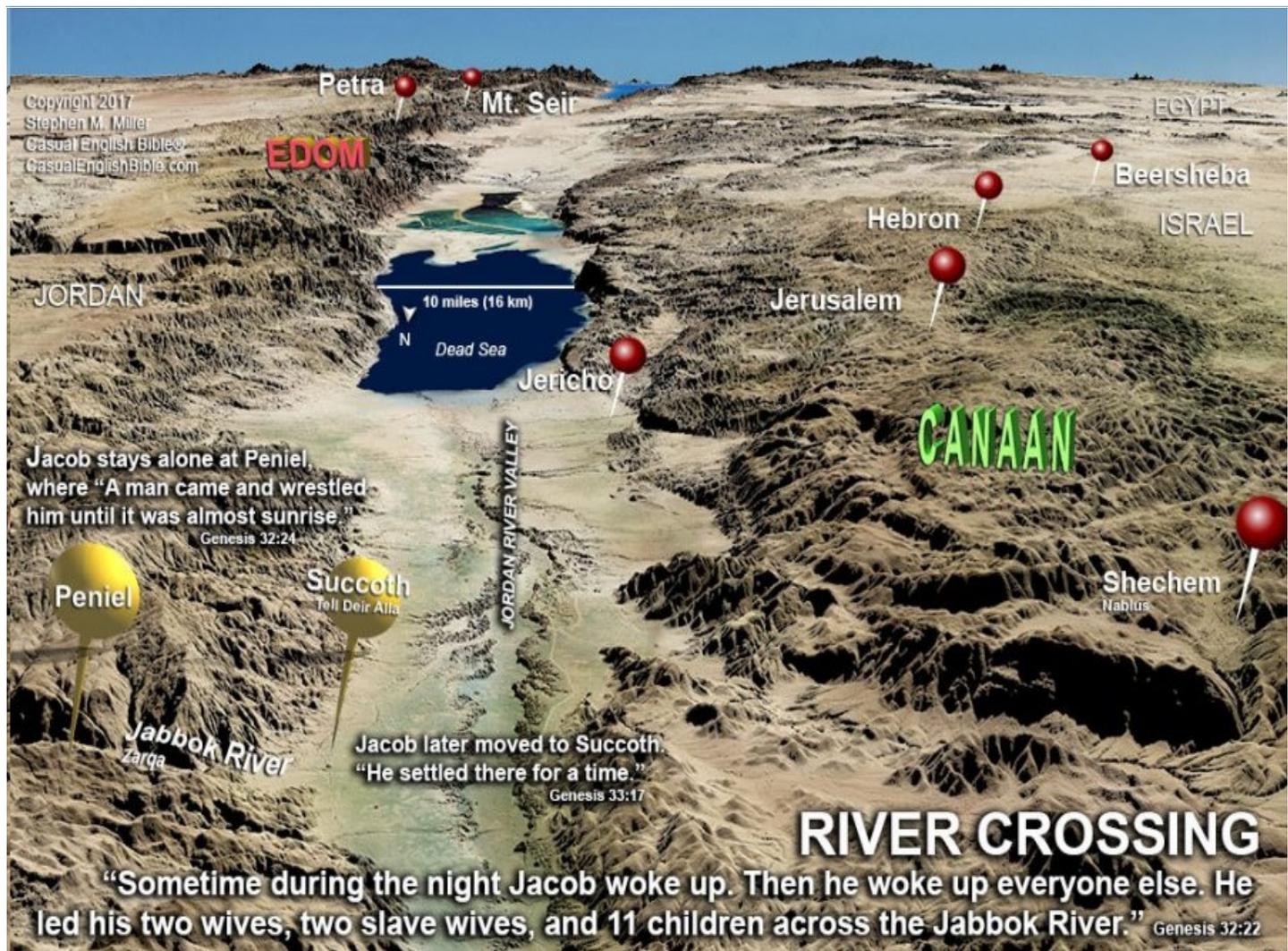
## Jesus Christ in Genesis 32

Jesus is the mysterious Wrestler in this chapter. This wrestling match reveals Jacob's constant struggle in this life between his will and God's will. Jacob seems to often be at odds with God.

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**A Bird's Eye View of Jacob's Travels in Genesis 32** (a Relief Map); from the [Casual English Bible](#); accessed March 9, 2019. In the lower left hand corner, you can see the Jabbok River and Peniel, which is where Jacob would be. He is intending to return to Canaan, on the other side of the Jordan Valley (there is supposed to be a river in there). Further back (on the top left) we see Edom and Mt. Seir, which is where Esau would be coming from.



Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does.

### B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 32

JACOB'S MEETING WITH ESAU  
Genesis 32:1-34:31 (most of this is Genesis 32)

Our last discussion closed with the thirty-first chapter of Genesis, and we had just finished our discussion of Jacob's meeting with his uncle Laban. In this discussion we take up the thirty-second chapter, which deals with Jacob's meeting with Esau, his brother, his inveterate enemy, and the method which was pursued by Jacob in appeasing Esau's wrath. "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, This is God's host, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim," or as the margin has it, "The two hosts or companies." This vision was an encouraging revelation to Jacob. He saw a heavenly band on

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earth; hence the name, "Mahanaim," or "two companies." That upper band had been with him all the time, but invisible. Here he is permitted to see them. In view of apprehended troubles ahead of him, this vision greatly assures him of safety. The psalmist later expressed the general truth: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psa\_34:7). In the same way Jehovah opened the eyes of the faithful young man with Elisha: "And he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2Ki\_6:17). So, when our faith is bright enough we can see the presence of attending angels.

In Gen\_32:3 we learn that Jacob sent messengers forward into the country of Esau to find out the plan of his brother. It had been twenty years since Jacob had seen his brother, on that occasion when through the duplicity of his mother and himself he had secured the blessing of the birthright from his old, blind father, when Esau had determined to kill him and his mother had sent him away from home secretly. Jacob was naturally very anxious to know what Esau's reception would be and so he sent these messengers. And in order to excite the attention of his brother to his wealth and possessions, Jacob directed the messengers as follows: "Thus shall ye say unto my lord Esau: Thus saith thy servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now: and I have oxen, and asses, and flocks, and men-servants, and maidservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favour in his sight."

When the messengers returned to Jacob they brought back the news that the wrath of Esau had not abated during these twenty years. "We came to thy brother Esau, and moreover he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him." And Jacob was afraid. So he began to make preparation for his meeting with his brother. His first step was to divide his herds and his people into three companies, in order that they might not all be destroyed at one stroke from the warlike band of his brother. But notice that in his preparation, he made no effort to resist the onslaught of his brother's men. He had a stronger shield than physical forces, the shield of faith in God's promises to him, and the accompanying angel host. And his next step and best step of all was his earnest prayer. Let us notice that prayer: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac." Do you notice how that prayer leads? He states the fact that Jehovah was the God of his father and his grandfather, and he had made promises to both of them. Then he pleads the fact that God had commanded him, therefore the Lord ought to protect him in his obedience. He pleads the Lord's promise: Who said, "I will do thee good." Notice another element of power in his prayer: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shown thy servant." There is humility in the prayer, pleading the promise, pleading the command, pleading the triple blessing pronounced upon Abraham, Isaac, and himself, and then acknowledging, that, personally, he was not worthy of any of it: "With my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I have become two companies." Let us see what he is going to ask for. He knows how to make a request. He did not commence by praying that the Lord would bless the dwellers in the steppes of Asia and on the islands of the sea, and then pray all around the world. He says, "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children. 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." That is his step so far. Now he is going back to his worldly wisdom again. He is like Mohammed, who said, "Tie your camel and pray the Lord that he may not get away." Don't turn the camel loose and then pray that he may not escape. As the old British general said to his soldiers, "Pray to the Lord and keep your powder dry." Don't simply pray and leave God to do everything, but do what you can do.

