

# GENESIS 33

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

**Genesis 33:1–20**

**Jacob and his Family Return to Canaan/Jacob Meets Esau**

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

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 understanding of God’s plan and Bible doctrine, 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 there are significant problems with some Catholic 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 or other 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 to examine. You may find some individual verse commentary (also presented as tables) to be superfluous.

**Preface:** 20 years previous, Jacob escaped Canaan with his life, having just deceived his father in order to claim Esau's blessings. When Esau found out, he was angry, and he threatened to kill Jacob at a later date.

In this chapter, the two brothers meet again after 20 years. Both men meet apart from their father Isaac, and both men have apparently matured considerably and put their past behind them. It was an animated, enthusiastic and congenial meeting between these former rivals, despite Jacob's strong apprehension the night before. Esau places his sibling rivalry in the past. In fact, Esau invites Jacob to join him in Seir, and Jacob appears to agree to this, but he goes in a different direction, remaining in the land promised to his father and grandfather.

The narrative of this chapter is quite straightforward, with very little commentary offered by the author (Jacob). To have an idea what is going on emotionally with these two men, and to discuss their motivations, we must do some speculation. When we speculate, we must be both measured and careful, trying not to insert more than the narrative warrants.

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Genesis. This will be the most extensive examination of Genesis 33, 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:

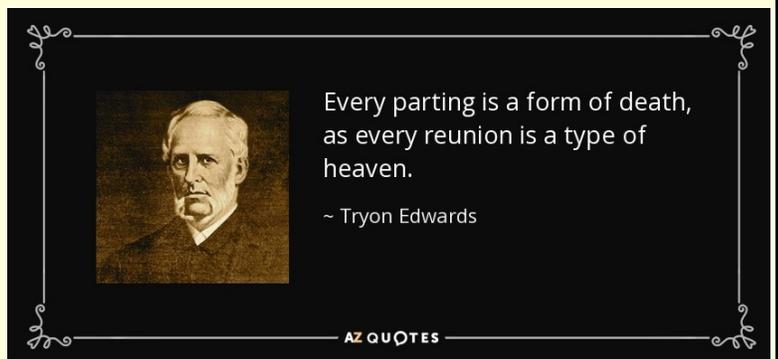
Hamilton: *At almost every point in this story, Esau emerges as the more appealing, more humane, and more virtuous of the two brothers.*<sup>1</sup>

**Tyron Edwards Reunion Quote;** from **AZ Quotes**; accessed April 18, 2019.

Arthur Schopenhauer: *Every parting gives a foretaste of death, every reunion a hint of the resurrection.*<sup>2</sup>

Paul Simon: *I was eating in a Chinese restaurant downtown. There was a dish called Mother and Child Reunion. It's chicken and eggs. And I said, I gotta use that one.*<sup>3</sup>

**George Bernard Shaw quote on relatives;** from **Family Reunion Success**; accessed April 18, 2019.



*"When our relatives are at home,  
we have to think of all their good points  
or it would be impossible to endure them."  
- George Bernard Shaw*

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1-7.

<sup>2</sup> From [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/arthur\\_schopenhauer\\_398088](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/arthur_schopenhauer_398088) accessed April 18, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> From [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/paul\\_simon\\_312941](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/paul_simon_312941) accessed April 18, 2019.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: *The history of the kingdom of God is, directly, one of a reunion. The total divine milieu is formed by the incorporation of every elected spirit in Jesus Christ.*<sup>4</sup>

J. F. Montgomery: *We are called to be the salt of the earth. It is an error to shrink from contact with the world as dangerous to us. This of old led to monasticism. But there may be a spiritual solitude even when living in the throng of a city. In secular matters refusing to take an interest in what occupies others (cf. Luke 6:31), as if God had nothing to do with these; or in spiritual things avoiding Christian intercourse with those who do not in all points agree with us; or being engrossed with our own spiritual welfare, and turning away from all concern for the welfare of others (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:20–22).*<sup>5</sup>

Psalm 112:6–7 For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever.  
He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD. (ESV)

### Outline of Chapter 33:

#### Introduction

- vv. 1–15 **Jacob and Esau Meet After 20 Years Apart**
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<sup>4</sup> From [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/pierre\\_teilhard\\_de\\_chardi\\_752955](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/pierre_teilhard_de_chardi_752955) accessed April 18, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword (Homilies by J.F. Montgomery). This may be better placed in another study; but I like this quote.

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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](#)).