Let us see the next step he takes. "He took a present for his brother Esau: first, two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; second, two hundred ewes and twenty rams; third, twenty milk camels and their colts; fourth, forty cows and ten bulls; fifth, twenty she-asses and ten foals." Notice how he makes that work: "And he said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove." When the first drove meets Esau, he will say, "Who are you, and what is this?" They will say, "We are Jacob's servants, and this is a present to his brother Esau." After awhile Esau meets the second drove, and receives the same answer to his question. Imagine in your mind the effect of these repeated answers. Imagine his feelings after he had met these five successive droves, – Jacob's wisdom, viz.: that he must not be content with making a small impression:

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Many drops of water, drop, drop, drop,

.....will wear away a rock.

And yet again present a thing to a man's mind; wait a while and present it again. Maybe the first impression glances off, but after awhile one will stick. It does not seem to me that the maddest man in the world could have remained mad until he got through meeting these herds.

We now come to Jacob's last step. Here was the brook Jabbock, flowing into the Jordan. Jacob sends all his family and property across that brook and is left alone. He is going to have a big battle and he is going to fight this battle out with God. From no scripture have I ever gained more spiritual power than that. I never went out as an agent or undertook any enterprise that I did not separate myself from all humankind, and go off alone with God, and just like a little child, state the whole case, prostrate myself before him; and if I win the divine favor I am not afraid of anything. And a man wrestled with him till the rising of the dawn. The prophet Hosea calls him an angel (Hos\_12:4), and a little later Jacob calls him God, and he was a manifestation of the Logos, the Son of God. When he saw that he prevailed not against Jacob, he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and it was out of joint. He said to Jacob, "Turn me loose, for the dawn is coming." Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." He could stand on but one foot, but he would not turn loose. The Hoosier Schoolmaster by Edward Eggleston has a remarkable lesson about a bulldog that belonged to "Old Man Mean's" boys which had this virtue, viz.: whenever he took hold he would not turn loose. You might kick him and scold him, but he held his grip. That taught a lesson to the schoolmaster. I think the dog and the schoolmaster both might credit Jacob with the original idea. What a marvelous secret of success that is: "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." Anybody that knocks tentatively at the door of prayer and runs off before anybody comes, making but one petition, will never succeed. You have heard me state before, and I will restate it now, how that idea of persistence got hold of me when I was four years old. I slept with my eldest brother and he taught me history lessons in child stories. One night he told me the history of the Battle of Marathon, where one hundred thousand Persians were assailed by ten thousand Greeks under Miltiades; how the Greeks broke the ranks of the Persians, and followed them into the sea; how the Persians got into their boats, and the Greeks grabbed the boats with their hands until the Persians cut their hands off; and then how they caught hold with their teeth until the Persians cut their heads off. And when my brother got that far, I jumped up in the bed and yelled out, "Hurrah for the Greeks!" until I woke up the whole house. There is the secret of prayer. As David Crockett said, "Be sure you are right, and then go ahead." "And the angel said to Jacob, What is thy name? and he says, Jacob," which means supplanter, a crafty fellow, and the angel says, "Thy name shall no more be called supplanter, but Israel, for thou hast striven with God and with men and has prevailed," power with God and man. One of the greatest revival sermons ever preached in Waco was preached by A. B. Earle, an evangelist, on that text: "Israel, power with God and man." One of my examination questions is: Analyze Jacob's power with God and with man. With God: humility, pleading of commandment, then the promise, then his faith which took hold, then his importunity: "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." His power with men appears from the way he got at Esau. He took every step that wisdom could suggest to placate and disarm the adversary of hostility. Some men have a way of looking at you that conveys an insult, and others with a shrug of the shoulders. Shakespeare tells how the followers of Montague and Capulet would insult each other, one by twisting his mustache and the other by letting his hand rest on his sword. They would begin, "Did you twist your mustache?" "I twisted my mustache." "Did you touch your sword?" "I touched my sword," until finally they got to fighting. Jacob had none of that. He was never going to have a controversy for which he was responsible. His power with man consisted in this also, that he never violated a contract. You can find no evidence in the Bible that Jacob ever went back on a compact made with men.

"Jacob called the name of the place Peniel," i.e., "the face of God." "I have seen God face to face, and my soul was delivered." The sun rose upon him as he passed over Peniel, and he limped on his thigh. Therefore, the children of Israel eat not the sinew of the hip. Look at the effect of that upon Esau: Present after present, and Jacob coming to meet him, limping, without a weapon in his hand. There are two things I want to say about this.

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One is that all the second-blessing people and sanctificationists make this an example in which their second blessing was received, sinless perfection. And they used to go by the name of "Penielists." Unquestionably it was a tremendous upward step in the spiritual life of Jacob. But he needed more of God's discipline before he would be perfectly holy, and we will come to some of it after awhile. I ask you to read the best spiritual interpretation of this incident of Jacob's life that I know, Charles Wesley's great hymn. Every time I teach Genesis I have the class bring out that hymn, which you will find in the old-time Methodist hymnbook:

Come, O thou traveller unknown, whom still I hold but cannot see,  
My company before is gone, and I am left alone with thee.

With thee all night I mean to stay and wrestle till the break of day.

My prayer hath power with God, the grace unspeakable I now receive  
Through faith I see thee face to face and live.

In vain I have not wept and strove; thy nature and thy name is love.

I have a remark for you preachers: Get as many commentaries as you can on that wrestling of Jacob. Every time you see it mentioned in literature, buy what is said, and read and study it profoundly. You are looking for power; that is what you preachers ought to be looking for, power with God and men. Right in that incident of Jacob's life power can be found. There are a great many things in the Bible you can go over hurriedly. They are parts that hold the rest together, but this is a passage to spend the night on.

But we will go on, however. Jacob has the matter settled with God, and has done everything he can do to get God on his side, and has succeeded. As Saul's name was changed to Paul, and Abram's name was changed to Abraham, so Jacob's name was changed to Israel, as Simon's name was changed to Peter, Cephas, a stone. Great events of life justify a change of name. "Jacob lifted up his eyes and beheld Esau coming with his four hundred men." Now we see the last step that Jacob took. First he takes the two concubines and their four sons, as the least beloved, and puts them ahead; then Leah and her six sons and daughter as next most beloved, and puts them next; and last he puts Rachel and Joseph in the rear, furthest from danger. I don't blame him for his preference, but Jacob is not going to skulk in the rear. He goes in front, limping as God had lamed him. But as Paul says, "When I am weak, then am I strong." He is now going to rely upon God altogether. When Esau saw him all of his enmity had banished and he ran to meet him and embraced him and fell upon his neck and kissed him and they wept. They had not met for twenty years. Then Esau saw the women and children and asked an introduction. Each woman with her children came up and was introduced in order; so Esau became acquainted with the family and Jacob won out completely.

The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessing on your head.

I hope that when trouble comes and takes to itself the form of a cloud and gathers thick and thunders loud, you will be as humble before God and as courageous before man as Jacob was, and come out of it as well.

Esau proposes to accompany him. Jacob said no; that he had a great many young cattle and children, and they could not go fast like the soldiers, and he does not think it wise to keep too long in the company of that force of border men. In *Ivanhoe* we have an account of the wisdom of Wamba, the son of Witless, when he saw Richard the Lion-Hearted, "hail fellow well met," with Robin Hood's crowd of thieves. It all went off very well, but he was afraid if they kept on, directly some controversy would arise, and so he got off into a thicket and blew a horn, and everybody got up. Thus the wise son of Witless warned Richard that he had better separate from the thieves.