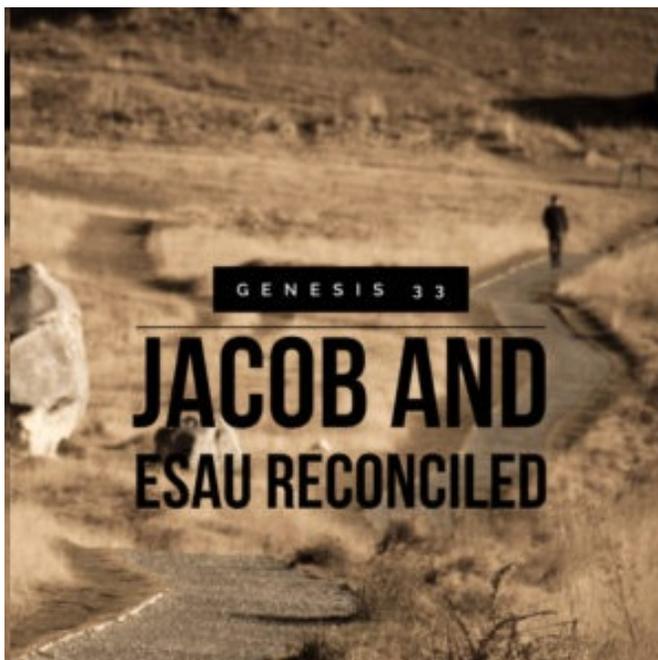
<a href="#">Definition of Terms</a>	
<a href="#">Amanuensis</a>	An amanuensis is <i>one employed to write from dictation or to copy manuscript</i> . <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> From <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/amanuensis> accessed April 6, 2019.

Definition of Terms	
<b>Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)</b>	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the <b>Doctrine of Rebound</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ).
<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>Supergrace; the Supergrace life</b>	This is a term and doctrine, developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr., which indicates a stage of spiritual maturity that some believers attain. Essentially, this is our first stage of spiritual growth and it is based upon the words <i>greater grace</i> as found in James 4:6. ( <a href="#">Robert R. McLaughlin</a> ) Or, R. B. Thieme, Jr. covers this in lesson #10 of his 1972 David Series 631; or in his 1972 Supergrace Series769 (12 lessons) (the terminology is original with Thieme)
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.realttime.net/~wdoud/topics.html">http://www.realttime.net/~wdoud/topics.html</a> <a href="http://www.theopedia.com/">http://www.theopedia.com/</a>	

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



### An Introduction to Genesis 33

**I**ntroduction: Genesis 33 is an immediate continuation of Genesis 32. This chapter is very short and requires very little exegesis. There should not have even been a chapter break here. Jacob first placed his wives, mistresses and children on the other side of the river (Genesis 32:21–23). Then, when he is alone, Jacob is met by the angel of God, Jesus Christ, Who wrestles him and dislocates his hip (We do not know the exact nature of his injury). He names that area Penuel and then returns to get his family. As he passes through Penuel again, then he sees Esau coming with his 400 men. Now his wives and children are with him, representing a change of heart.

**Genesis 33: Jacob and Esau Reconciled** (a graphic); from [GC Grace church](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

In this chapter, Jacob actually meets his twin brother Esau, after 20 years. Both men are quite successful and both men have been greatly blessed by God.

Over these past 20 years, becoming a husband and father, having many responsibilities, having met God, and having been cheated on many occasions by his Uncle Laban, Jacob has apparently enjoyed some spiritual growth. Some of this came at the time of his wrestling match with God, where Jacob realized that his blessing comes directly from God.

In other words, Jacob has become somewhat more grace oriented. Remember that **God resists the arrogant, but He gives grace to the grace oriented [believer]**. (1Peter 5:5 Proverbs 3:34). I do not want to suggest that Jacob has reached some pinnacle, but he is in better shape, spiritually speakin, than he was a day ago.

The *arrogant* is Jacob, always doing things his own way, following his own instincts, attempting to wrest what he wanted from others. The Lord Jesus Christ, as a theophany, had to knock Jacob around a bit to put him on track.

So that there is no misunderstanding, Jacob never attains the spiritual maturity of his grandfather Abraham—at least, not until he is in Egypt. But clearly, Jacob will never be called *the friend of God*. His name occurs 27 times in the New Testament; Abraham's 75 times. Jacob has moved forward in his spiritual trek, learning the hard way most of the time. He is anything but perfect, as subsequent chapters will bear out.

However, I am personally comforted more by Jacob than I am by Abraham. I find solace in the failures of Peter, Paul and Jacob, given my own extensive failures in life.

Grace is an key word in this chapter. In the Hebrew, the word is *chên* (חַן) [pronounced *khayn*], and it is found 3x in this chapter. Strong's #2580 BDB #336.