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Jacob moved down into the valley of the Jordan, a hot, rank place, and full of sinkholes. He did not stay long. Next he came to Shechem and pitched his tent before that city. Although all the country belonged to him as it did to Abraham, he bought a piece of land. There occurs the incident which is self-explanatory, recounted in the thirty-fourth chapter, and upon which I need to comment very little. Dinah wanted to go to a parties – will call it that – that the Shechemites were giving. It is a characteristic of girls that they do like to go to parties, but it is not best for a young girl, unchaperoned, to go, among strange wild people. But this heathen loved her and came to Jacob and proposed to marry her, and Jacob would have consented under the circumstances, but an expedient was resorted to that they should become Jews. So the males were circumcised. But Simeon and Levi and their followers came and killed all the men and took possession of the property, and merged the two tribes into one, a most horrible transaction, yet it is customary for brothers to slay those who ruin their sisters, at least it used to be so regarded in the South. Jacob did not approve of it and felt that it was an awful wrong, especially after a covenant had been made and marriage had been proposed and accepted, and they had even agreed to turn Jews. When the old man comes to die you will hear from him on this.

From *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-34:31. Updated.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant. This volume of the book is entitled *The World Before the Flood, and The History of the Patriarchs*.

This comes from Chapter 18; entitled *Jacob at Mahanaim - The Night of Wrestling - Reconciliation between Jacob and Esau - Jacob settles at Shechem - Jacob proceeds to Bethel to pay his Vow - Death of Rachel - Jacob settles at Hebron*.

(GENESIS 32-36)

## Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 32

WE are now nearing what may be described as the high point in the spiritual history of Jacob. Quite different as the previous history of Abraham had been from that of Jacob, yet, in some sense, what Mount Moriah was to Abraham, that the fords of Jabbok became to his grandson: a place of trial and of decision, - only that while the one went to it, the other only left it, with a new name, and all that this implied.

One dreaded meeting was past, and its apprehended dangers averted. Jacob had in his fear "stolen away" from Laban. He had been pursued as by an enemy, but God had brought peace out of it all. Standing by his "Mizpah," he had seen Laban and his confederates disappearing behind the range of Gilead, their spears and lances glistening in the sunlight, as they wound through the pine and oak forests which cover the mountain side. One enemy was now behind him; but another and far more formidable had yet to be encountered. In dealing with Laban, Jacob could justly plead his long service and the heartless selfishness of his employer. But what could he say to Esau in excuse or palliation of the past? How would he meet him? and did his brother still cherish the purpose of revenge from which he had fled twenty years ago? To these questions there was absolutely no answer, except the one which faith alone could understand: that if he now returned to his own country, and faced the danger there awaiting him, it was by the express direction of the Lord Himself. If so, Jacob must be safe. Nor was he long in receiving such general assurance of this as might strengthen his faith. Leaving the mountains of Gilead, Jacob had entered the land of promise, in what afterwards became the possession of Gad. A glorious prospect here opened before him. Such beauty, fruitfulness, freshness of verdure, and richness of pasturage; dark mountain forests above, and rich plains below, as poor Palestine, denuded of its trees, and with them of its moisture - a land of ruins - has not known these many, many centuries! And there, as he entered the land, "the angels of God met him." Twenty years before they had, on leaving it, met him at Bethel, and, so to speak, accompanied him on his journey. And now in similar pledge they welcomed him on his return. Only then, they had been angels ascending and descending on their ministry, while now they were "angel hosts" to defend him in the impending contest, whence also Jacob called the name of that

## Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 32

place Mahanaim, "two hosts," or "two camps." And if at Bethel he had seen them in a "dream," they now appeared to him when waking, as if to convey yet stronger assurance.

Such comfort was, indeed, needed by Jacob. From Mahanaim he had sent to his brother Esau a message intended to conciliate him. But the messengers returned without any reply, other than that Esau was himself coming to meet his brother, and that at the head of a band of four hundred men. This certainly was sufficiently alarming, irrespective of the circumstance that since Esau was (as we shall presently show) just then engaged in a warlike expedition against Seir, the four hundred men with whom he advanced, had probably gathered around his standard for plunder and bloodshed, just like those wild Bedouin tribes which to this day carry terror wherever they appear. Even to receive no reply at all would, in itself, be a great trial to one like Jacob. Hitherto he had by his devices succeeded in removing every obstacle, and evading every danger. But now he was absolutely helpless, in face of an enemy from whom he could neither retreat nor escape. It is said in the sacred text: "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed." The measures to which he resorted prove this. He divided his caravan into two bands, in the hope that if Esau attacked the one, the other might escape during the fray. The result thus aimed at was very doubtful, and, at the best, sad enough. Jacob must have deeply felt this, and he betook himself to prayer. Mingling confession of his utter unworthiness with entreaty for deliverance from the danger before him, he successively pleaded before God His express command to return to Canaan, His past mercies, and His gracious promises, at the same time addressing God as Jehovah, the covenant-God of Abraham and of Isaac. Not one of these pleas could fail. That cry of despair was the preparation for what was to follow: Jacob was now learning to obtain, otherwise than by his own efforts, that which Jehovah had promised to give.

From [http://philologos.org/\\_eb-bhot/vol\\_1/contents.htm](http://philologos.org/_eb-bhot/vol_1/contents.htm) accessed .

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Before we move into Genesis 33, let's take a look back at Genesis 32, to see how this chapter is chiasmically organized.

## Peniel, or the mysterious contest (Murphy)

- I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUGGLE.
  1. The scene. The north bank of Jabbok (vide Exposition).
  2. The time. Night; the most suitable season for soul exercises, such as self-examination (Psalm 4:4), meditation (Psalm 63:6), devotion (Luke 6:12).
  3. The circumstances. Jacob was alone. In solitude the human soul discovers most of itself, and enjoys most frequent interviews with God (Psalm 77:6; Dan. 10:8; John 16:32).
  4. The combatants.
    - 1) Jacob: by nature the supplanter, by grace the heir of the covenant; who in early life by craft had overreached his brother Esau in the matters of the family birthright and theocratic blessing, and who had now, by the dispatch of his munificent present to "my lord Esau," renounced both, so far at least as renunciation was possible, i.e. in respect of material and temporal advantages.
    - 2) A man, i.e. one who in outward appearance wore the form of a man, though in reality "the visible revealer of the invisible God" (Delitzsch); the angel of Jehovah, who had previously appeared in like guise to Abraham at Mature (Genesis 18:1), and who subsequently, in the fullness of the times, incarnated himself as the Word made flesh (John 1:14).
  5. The combat.
    - 1) Its commencement. When precisely this mysterious conflict began, and how Jacob was engaged at the moment of the unknown wrestler's approach, are points upon which the

## Peniel, or the mysterious contest (Murphy)

narrative is silent, though it is probable that Jacob was employed in fervent supplication, and that, without knowing how, he suddenly became conscious of being involved in a close physical struggle with a powerful antagonist. Perhaps this was designed to suggest that God's approaches to the praying soul are mostly sudden and inexplicable (cf. John 3:8).

- 2) Its character. Though unquestionably depicted in the narrative as a veritable contest between two human beings, it is apparent that underlying the physical struggle, and related to it as the substance to the shadow, as the soul to the body, was another spiritual contending carried on by means of prayers and tears (Hosea 12:4).
- 3) Its continuance. Beginning probably at midnight, it was protracted until dawn, a circumstance suggestive of Jacob's earnestness and determination, and yet attesting the severe character of all true spiritual conflicts, and the extraordinary difficulty of achieving victories with God
- 4) Its course. Four stages are discernible in this mysterious struggle.
  - i The wrestlers appear to be equally balanced in their strength and skill, so that the stranger finds himself unable to prevail against Jacob, and laying his finger on his adversary's hip, puts it out of joint—a hint to Jacob that though seemingly the victory inclined towards him, it was due not so much, or even at all, to his wisdom and prowess, but rather to the stranger's grace and good-will.
  - ii Jacob having thus been disabled, his mysterious antagonist, as if owning that the mastery remained with him, requests permission to depart, alleging as a reason that the ascending dawn proclaimed the day's return, and called to other duties—a valuable reminder that religion has other necessary works for God's saints besides devotion and contemplation; but Jacob, who by this time recognized his antagonist as Divine, objected to his departure without confirming the blessing he had formerly received at Bethel—and this, the personal reception and enjoyment of the blessing of the covenant, should be the end and aim of all the saint's contendings with God and communings with Heaven.
  - iii Inquiring Jacob's name, the Divine adversary now discovers his true personality by authoritatively changing that name to Israel, prince of El, in token of his victory—an outward symbol of the completed spiritual renovation which had taken place in Jacob since God first met with him at Bethel.
  - iv Probably excited, or spiritually elevated, by what had just transpired, Jacob ventures, either with holy boldness or with unthinking curiosity, to inquire after his heavenly antagonist's name, but is answered that in the mean time he must rest satisfied with the blessing Which was then and there pronounced. It was either a rebuke to Jacob's presumption, or, and with greater probability, a reminder that even holy boldness has its limits, beyond which it may not intrude.
- 5) Its close. Suddenly and mysteriously as the stranger came did he also disappear, leaving Jacob in possession of the blessing indeed, but also of a dislocated limb. So God frequently accompanies spiritual enrichment with material and temporal deprivation, in order both to evince his own sovereignty and to keep his saints humble (cf. 2Corinthians 12:7).
- 6) Its commemoration. By Jacob, who called the place Peniel; by Jacob's descendants, who to this day eat not of the sciatic nerve in animals they kill for food.

II. THE REALITY OF THE STRUGGLE. The question arises whether the contest just described had an objective reality (Havernick, Kurtz, Murphy, Alford, &c.), or partook of a purely subjective character, being in fact an allegorical description of a spiritual conflict in the soul of Jacob (Kalisch), or a wrestling which took place only in a dream (Hengstenberg), or in an ecstasy (Delitzsch, Keil, Lange), for the idea of its being a myth (Bohlen, De Wette, Oort, Kuenen) may be discarded.

1. Against the notion of a dream-vision it is sufficient to remark that if Jacob's wrestling was a dream, so also were his victory and his blessing dreams. Besides, limbs do not usually become dislocated in dreams.
2. To read the passage as an allegory is both forced and unnatural, and "little better than trifling with the sacred narrative" (Alford).

### Peniel, or the mysterious contest (Murphy)

3. There is no insuperable objection to the idea of an ecstasy, provided it is not intended to exclude the objective manifestation yet.
  4. There does not seem sufficient reason for departing from the obvious and literal sense of the passage, according to which there was a beret fide corporeal contest between Jacob and the angel of Jehovah in human form; for
    - 1) the narrative gives no indication that it was designed in this part to be interpreted otherwise than literally and historically, as in the surrounding context;
    - 2) unless on the hypothesis that the supernatural is the unreal, there is no imperative necessity why exception should be taken to the objective character of this remarkable struggle;
    - 3) the dislocation of Jacob's thigh points to an actual physical contest; and
    - 4) the other events in the narrative appear to require that the historic credibility of Jacob's wrestling be maintained.
- III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE. That a momentous crisis had arisen in Jacob's history is universally admitted. He was now returning to the land of Canaan a man of mature age, being in his ninety-seventh year, and of a singularly diversified experience, both natural and spiritual, In his early life he had twice supplanted Esau by means of craft, depriving him of his birthright and blessing, and now he was on the eve of meeting that formidable brother whom he had wronged. That the prospective interview filled him with alarm is explicitly declared (Genesis 32:7); but it likewise drove him to take refuge in prayer, in which exercise it is scarcely doubtful he was engaged when his mysterious assailant approached. What then did this extraordinary combat signify in the spiritual consciousness of Jacob? Putting together those views which do not necessarily exclude one another, and which appear to contain an element of truth, it may be said that this remarkable experience through which the patriarch passed at Jabbok was designed to have a threefold bearing.
1. On his fear of Esau. Apprehensive of his brother, he now learns that not Esau, but Jehovah, was his real adversary (Keil, Kurtz, Gerlach, Candlish), and that before he can ever hope to triumph over Esau he must first conquer God.
  2. On his retention of the blessing. Having previously, as he thought, obtained the birthright and its accompanying blessing by means of carnal policy and worldly stratagem, he now discovers that it cannot be received, or, if he renounced it in the act of homage done to Esau (Lange), cannot be recovered except directly from the lips of God, and by means of earnest cries and entreaties (Keil)—a truth taught him, according to Kurtz, by the dislocation of his thigh, which caused him to discontinue his corporeal wrestling, and resort to prayers and tears.
  3. On his personal character. Jacob during all his past career, from his birth, when he caught his brother by the heel, to his last years in Haran, when he overreached the crafty and avaricious Laban, having been a person who sought to overcome by means of self-reliance and personal effort, it was now designed to teach him that, as the heir of the covenant, the weapons of his warfare were not to be carnal, but spiritual, and that his advancement to the place predestined for him of pre-eminence over his brethren was to be brought about by earnest reliance upon God.

*The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 32:24–32 (homiletics).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

There are actually several **overlapping chiasmi** in Genesis 32–33. This is simply the overarching view of Genesis 32.

### William Ramey's Chiasm of Genesis 32

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| A | The angels of God encounter Jacob -- place name changed to "Mahanaim" (1-2) |
| B | Jacob sent messengers, listing possessions to Esau (3-8)                    |
| X | Jacob's prayer to the LORD (9-12)   |

**William Ramey's Chiasmus of Genesis 32**

B' Jacob sent messengers and gifts to Esau (13-21)  
 A' A "man" opposes Jacob, blesses and changes his name to Israel, after which Jacob renames the place as "Peniel" (22-31)

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

From here we must immediately proceed to Genesis 33 without taking a breather. It is important because Jacob originally planned to keep his children and wives and mistresses far behind him. He had traveled not too far from there that night until he met Jesus Christ and was knocked about. So he returns to them and to bring them with him.

<b>Chapter Outline</b>		<b>Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines</b>	
<b>Beginning of Document</b>	<b>Doctrines Covered or Alluded to</b>	<b>Chapters of the Bible Alluded to</b>	
<b>Definition of Terms</b>	<b>Introduction and Text</b>	<b>Addendum</b>	
<a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a>		<b>Exegetical Studies in Genesis</b>	

**Addendum**

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

**Josephus' History of this Time Period**

**CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF THREE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE YEARS. FROM THE CREATION TO THE DEATH OF ISAAC.**

**CHAPTER 20. CONCERNING THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU.**

1. NOW as Jacob was proceeding on his journey to the land of Canaan, angels appeared to him, and suggested to him good hope of his future condition; and that place he named the Camp of God. And being desirous of knowing what his brother's intentions were to him, he sent messengers, to give him an exact account of every thing, as being afraid, on account of the enmities between them. He charged those that were sent, to say to Esau, "Jacob had thought it wrong to live together with him while he was in anger against him, and so had gone out of the country; and that he now, thinking the length of time of his absence must have made up their differences, was returning; that he brought with him his wives, and his children, with what possessions he had gotten; and delivered himself, with what was most dear to him, into his hands; and should think it his greatest happiness to partake together with his brother of what God had bestowed upon him." So these messengers told him this message. Upon which Esau was very glad, and met his brother with four hundred men. And Jacob, when he heard that he was coming to meet him with such a number of men, was greatly afraid: however, he committed his hope of deliverance to God; and considered how, in his present circumstances, he might preserve himself and those that were with him, and overcome his enemies if they attacked him injuriously. He therefore distributed his company into parts; some he sent before the rest, and the others he ordered to come close behind, that so, if the first were overpowered when his brother attacked them, they might have those that followed as a refuge to fly unto. And when he had put his company in this order, he sent some of them to carry presents to his brother. The presents were made up of cattle, and a great number of four-footed beasts, of many kinds, such as would be very acceptable to those that received them, on account of their rarity. Those

## Josephus' History of this Time Period

who were sent went at certain intervals of space asunder, that, by following thick, one after another, they might appear to be more numerous, that Esau might remit of his anger on account of these presents, if he were still in a passion. Instructions were also given to those that were sent to speak gently to him.