Robert Dean: *Giving more grace indicates the successive stages of grace reception in the spiritual life where there is saving grace, logistical grace, an accumulation of more and more grace that God gives as we walk in obedience and grow spiritually.*<sup>7</sup>

There are questions about this chapter posed by *friendly* critics. Documentary Hypothesis (also called form criticism; also called the JEPD theory) teaches *that the first five books of the Bible were written close to one thousand years after Moses' death and were the result of a process of writing, rewriting, editing, and compiling by various anonymous editors or redactors.*<sup>8</sup> This is has been taught for over a hundred years in many seminaries throughout the United States, and was based upon the theory that nobody wrote stuff down in the time of Abraham or Moses (an assumption which has been shown to be historically false). However, this false theory remains, even though the foundation for this theory no longer exists.

I mention this because the structure of parts of Genesis is very well-organized, designed perhaps in a way to be more easily memorized.

I often wondered if Darwin was inspired by life seeming to appear out of nowhere in a bucket of water? (Barrels of water would have been common in his day; life growing in these water barrels would also have been common) The connection here is, coming up with a theory based upon some incorrect observations.

Anyway, in the original Hebrew, there were no chapter breaks; chapter breaks were added hundreds of years later. There is little which separates Genesis 32 from 33. They could have been combined into one long chapter instead (to be discussed later). However, one could argue that Jacob's mental attitude had dramatically changed from the previous chapter to this one—overnight, as it were—and thereby justify the splitting of the chapters.

<sup>7</sup> From **Dean Bible Ministries**; accessed September 14, 2015.

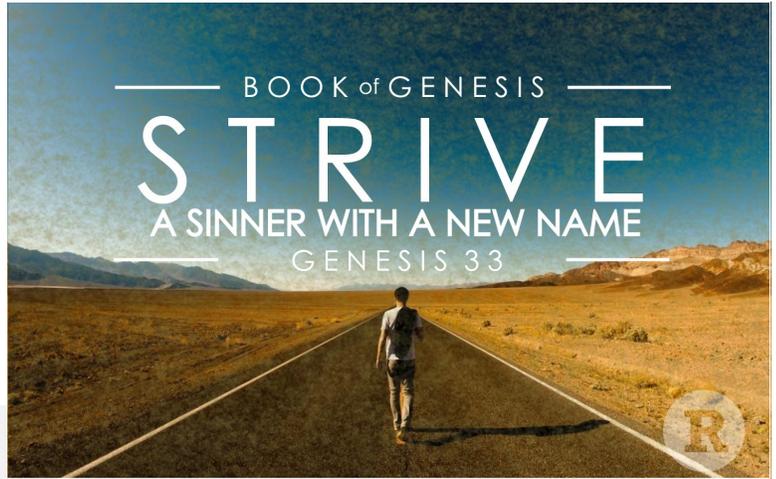
<sup>8</sup> Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1999 by Josh McDowell; p. 391.

In the previous chapter, Jacob was anticipating his meeting with Esau with no little trepidation; and in this chapter, he will meet Esau face to face after 20 years. He tried to hide his family the previous night; but in Genesis 33, they are right behind him.

Between his concern over this meeting and the actual meeting, Jacob finds himself wrestling with God. He demands a blessing from God, which he receives; along with a name change. He was no longer Jacob; his new name was Israel.

**A Sinner with a New Name** (a graphic); from [Restoration Road Church](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

I don't know that I would describe this new chapter by the word *strive*, but this is Jacob moving forward in life, with the name *Israel* just given him by God. In the previous chapter, he clearly strives with God; in this chapter, however, he reunites with Esau; there does not appear to be any strife involved.



### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Robert Dean: *Jacob [now] 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>9</sup>

**How did Esau happen to meet up with Jacob?** There is one point of interest, and that is, how did Esau happen to meet Jacob? This is a fairly large land occupied by many different peoples; and yet, as Jacob pulls up to the outskirts of Canaan, Esau meets him with 400 men. Did Jacob deliberately go to where he knew that he would find Esau first?

There is the option that Esau has told his men to keep out a look for Jacob. Jacob, having his 4 women and all of the children, was not moving very quickly. Therefore, he could have been seen, this reported back to Esau, and then Esau come out to meet him.

In all actuality, we know how Esau just happens to be there. This is revealed to us in the previous chapter. But, sometimes there are incidents in Scripture without an explanation; without a back story. This time, it is provided, and we know the back story. In other instances, we may not know all of the events leading up to where we are.

Back in Genesis 32, Jacob knew that Esau lived in Seir, and so he sent messengers ahead of him to Seir, to inform Esau that he was returning to the land of Canaan. How does Jacob intend to deal with the problems that they had in the past? Jacob intends to bribe Esau, to send a present of [oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants](#).

<sup>9</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.

It is reasonable to assume that Jacob knew that he would not be able to avoid his twin brother after returning to the land, and he has decided to deal with that meeting first. As we will see, Jacob and Esau come into this meeting with far different expectations.

Throughout his life, Jacob has approached human relationships in mostly manipulative ways. This is how he hopes to mollify Esau—with a bribe. When Jacob speaks of a *present* in this verse, it is a reference to the animals and servants named above. Jacob left on bad terms with his brother 20 years ago, and the present is his attempt to apologize to his brother.

You may recall that the Angel of the Lord (Jesus Christ in His Preincarnate form) wrestled with Jacob and damaged his hip, to indicate that he does not move ahead based on his own activities, but based upon the grace of God. God could have ended his movement right then and there, in a second. Jacob was, in his own way, always wrestling with (opposing) God.

**Esau—his present and his future:** We may want to spend some time considering Esau. He comes from an amazing family, where Abraham is his grandfather and Isaac is his father. There are specific promises made by God to those two men—but promises that Esau will not personally enjoy. Furthermore, these promises extend out for a very long time, beyond the lives of Jacob and Esau.

At some point, Esau had to have decided that he is fine where he is. Not receiving that blessing from his father Isaac has not destroyed Esau's life. He is not in poverty, wondering where his next meal is coming from. He is a great leader and he controls a great deal of land outside of Canaan. He is a natural leader and he has at least 400 men who are devoted to him. In this chapter, Jacob wants to give Esau this grand present and Esau refuses at first, suggesting that he is doing fine, financially speaking (no doubt there is some normal human politeness in his initial refusal of Jacob's present).

Esau has separated from his parents and he seems to have carved out for himself a place in Seir. For 3 or 4 generations, the name Esau will be revered in that area. Jacob—named *Israel* by God—has a country to this day named for him.

Dr. Peter Pett writes this about Esau and his current life: *For Esau, recognising that he now had no part in the rulership of the family tribe (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.<sup>10</sup>*

It is reasonable to ask yourself, how long will you impact the world? Do you care? Esau was able to let this go; this aspect of his life no longer bothered him. Yet, Esau impacted life in that area for the next 2 or 3 generations. However, Jacob will become the genetic head of the entire Hebrew race. We all know people today who are born of Jacob (Israel). We would be hard-pressed to point to any particular Arab today and identify him as having come from Esau.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

**Two common viewpoints offered by commentators:** There is an interesting general phenomenon which I have noticed among commentators regarding this chapter. A great many of them assume that Jacob has reached a high level of spiritual maturity as a result of his wrestling with the Angel of God the night before. I will certainly acknowledge a change in Jacob, but to say that he went from 50 to 100 overnight? That is a bridge too far. Let me explain why: we grow by what we think. The more that we think like God thinks, the more that we grow spiritually. In the Church Age, we make use of the Holy Spirit by getting into fellowship with God (by means of **rebound**—1John 1:9), and then we take in doctrine, which we mix with faith (that is, we must believe it—Hebrews 4:2) in order to advance. God sometimes sends difficulties and trials our way in order for us to apply this doctrine to difficult situations in life (James 1:2). We may think of those situations as a test, much like the math tests you took throughout your life in school. If you were prepared for those tests, you did well; if you were unprepared, you became quite anxious.

Whereas, salvation is a one-shot decision, the spiritual life is not a one-shot decision. We do not advance in the spiritual life suddenly, overnight, because we make Jesus *Lord* (or, rededicating our lives, or whatever). The Bible does not suggest that we need to find that mysterious one-shot key to move us from 50 to 100. For this reason, my opinion is that Jacob did not change overnight, he did not suddenly move into spiritual maturity, but he was guided enough in the wrestling match to get him through the first half of the next day (that is, he met Esau as he should have; and he brought his family with him, having faith that Esau would not kill them all). But, that is as far as his spiritual progress would take him.

The next general commonality which I found among nearly all commentators is, they completely and totally forget about Jacob's injury from the night before (with one or two exceptions). His injury never plays a part in their commentary after the end of Genesis 32 (this is despite so many commentators saying, *and this was an injury that Jacob had for the rest of his life*). I even changed my opinion on this matter. Like most injuries, Jacob learned to adjust to his and to better live with it as time went on. Did he ever become healed from it? Possibly; possibly not. The Bible does not speak of it again. However, no matter how you view the permanence of his injury, there is one thing for certain—Jacob was more affected by his injury the next day than on any subsequent day. So, even though the Bible does not mention his injury again, it is not unreasonable to consider his injury when speculating about his motivation to do this or that (for instance, Jacob for a time appears to put down permanent roots in Succoth—could that be because of his injury?).

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Faith does not mean trusting God to work for us in spite of our irresponsibility; that is presumption. Faith means trusting God to work for us when we have acted responsibly realizing that without His help we will fail.*<sup>11</sup>

What Dr. C says here seems quite reasonable—but, you have to remember that, over and over again, Jacob wanted to do things his own way. Nevertheless, God continues to bless this man. Maybe that is why God continues to tolerate us?