2. When Jacob had made these appointments all the day, and night came on, he moved on with his company; and, as they were gone over a certain river called Jabboc, Jacob was left behind; and meeting with an angel, he wrestled with him, the angel beginning the struggle: but he prevailed over the angel, who used a voice, and spake to him in words, exhorting him to be pleased with what had happened to him, and not to suppose that his victory was a small one, but that he had overcome a divine angel, and to esteem the victory as a sign of great blessings that should come to him, and that his offspring should never fall, and that no man should be too hard for his power. He also commanded him to be called Israel, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies one that struggled with the divine angel. (37) These promises were made at the prayer of Jacob; for when he perceived him to be the angel of God, he desired he would signify to him what should befall him hereafter. And when the angel had said what is before related, he disappeared; but Jacob was pleased with these things, and named the place Phenuel, which signifies, the face of God. Now when he felt pain, by this struggling, upon his broad sinew, he abstained from eating that sinew himself afterward; and for his sake it is still not eaten by us.

3. When Jacob understood that his brother was near, he ordered his wives to go before, each by herself, with the handmaids, that they might see the actions of the men as they were fighting, if Esau were so disposed. He then went up to his brother Esau, and bowed down to him, who had no evil design upon him, but saluted him; and asked him about the company of the children and of the women; and desired, when he had understood all he wanted to know about them, that he would go along with him to their father; but Jacob pretending that the cattle were weary, Esau returned to Seir, for there was his place of habitation, he having named the place Roughness, from his own hairy roughness.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed . Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 1.

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Given Jacob's decisions, we often ask this question:

### Why Did God Choose the Jews Instead of the Chinese? (From Bible Query)

Q: In Gen 12:1, 28:10-15; 32:22-32, why did God choose the Jews instead of the Chinese or someone else?

A: First of all, God has the right to choose whomever He wishes. Here God did not choose a people, but rather one man: Abraham. Later the covenant and offspring were reckoned through Isaac in Genesis 17:21 and 21:12. Later Jacob was chosen in Genesis 26:23-24. Abraham was willing to leave his culture and city (Ur), which was probably the largest city (100K to 180K population) and most civilized city on the earth at that time. Many people have some desire to do what is right, but fewer wealthy men would be willing to sacrifice their ties to their culture and religion to follow God above all, even to a place he did not know (Hebrews 11:8). Today, Romans 10:12 and Galatians 3:24 teach there is no difference to God in Jews and non-Jews.

I believe that one must also take into consideration that God knew every decision that would be made among the descendants of Jacob and the descendants of Esau (for instance), and chose the Hebrew people with that in mind.

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## Genesis 32:1–2: Hosts of angels (C. H. Spurgeon.)

1. God has a multitude of servants, and all these are on the side of believers. "His camp is very great," and all the hosts in that camp are our allies. Some of these are visible agents, and many more are invisible, but none the less real and powerful.
2. We know that a guard of angels always surrounds every believer. "Omnipotence has servants everywhere." These servants of the strong God are all filled with power; there is not one that fainteth among them all, they run like mighty men, they prevail as men of war. We know that they "excel in strength," as they "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." Rejoice, O children of God! There are vast armies upon your side, and each one of the warriors is clothed with the strength of God.
3. All these agents work in order, for it is God's host, and the host is made up of beings which march or fly, according to the order of command. "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path." All the forces of nature are loyal to their Lord. They are perfectly happy, because consecrated; full of delight, because completely absorbed in doing the will of the Most High. Oh that we could do His will on earth as that will is done in heaven by all the heavenly ones!
4. Observe that in this great host they were all punctual to the Divine command. Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. The patriarch is no sooner astir than the hosts of God are on the wing. They did not linger till Jacob had crossed the frontier, nor did they keep him waiting when he came to the appointed rendezvous; but they were there to the moment. When God means to deliver you, beloved, in the hour of danger, you will find the appointed force ready for your succour. God's messengers are neither behind nor before their time; they will meet us to the inch and to the second in the time of need; therefore let us proceed without fear, like Jacob, going on our way even though an Esau with a band of desperadoes should block up the road.
5. Those forces of God, too, were all engaged personally to attend upon Jacob. I like to set forth this thought: "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him"; he did not chance to fall in with them. They did not happen to be on the march, and so crossed the patriarch's track; no, no; he went on his way, and the angels of God met him with design and purpose. They came on purpose to meet him: they had no other appointment. Squadrons of angels marched to meet that one lone man. He was a saint, but by no means a perfect one; we cannot help seeing many flaws in him, even upon a superficial glance at his life, and yet the angels of God met him. All came to wait upon Jacob, on that one man: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him"; but in this case it was to one man with his family of children that a host was sent. The man himself, the lone man who abode in covenant with God when all the rest of the world was given up to idols, was favoured by this mark of Divine favour. One delights to think that the angels should be willing, and even eager, troops of them, to meet one man. Are ye not well cared for, oh ye sons of the Most High!
6. Those forces, though in themselves invisible to the natural senses, are manifest to faith at certain times. There are times when the child of God is able to cry, like Jacob, "The angels of God have met me." When do such seasons occur? Our Mahanaims occur at much the same time as that in which Jacob beheld this great sight. Jacob was entering upon a more separated life. He was leaving Laban and the school of all those tricks of bargaining and bartering which belong to the ungodly world. By a desperate stroke he cut himself clear of entanglements; but he must have felt lonely, and as one cast adrift. He missed all the associations of the old house of Mesopotamia, which, despite its annoyances, was his home. The angels come to congratulate him. Their presence said, "You are come to this land to be a stranger and sojourner with God, as all your fathers were. We have, some of us, talked with Abraham, again and again, and we are now coming to smile on you. You recollect how we bade you good-bye that night, when you had a stone for your pillow at Bethel; now you have come back to the reserved inheritance, over which we are set as guardians, and we have come to salute you. Take up the nonconforming life without fear, for we are with you. Welcome I welcome I we are glad to receive you under our special care." Again, the reason why the angels met Jacob at that time was, doubtless, because he was surrounded with great cares. He had a large family of little children; and great flocks and herds and many servants were with him. Again, the Lord's host appeared when Jacob felt a great dread. His brother Esau was coming to meet him armed to the teeth, and, as he feared, thirsty for his blood. In times when our danger is greatest, if we are real believers, we shall be specially under the Divine protection, and we shall know that it is so. This shall be

### Genesis 32:1–2: Hosts of angels (C. H. Spurgeon.)

our comfort in the hour of distress. And, once again, when you and I, like Jacob, shall be near Jordan, when we shall just be passing into the better land, then is the time when we may expect to come to Mahanaim. The angels of God and the God of angels, both come to meet the spirits of the blessed in the solemn article of death.