Mine: Genesis 33:1–20 Jacob and his Family Return to Canaan/Jacob Meets Esau.

### **Titles and/or Brief Descriptions of Genesis 33 (by Various Commentators)**

929 Chapters: *Genesis 33: Jacob Meets Esau in Peace; Jacob Abandons Esau and Settles in Shechem.*<sup>12</sup>

The Open Bible: *Jacob Makes Peace with Esau.*<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob Meets With His Brother Esau (Genesis 32:3 to Genesis 33:17).*

<sup>11</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-33.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> From [929chapters.com](http://929chapters.com) accessed April 8, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 49 (footnote).

## Titles and/or Brief Descriptions of Genesis 33 (by Various Commentators)

Pett continues: *This section is built around two covenants. The covenant made with God at Peniel and the covenant of peace made between Esau and Jacob.*<sup>14</sup>

Arno Gaebelein: *The Reconciliation of Esau.*<sup>15</sup>

H. C. Leupold: *Reconciliation with Esau; Settlement in Canaan.*

J. Vernon McGee: *Jacob meets Esau; Jacob journeys to Shalem.*<sup>16</sup>

L. M. Grant: *The brothers meet again.*<sup>17</sup>

Robert Hawker: *The Patriarch's history is still continued through this Chapter. Here is the account of Jacob's meeting his brother Esau, and the effect of the interview: the affection displayed between the brothers; their amicable separation: Esau returns to Mount Seir, and Jacob pursues his journey to Canaan.*<sup>18</sup>

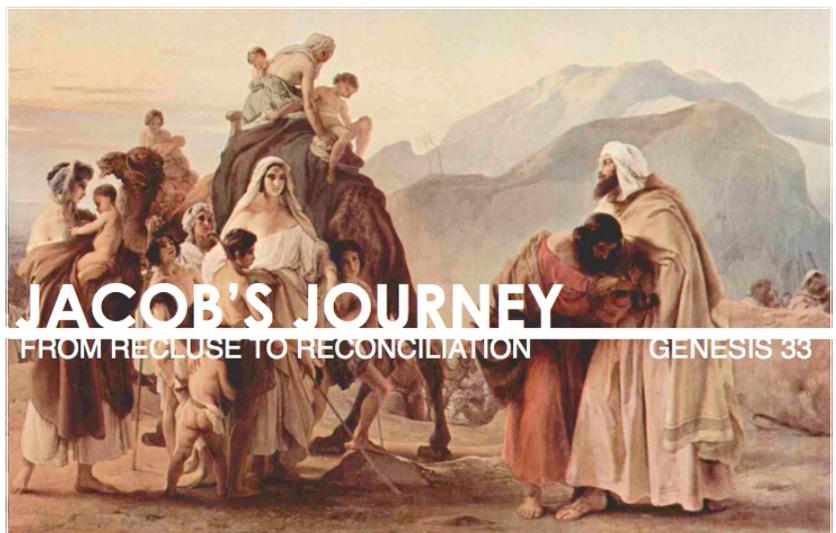
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**Jacob's Journey** (a graphic); from [Spreading the Fame](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

This is an abbreviated way to describe Genesis 32–33. I don't know that we could categorize Jacob as a recluse, as he had 2 wives, 2 mistresses and at least 12 children; but he did oversee large herds of livestock. Perhaps there were times when he was alone, at least early on when taking care of his Uncle Laban's flocks and livestock.

Perhaps the teacher just liked the way *from recluse to reconciliation* sounded. Or, perhaps he understood *recluse* to mean that Jacob was separated from his parents and brother?



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

## Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 33

929 Chapters: *Jacob meets Esau in peace. Instead of following Esau as he said he would, Jacob heads to Shechem via Sukkoth. Jacob buys land near Shechem and builds an altar named "god of the gods of Israel."*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>15</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–20.

<sup>16</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>17</sup> From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1.

<sup>19</sup> From [929chapters.com](http://929chapters.com) accessed April 8, 2019.

## Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 33

Baumgarten: *God Himself had appeared to Jacob as his combatant instead of Esau.*<sup>20</sup>

Morgan G. Campbell: *The chief interest of this story, however, is found in Esau's attitude. In him Jacob met no angry man but a brother. It would appear that Esau had started to meet Jacob with revenge in his heart, as the armed bands suggest. But God has the disposing of all hearts in His own power; and while He had been dealing with Jacob by the brook, probably all unconsciously to Esau, He had been dealing with him too, changing his attitude toward Jacob.*<sup>21</sup>

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>22</sup> Exactly how this took place we don't know.