7. Thus I have mentioned the time when these invisible forces become visible to faith; and there is no doubt whatever that they are sent for a purpose. Why were they sent to Jacob at this time? Perhaps the purpose was first to revive an ancient memory which had well-nigh slipped from him. I am afraid he had almost forgotten Bethel. Surely it must have brought his vow at Bethel to mind, the vow which he made unto the Lord when he saw the ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it. Here they were; they had left heaven and come down that they might hold communion with him. Mahanaim was granted to Jacob, not only to refresh his memory, but to lift him out of the ordinary low level of his life. Jacob, you know, the father of all the Jews, was great at huckstering: it was the very nature of him to drive bargains. Jacob had all his wits about him, and rather more than he should have had, well answering to his name of "supplanter." He would let no one deceive him, and he was ready at all times to take advantage of those with whom he had any dealings. Here the Lord seems to say to him, "O Jacob, My servant, rise out of this miserable way of dealing with Me, and be of a princely mind." Oh for grace to live according to our true position and character, not as poor dependents upon our own wits or upon the help of man, but as grandly independent of things seen, because our entire reliance is fixed upon the unseen and eternal. Believe as much in the invisible as in the visible, and act upon your faith. This seems to me to be God's object in giving to any of His servants a clearer view of the powers which are engaged on their behalf. If such a special vision be granted to us, let us keep it in memory. Jacob called the name of that place Mahanaim. I wish we had some way in this western world, in these modern times, of naming places, and children, too, more sensibly. We must needs either borrow some antiquated title, as if we were too short of sense to make one for ourselves, or else our names are sheer nonsense, and mean nothing. Why not choose names which should commemorate our mercies?

*The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 32:1.

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### Genesis 32:1–2: God's host always near (D. March, D. D.)

We who live in this matter-of-fact and mechanical age are apt to think that it was a wondrous life which the patriarch led in that old time, when he could meet God's host among the hills, and could see convoys of bright angels like the burning clouds of sunset hovering round him in the solitudes of the mountains. But God's host is always nearer than we are apt to suppose in the dark hours of trial and conflict. The angels have not yet forsaken the earth, nor have they ceased to protect the homes and journeys of good men. Heaven and earth are nearer each other now than they were when Jacob saw God's host in the broad day and Abraham entertained the Divine messengers under the shadow of the oak at noon. The spiritual world is all around us, and its living inhabitants are our fellow-servants and companions in all our work for God and for our own salvation. The inhabitants of heaven find more friends and acquaintances on earth now than they did in former times. It is not from any want of interest in the affairs of men that they do not now meet us in the daily walks of life or speak to us in the dreams of the night. If we do not see angels come and take us by the hand and lead us out of danger, as they led Lot out of Sodom, it is not because they have ceased to come, or because they fail to guard us when we need protection. We must not think that God was more interested in the world in ancient times, when He spoke by miracles and prophets and apostles, than He is now when He speaks by His written word and by His holy providence. The heart of the Infinite Father never yearned toward His earthly children with a deeper or more tender compassion than now. There never was a time when God was doing more to govern, to instruct, and to save the world than He is doing now. To those who look for Him the tokens of His presence are manifest everywhere; the voice of His providence is in every wind; every path of life is

## Genesis 32:1–2: God's host always near (D. March, D. D.)

covered with the overshadowings of His glory. To the devout mind this world, which has been consecrated by the sacrificial blood of the cross, is only the outer court of the everlasting temple in which God sits enthroned, with the worshipping hosts of the blessed around Him. We need only a pure heart to see God as much in the world now as He was when He talked with men face to face. He speaks in all the discoveries of science, in all the inventions of heart, in all the progress of the centuries, in everything which enriches life and enlarges the resources of men. All the great conflicts and agitations of society prove that God is on the field. We need only add the faith of the patriarchs to the science of the philosophers, and we shall find Bethels in the city and in the solitude, Mahanaims in every day's march in the journey of life.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We are covering a great deal of ground, which helps us to relate this wrestling match to the name *Palestine* which was given to this land.

## Griffin post: Palestine and Jacob's Wrestling Match with the Lord

### Who Are the Palestinians?

According to a recent census released by Central Bureau of Statistics, nearly three million Palestinians live in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza. These Palestinians claim to be the descendants of the ancient natives of Palestine. Furthermore, they declare that they and millions more of their Palestinian descendants, scattered as refugees throughout the Middle East and living in other countries of the world, are engaged in a national struggle for sovereignty in their historic homeland. In addition, the radical Islamic terrorists have championed this same cause and declared that there will be no peace for the West until Palestinians achieve their objectives. But what are the facts behind these claims? What is the actual origin of this people who have gained such prominence that their demand for national recognition and right of return is said to be at the center of the Middle East conflict and the deciding factor and the war on terrorism?

### What Is the Origin of the Name Palestinian?

The term Palestinian is thought to have been derived from the Greek and Latin words for one of the chief enemies of the Israelites - the Philistines (Greek Palaistine, Latin Palaestina, for Hebrew Plishtim—notice the repetition of the consonants PLST). The Philistine kingdom of Philistia occupied the narrow strip of coastal plain between modern Gaza and Joppa from thirteenth to seventh centuries B.C.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the word Palestine appears in the King James version of the Bible with reference to this region (Joel 3:4). However, more modern versions use the term Philistia.

David Jacobson, an instructor at the University College of London on Jews and the classical world, believes that Palestine may have originated as a Greek pun on the translation of "Israel" and "land of the Philistines". He observes that the Greek and Latin terms frequently appear in ancient literature with reference not to the land of Philistines, but to the land of Israel. For example, Herodotus (circa 450 B.C.), reputed to be the father of history, recorded that the people of Palestine were circumcised, a distinction of the Israelites, not Philistines (who were uncircumcised). Likewise, Aristotle (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) observed in his writings that the Dead Sea was in Palestine (a geographical setting in Israel far to the east of Philistine territory). And Philo of Alexandria (1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.) identified Palaistinei with biblical Canaan and remarked that "Palestinian Syria was occupied by the populous nation of the Jews".

Furthermore, if Palestine was derived from Philistine, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Septuagint (circa 250 B.C.), should have translated the Hebrew word "Plishtim" (Philistine) by the well-known Greek term Palaistinoi (Palestine). However, the translator chose the Greek transliteration Philistieim (revealing by the plural ending IM, a term of Hebrew origin). Jacobson argues that the Greek word Palaistine is quite close to the Greek word Palaistes, which means "wrestler", "rival" or "adversary". This is the very meaning of the

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Hebrew word Yisra'el (Israel), based on Genesis 32:25-17, in which Jacob received the name Israel because he "wrestled" (Hebrew sarita) with "God" (Hebrew 'El).

To the Greeks, who liked to use word plays, the word Palestine would have sounded both like the people of Israel, who were thought to be the descendants of a hero who wrestled with a god, and the Philistines, who lived in adjacent coast. The first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who wrote in Greek, supports this general usage by referring to both the land of the Philistines and the much larger Land of Israel as "Palestine". However, he also distinguished the Land of Israel by this term when he wrote of "the events that befell us Jews in Egypt, in Syria and in Palestine".

The use of the term Palestine in identification with the Land of Israel officially took root when the Roman emperor Hadrian renamed the country Syria Palaestina. It is often thought that Hadrian did this to punish the Jews for their revolt against Roman rule (the Bar-Kokhba Revolt of A.D. 132-135), for by removing their name for their country, the historic connection with their homeland would be severed. However, since the first-century Jewish writers Philo and Josephus had already used this term in Greek for Israel, and Roman writers continued this practice. Hadrian may have simply codified the ancient and accepted usage. Nevertheless, the designation Palaestina appears to have been applied particularly to Judea, at the center of which was the capital city of Jerusalem.

Hadrian's attack was clearly leveled against Jerusalem, which he considered the heart of the rebellion. It was from this city he expelled the Jewish population and renamed it Aelia Capitolina (in honor of his own family name Aelia and the gods on Rome's Capitol Hill). To obscure the Jewish religion of the city, he plowed under the site of the Temple Mount and erected within it pagan temples and shrines. In this way Hadrian symbolically sought to remove the Jewish past and build a new and revised Roman future.

Even though Romans attempted to sever a connection between Palestine and the Jewish people, Palestine remained identified with Israel as a place of promise "so that in later times the words Judea and Palestine were synonymous". Therefore, in general sense, the name Palestine has more of a historical link with the land of the people of Israel - the Jews - and in a restricted sense, also with the Philistines. In addition, the later application to Judea and Jerusalem may well have arisen from an attempt by the Roman enemies of the Jews to revise their historical origins.

### Who in Palestine Was Called a Palestinian?

Greek and Roman writers used the terms Palestine and Palestinian to refer to the land of Israel and its Jewish inhabitants. As we have seen, early secular writers such as Herodotus and Aristotle had used these terms in this way, as had first-century Jewish writers such as Philo and Josephus. In the early 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., the Roman poet Ovid described Jewish Sabbath observance with the words "the seventh-day feast that the Syrian of Palestine observes". Other Latin authors, such as the poet Statius and the historian Dio Chrysostom, also spoke of the Jews as Palestinians and the Jewish homeland as Palestine.

Likewise, in Talmudic literature (3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.), Palestine is used as the name of a Roman province adjoining the provinces of Phœnicia and Arabia (i.e., the Land of Israel).

In the fourth century A.D. the three provinces into which the Land of Israel had been divided were referred to as first, second and third Palestine. But the term Palestine seems to have disappeared completely after the Muslim conquest of A.D. 638. In fact, Palestine never appears in the Qur'an, which refers to the area as simply "the holy land" (Al-Arad Al-Muqaddash). In like manner, Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Qur'an, and Arab historians variously referred to it as Iliya (adapted from the Latin Aelia), Bayt Maqdis (adapted from the Hebrew Beit Hamiqdash, "the Holy House" or "the Temple") or finally as Al-Quds (the holy one).

The crusaders renewed the use of the three Palestines, however, after the fall of the Crusader kingdom, the name Palestine was no longer used officially, but was preserved only by Christians cartographers in maps drawn in their native lands. From the establishment of Islamic rule over the land until the late nineteenth

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century, inhabitants of the region between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean appear to have referred to themselves primarily with respect to their religions (Mohammedan, Christians and Jews)

The first modern use of the term Palestinian appears during the time of the British Mandate (1917-1948). To the classically trained British mind the Land of Israel had ceased to exist in ancient times; and Palestine had endured in the classical literature as the designations of the Jewish homeland and heritage. This may be seen, for example, in the Jewish Encyclopedia (published in London 1905), which states that Palestine is "the portion of Syria that was formerly the possession of the Israelites". Given the British penchant for historical accuracy, the term is applied with reference to the Jewish residents of the country. Therefore, the standard British reference for defining terms, the Oxford English Dictionary, defines the term Palestinian as 1) "the Jews who returned to Israel from Moscow" and 2) "Jews from Israel who volunteered to be British army to fight Germany". In fact, Jewish soldiers serving with the Allies during World War II had the word Palestine inscribed in the shoulder badges.

In addition, under the British mandate, the Jewish owned newspaper Jerusalem Post was known as the Palestine Post and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was called Palestine Philharmonica Orchestra, and postage stamps were issued bearing the appellation "Palestine - EI", the abbreviation EI meaning Eretz Israel (Hebrew for "the land of Israel").

These usages makes clear that even though the term Palestinian could have also been applied to Arabs or many other ethnic groups (such as the Armenians, Greeks, Syrians and Ethiopians of Jerusalem's Old City or the German Templars of its New City), under British rule, the term was especially understood to refer to a Jew from Palestine.

<sup>1</sup> Abraham lived in the land around 2000 B.C., and both he and Isaac interacted with the Philistines of Gerar. It is unclear whether these Philistines are related to the Philistines who occupied the land during the time of David. It appears to me that they are, as Abraham and Isaac interact with Abimelech (Genesis 20:26), which is a title for their king; and David interacts with Abimelech as well (Psalm 34 superscript; *Abimelech* appears to be the title and *Achish* his actual name—1 Samuel 21:10). Obviously, this is not the same person, but, since he carried the same title, that continuity would suggest that these are the same people. Based upon Genesis 38, where one family wants to intermingle with the Jews, it is not out of the question that another people have intermingled with the Philistines.

From <http://thestupidleft.blogspot.com/2007/02/lie-about-palestinian-people-and.html> accessed June 3, 2015. Some editing and corrections have been made. The apparent author of this website is Stewart Gilligan Griffin; however, this article appears to have been cut and pasted, with a great many of the original spelling errors included. See [WordPress](#) for another site which carries this same article.

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Dr. Robert Dean give us the short version: *[T]he Greek verb for wrestling is PALAIO [palaiw], and before the emperor Hadrian shut down Jerusalem and renamed Jerusalem and renamed Israel Palestine, long before the end of the first century and the destruction of Israel the Greeks called the land of Israel Palestine. It is not a play on Philistine at all, which is what a lot of people think, but the etymological derivative goes back to this word for wrestler. Palestine sounded like Philistine but it was based on the Greek verb for wrestler, the land of the wrestler, the land of Jacob the wrestler who was renamed Israel.*<sup>597</sup>

What we do and do not know about the ancient Philistines.

## Regarding Philistines and Palestine—In Summation

<sup>597</sup> From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen134.htm> accessed September 1, 2015.

1. Although we have some clues about the origin of the Philistines, we do not even know for certain if they are Semitic peoples.
2. There is no relationship between the people who call themselves Palestinians today and the Philistines of yesteryear, despite the similarity of the name.
3. There is no clear title to the Land of Promise, apart from God giving it to Abraham. Abraham’s descendants will live on this land in the Millennium.
4. However, even from human viewpoint, we could not assign this land to the Palestinians today. The Jews, historically, have a much earlier claim on this land. However, people live on whatever land that they can seize and defend. I don’t know that there is any land that has been occupied by descendants from the original occupants. Native American Indians may be some of the few people who live on the land originally occupied by their ancestors.
5. Right now, the Palestinians live on roughly the same plot of land that the Philistines lived on 3 millennia ago; and the Jews live on a smaller plot a ground than they themselves occupied 3 millennia ago.
6. The name Palestine appears to be a play on words. It appears to both reference the Philistines who occupied this land; and a Greek word for *wrestler*, which is a reference to Jacob, named *Israel* by God.
7. There could not be a better designation for this land; and there seems to be conflict (wrestling) in the land continually. This conflict is often related to God and the relationship of the people of the land to God.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

**A Complete Translation of Genesis 32**

**A Reasonably Literal Translation**

**A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase**

Jacob see the encampment of angels

So Jacob went on his way and [an encampment of] Elohim's angels met with him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This [is] the army of Elohim." Therefore, he called the name of that place *Mahanaim*.

So Jacob went on his way and then a sizeable encampment of God's angels met up with him. When Jacob saw the angels of God, he said, "This is the army of God." Therefore he named that place *Mahanaim*.

Jacob finds out that Esau is coming to see him and he has 400 men with him

Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir [in] the country of Edom. He instructed them, saying, "Thus will you say to my adonai Esau: 'So speaks your servant Jacob [to you]: *I have stayed with Laban and I remained [with him] until now. I [now] have oxen and donkeys, flocks, male and female servants. Therefore, I am sending [my messengers] to know [if] I might find grace in the sight of my adonai.'*"

Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau, to the land of Seir in the country of Edom. He instructed them what to say: "This is what you will say to my lord Esau, 'This is a message from your servant Jacob: *I have been staying with Laban, our uncle, all of this time. I now own oxen and donkeys and flocks, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my messengers to you in the hope that I might find grace in the sight of my lord.'*"

The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and [he informed us that he] is coming to meet you and [also there are] 400 men with him."