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob was ready to sacrifice part of his family, expecting Esau to attack him, and he approached his brother as though Esau was his lord. In contrast, Esau welcomed Jacob magnanimously, reluctantly received his gift, and offered to host him in Seir. Jacob declined Esau's offer and traveled instead to Succoth, four miles west of Peniel, where he settled next.*<sup>23</sup>

Arno Gaebelein: *The reconciliation is effected, but Jacob is the same man of deceit. He tells his brother he will follow him to Seir. But he goes instead to Succoth. He built an altar there, but it is not the worship God expected. He should have gone to Bethel and fulfilled his vow.*<sup>24</sup>

F. B. Meyer: *Many things, like this meeting with Esau, are worse in anticipation than in actuality.*<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *This chapter includes mostly dialogue (note TEV translation). The term "say" (BDB 55, KB 65) is used ten times.*<sup>26</sup> In other words, there is a lot of dialogue in this chapter.

It is best to consider Jacob in the light of what we know about spiritual growth; and to connect this chapter with the previous one.

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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 33

I have far more unanswerable questions in this chapter than I did in the previous chapter; but most of them have to do with motivation.

1. What spiritual growth did Jacob really achieve at this time?
2. The night before (in the previous chapter), Jacob appears to be hiding his family safely away. However, at the beginning of Genesis 33, his family is right there with Jacob when he meets Esau. Why?
3. Jacob makes it sound to Esau as if he is going to follow him down to Seir, but he does not appear to do that. Why?
4. Did Jacob really mean to let Esau push on ahead, and that he would catch up to him in Seir? Everything which Esau suggested (traveling together, leaving some servants with Jacob to help guide and protect him) was refused.

<sup>20</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:10.

<sup>21</sup> Morgan G Campbell, *Exposition on Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–20.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>24</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–20.

<sup>25</sup> F. B. Meyer, *Through the Bible by Day (A Devotional Commentary)*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–17.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33 chapter comments.

## Fundamental Questions About Genesis 33

5. At what point did Jacob decide to not go to Seir? A reasonable guess would be, he made this decision before Esau offered him help to come south. However, that is just a reasonable guess. God told Jacob to return to Canaan, but Jacob does not appear to cross the Jordan River for a few years.
6. He appears to stop in Succoth, where he appears to put down stakes permanently. He does not go further west into Canaan. Why?
7. Why did Jacob and family stop suddenly in Succoth? What in Succoth caught their attention?
8. Why did Jacob build some permanent structures in Succoth? Again, a reasonable conjecture would be, he originally planned to stay there.
9. Did God tell Jacob to move there? I would suggest that He did not, as this is not recorded (it would be logical that all or nearly all interaction between God and the patriarchs is recorded).
10. Did Jacob move there because he realized that is where God wanted him? God never handed any of the patriarchs a map, and indicate exactly where the borders of the Land of Promise were (when God showed Abraham the land from a mountain, the area taken in was much larger than what Israel has ever occupied).
11. Genesis 33:18 makes it sound as if this were a sudden move (Paddan-aram and Shechem are both named, but Succoth is not)?
12. Then, why did Jacob move suddenly to Shechem? This is one of the most baffling questions.
13. Jacob never appears to make an attempt to contact his father and family, even though he is not far away from them. Why?
14. Saint Stephen, in Acts 7:16, speaks of a land purchased by Abraham from the sons of Hamor; but Jacob is said to purchase that land here—which is it?

In looking back at these questions, I think most of them get resolved here.

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It is important to understand what has gone before.

## The Prequel of Genesis 33

20 years ago, Jacob deceived his own father and appeared to take the end-of-life blessing meant for his brother. His father was expecting Esau to return from hunting with an animal to cook. He was going to cook the animal and they would eat it, followed by Isaac blessing Esau.

Jacob's mother finds out about all of this, and comes up with a devious scheme to fool her husband, Isaac, so that her favored son, Jacob, receives Esau's blessing instead. Although Jacob is an adult and fully capable of making his own decisions, he goes along with this ruse and makes his father believe that he is Esau.

Jacob is blessed by Isaac; Esau is furious; and Esau begins to talk about how he wants to kill Jacob. Rebekah, the mother, is not known by Isaac or by Esau to be a part of this plot. She suggests, out of the blue, that Jacob go east to their family there and take a wife from them. So this is what Jacob does. He is able to exit this situation unharmed, without anyone knowing what Rebekah engineered.

Jacob spends 20 years in Paddan-Aram, living with his Uncle Laban and marrying two of his daughters, and fathering 11 sons and at least 1 daughter. However, life with Laban was not good; and Laban did everything possible to cheat his son-in-law. Finally, Jacob could take no more. At the same time, God told him to return to Canaan.

Genesis 32–33 Is Jacob returning to Canaan.

Genesis 33 will begin with Jacob lifting up his eyes and seeing Esau and 400 men come in his direction.