The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We met up with your brother Esau, and he informed us that he will come out to meet you. Also there are 400 men with him."

Jacob divides his people and possessions into two camps

<b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 32</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
Jacob is greatly afraid and he is experiencing great inner stress [lit., <i>he is stressed regarding himself</i> ]. Therefore, he divides the people who [are] with him, and the flocks, the herds and the camels, into two camps. He thought, <i>If Esau comes to one company and strikes it down, the remaining company can escape.</i>	Jacob is greatly afraid and experiencing great inner stress. Therefore, he divides the people who are with him into two camps. He also splits up the flocks, the herds and the camels into two groups. He determined that if Esau attacked one company, the other one can escape.
<b>Jacob's prayer</b>	
Jacob then prayed [lit., <i>said</i> ], saying, "Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac—Y <sup>e</sup> howah, the One [Who] said, 'Return [now] to your land and to your relatives and I will do good to you.'	Jacob then prayed, saying, "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac—Jehovah Who said to me, 'Return now to your land of birth and to your relatives there; and I will do good to you.'
I am of little worth, [given] all the gracious acts and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward your servant. I crossed over this Jordan [River] with my staff; and now I have become two camps.	I am a man of little value to You, O God, given all of the graciousness and all the faithfulness which You have manufactured toward me, your servant. I crossed over the Jordan River, as you had asked me to, carrying my staff, and now I am able to divide my people and possessions into two camps.
Please deliver me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I fear him, that he will come [upon me] and strike me down, [along with] the mothers and their sons.	Please deliver me from the power of my brother Esau, because I am fearful of him. I worry that he will come upon me and kill me and my wives and their children.
You [emphatically] promised [lit., <i>said</i> ], 'I will definitely do good to [lit., <i>with</i> ] you and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for [lit., <i>from</i> ] multitude.' "	You emphatically promised, 'I will definitely do good to you and I will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered because there are so many.' "
<b>Jacob prepares a present for Esau</b>	
He lodged there that night and then took from the [animals] coming with him [lit., <i>in his hand</i> ] [as] a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 [in all]; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 female donkeys and 10 male-donkeys.	He lodged there that night and then took from the animals coming with him as a present for his brother Esau: 200 female goats and 20 male goats; 200 ewe lambs and 20 rams; nursing camels and their colts—30 in all; 40 cows and 10 bulls; and 20 female donkeys with 10 male-donkeys.
He placed [each] herd [of animals] into the care of his servants, saying to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put [some] space in between [each] herd."	He placed each herd of animals under the care of his servants, saying to them, "Pass over before me, and move along so that there is some space between each herd."
He instructed the chief [of Jacob's servants], saying, "When Esau my brother meets you, he will ask you, 'To whom [do] you belong?' And, 'Where [are] you going?' And, 'To whom [belong] these [herds of animals which are] before you?'"	Jacob instructed his head servant as follows: "When you run into Esau my brother, he will ask you, 'Whose servant are you? Where are you going? To whom do these animals belong?'"

<b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 32</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
And you will say to him, '[I belong] to your servant Jacob. These [animals are] a present being sent to my adonai Esau. Look, he [is] behind us.' "	You will say to him, 'I belong to your servant Jacob. These animals in my care are a present sent to you, my lord Esau. Also, my master Jacob is behind us.' "
He also instructed the second and the third and all those following after the herds, saying, "You will say [exactly] these words to Esau when you meet him. You will say, 'Furthermore, listen, your servant Jacob is behind us.' "	Jacob gave the same instructions to the second man, the third man, and to all those who followed after, saying, "Listen, say these words exactly to Esau when you meet him: 'Besides this, your servant Jacob is following behind us.
For he thought, "I might appease Esau [lit., his face] with [this] present—the [present] which goes before me and follows after me—[then] I will see him [and] he might lift up my countenance."	He thought that he might make things right with this present to you—all that you see before me and following after me, in hopes that you will see it and be reconciled.' "
<b>Jacob takes his wives and children to a more secure location</b>	
The present passed over before him, and [then] he spent the night in [their] camp.	After the present passed over before him, he spent the night in their camp.
He then rose up in the same night and took his two wives, his two maids and his eleven children and he crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He takes them and sends them across the torrent; and he takes across [all] that [is] his.	He then rose up that same night and took his two wives, his two mistresses and his eleven children and crossed over the Jabbok with them. He takes his family and sends them over the torrent; and along with them, all that belongs to him.
<b>Jacob wrestles the Angel of God</b>	
So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.	So Jacob is left alone and a man wrestles with him until the rising of the dawn.
He realizes [lit., sees] that He will not prevail regarding him, so the Man [lit., he] injures the hollow of his thigh; He put the hollow of Jacob's thigh out of joint by wrestling with him.	The Angel realizes that He will not win against him. Therefore, the Man injures the hollow of Jacob's thigh, which He knocked out of joint by wrestling with him.
He said, "Send Me away for the dawn is breaking."	He said, "Send Me away, for the dawn comes."
But he said, "I will not send You away unless You bless me."	But Jacob replied, "I will not send You away unless You bless me."
He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, "Jacob."	He asked him, "What is your name?" and he answered, "Jacob."
He then said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but [it will be] Israel, for you contend with Elohim and with men and you will prevail."	He then said, "You will no longer be called Jacob, but your name will be Israel, for you contend with both God and man, and yet you will prevail."
Jacob asked and said, "Tell me, please, Your Name."	Jacob asked God, "Tell me please what is Your Name."
But He said, "Why [is] this [that] you ask for My Name?"	But He answered, "Why are you asking Me for My Name?"
Nevertheless, He blessed him there.	Nevertheless, God blessed Jacob there.

A Complete Translation of Genesis 32	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
The aftermath of the wrestling match	
Jacob called the name of that place, <i>Peniel</i> , [saying,] "For I have seen Elohim face to face and my soul is delivered."	Jacob called the name of that place <i>Peniel</i> . He explained it in this way: "I have seen the God face to face and yet I am still alive!"
As the sun arose over him [lit., <i>to him, regarding him</i> ], he passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.	As the sun began to rise, Jacob passed over Penuel and he is limping because of his thigh.
Therefore, the sons of Israel do not eat the tendon of the hip, which [is] above the hollow of the thigh til this day, because God [lit., <i>He</i> ] injured the hollow of Jacob's thigh at the tendon of the hip.	Therefore, it is a tradition of the people of Israel not to eat the tendon of the hip, which is above the hollow of the thigh, until this day, because they recognize that God injured Jacob there at the hollow of his thigh, over the tendon of his hip.
<a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>	<a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

I did not find any study by R. B. Thieme, Jr. on this particular chapter.

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Genesis 32		
Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
<b>R. B. Thieme, Jr.</b> does not appear to have covered this chapter in any available series.		
1976 Abraham (Genesis 11:26–22:24) (#600)	#	Genesis :1–
1963 Dispensations (#201)	#	Genesis :1–
<b>R. B. Thieme, Jr.</b>		
Ken Reed	<a href="https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/">https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/</a>	Genesis 38–50
Dr. Robert Dean	<a href="https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem">https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem</a>	Genesis 1–50
Bill Wenstrom	<a href="https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124">https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124</a>	Genesis 1–50
Jack M. Ballinger	<a href="http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html">http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html</a>	Genesis 1–49
Ron Snider	<a href="http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html">http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html</a>	Genesis 1–50

\* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).



These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genesis 32 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

<b>Chapter Outline</b>		<b>Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines</b>
<b>Beginning of Document</b>	<b>Doctrines Covered or Alluded to</b>	<b>Chapters of the Bible Alluded to</b>
<b>Definition of Terms</b>	<b>Introduction and Text</b>	<b>Addendum</b>
<b><a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a></b>		<b>Exegetical Studies in Genesis</b>