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

### The Principals of Genesis 33

Characters	Commentary
Jacob	Jacob is the younger of the twin brothers, the sons of Isaac and Rebekah. He is the son of promise.
Jacob's wives and children	Jacob has 2 wives and to surrogate wives from Paddan-Aram; and 11 sons from these relationships. Leah, Rachel and Joseph are the only ones specifically named.
Jacob's servants	Jacob and his family also travel with servants, who organize and lead Esau's present along.
Esau	Esau is the older of the twin brothers. He has established himself in Seir rather than in Canaan and is apparently quite prosperous.
Esau's 400 men	Esau travels with a band of 400 men. These would be his muscle.

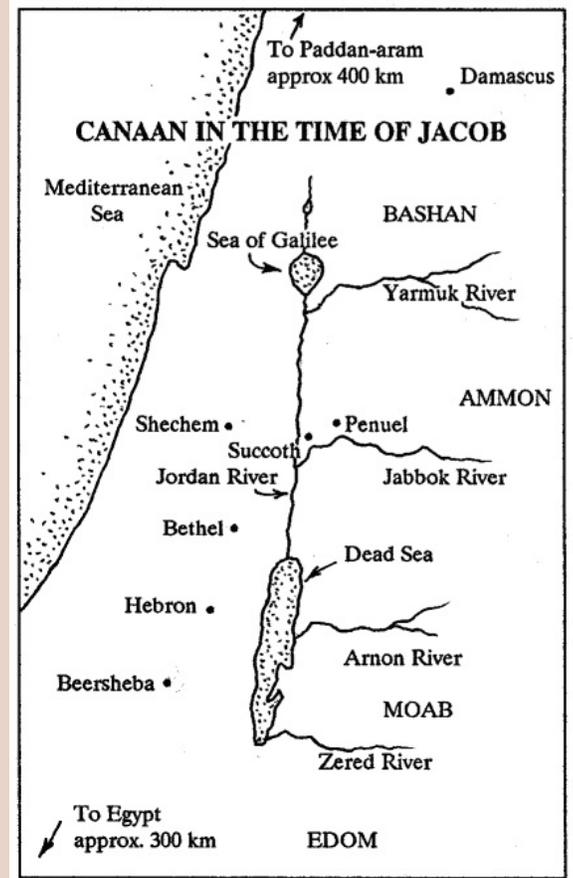
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We need to know where this chapter takes place. Not all of these places are named in Genesis 33, but they all play a part in this chapter.

### The Places of Genesis 33

Place	Description
Penuel	Penuel is where Jacob wrestled with the Angel of God.
Jabbok River	It appears that Jacob and family traveled west along the southern shore of the Jabbok. Jacob tried at first to hide his family north of the Jabbok.
Jordan River	The Jordan River separates Canaan from the land of the east. However, the Hebrew people will settle on both sides of this River.
Canaan	Canaan is the land to the west of the Jordan River, settled by Canaanites and other peoples. They are known for their degeneracy.
Seir	Seir is the area in the south marked Edom on this map. This is where Esau would make his mark, apparently allying himself with the people of Seir.
Succoth	After wrestling with the Lord and meeting his brother Esau, Jacob will appear to put down permanent roots in Succoth.
Shechem	Shechem appears to be the other side of the Jordan from Succoth. Shechem is properly in Canaan; Succoth is not.



Map from Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Commentary*; ©1988, 1994, 2005; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–17.

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## By the Numbers

Item	Date; duration; size; number
Time:	Benson suggests B.C. 1739. <sup>27</sup> F. LaGard Smith suggests 1905 B.C. <sup>28</sup> These are clearly 2 points of view which likely match up with their view of the time Israel spent in Egypt (between Genesis and Exodus). Gerrit Verkuyl suggests the move to Shechem occurs in 1908 B.C. <sup>29</sup>
Esau's troops:	400 men.
Jacob's present:	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. (Gen 32:14–15, ISV)
Jacob bows before Esau:	7 times.
The ages of Jacob's sons:	They would range in age from infants on up to 13.
The length of time Jacob remains in Succoth:	Being that Dinah is somewhere between 1 and 12 at the beginning of this chapter, and a woman of a marriageable age in Genesis 34, it is clear that Jacob and his family may have lived a few years in Succoth, but likely, no more than 20. Likely, this was their home for about 10 years.

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## The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 33

Legend
Birth or death
God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)
Parenthetical 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 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.

<sup>27</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>28</sup> *The Narrated Bible In Chronological Order*; narrated by F. LaGard Smith; ©1984 by Harvest House Publishers; Eugene, Oregon; (NIV ©1984 by the International Bible Society); p. 66.

<sup>29</sup> The Modern Language Bible (*The New Berkeley Version*); Gerrit Verkuyl, Ph.D., Editor-in-chief; revised edition; Hendrickson Publishers, © 1969, p. 34.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	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 <b>Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</b>
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 <b>Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.</b>
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 <b>Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.</b>
	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>30</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 <b>Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life.</b> 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 <b>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.</b> 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.

<sup>30</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
				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.
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.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	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.
				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.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Genesis 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Genesis 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.
		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.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
		1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:20–23	Joseph is put into jail; yet prospers in jail.
(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>31</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.

<sup>31</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
	1672– 1593 B.C.			1Chronicles 2:6–8	Zerah, the brother of Pharez, and his descendants.
	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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Borrowing and Gill and Clarke, here is what to expect from Genesis 33:

### A Synopsis of Genesis 33 (Dr. John Gill and Adam Clarke)

(Gill) In this chapter we find Esau meeting Jacob in a friendly manner, contrary to his fears and expectation, having set his family in order in case of the worst, Genesis 33:1; putting questions to Jacob concerning the women and children with him, who make their obeisance to him as Jacob had done before, Genesis 33:5; and concerning the drove he met, which was a present to him, and which he refused at first to take, but at the urgency of Jacob accepted of it, Genesis 33:8; proposing to travel with him, unto which Jacob desired to be excused, he, with the women, children, and flocks, not being able to keep pace with him, Genesis 33:12, and to leave some of his men with him to guard him, which Jacob judged unnecessary, upon which they parted friendly, Genesis 33:15; and the chapter is concluded with an account of Jacob's journey, first to Succoth, then to Shalem, where he pitched his tent, bought a field and built an altar, Genesis 33:17.

(Clarke) Esau, with four hundred men, meets Jacob, Genesis 33:1). He places his children under their respective mothers, passes over before them, and bows himself to his brother (Genesis 33:2 (Genesis 33:3). Esau receives him with great affection (Genesis 33:4). Receives the homage of the handmaids, Leah, Rachel, and their children (Genesis 33:5–7).

Jacob offers him the present of cattle, which he at first refuses, but after much entreaty accepts (Genesis 33:8–11). Invites Jacob to accompany him to Mount Seir (Genesis 33:12). Jacob excuses himself because of his flocks and his children, but promises to follow him (Genesis 33:13–14). Esau offers to leave him some of his attendants, which Jacob declines (Genesis 33:15).

Esau returns to Seir (Genesis 33:16), and Jacob journeys to Succoth (Genesis 33:17), and to Shalem, in the land of Canaan (Genesis 33:18). Buys a parcel of ground from the children of Hamor (Genesis 33:19), and erects an altar which he calls El–elohe–Israel (Genesis 33:20).

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.

Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

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## Outlines of Genesis 33 (Various Commentators)

Matthew Henry's concise outline:<sup>32</sup>

- (Genesis 33:1-16)      The friendly meeting of Jacob and Esau.  
 (Genesis 33:17-20)    Jacob comes to Succoth and Shalem, He builds an altar.

Matthew Henry:<sup>33</sup>

- I. A very friendly meeting between Jacob and Esau (Genesis 33:1-4).  
 II. Their conference at their meeting, in which they vie with each other in civil and kind expressions. Their discourse is
1. About Jacob's family (Genesis 33:5-7).
  2. About the present he had sent (Genesis 33:8-11).
  3. About the progress of their journey (Genesis 33:12-15).
- III. Jacob's settlement in Canaan, his house, ground, and altar (Genesis 33:16-20).

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *Genesis 33:1, Jacob and Esau's meeting; and Esau's departure; Genesis 33:17, Jacob comes to Succoth; Genesis 33:18, At Shalem he buys a field, and builds an altar, called El-elohe-Israel.*<sup>34</sup>

Arno Gaebelein: *CHAPTER 33 The Reconciliation of Esau*

1. *Jacob meets Esau (Genesis 33:1-17)*
2. *In the city of Shechem and the altar erected (Genesis 33:18-20).*<sup>35</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary:<sup>36</sup>

Jacob and Esau, or the brothers reconciled.

- I. THE MEETING OF THE BROTHERS.
  1. The approach of Esau.
  2. The advance of Jacob.
  3. The reconciliation of both.
- II. THE CONVERSE OF THE BROTHERS.
  1. Esau's inquiries and Jacob's answers.
  2. Esau's invitations and, Jacob's promise.
  3. Esau's offer and Jacob's declinature.
- III. THE PARTING OF THE BROTHERS.
  1. Esau returned unto Mount Seir.
  2. Jacob journeyed to Succoth, where he built himself a house, constructed booths for his cattle, and remained a considerable time, afterwards moving up to Shechem.

929 Chapters<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>34</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33 chapter comments.

<sup>35</sup> Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1-20.

<sup>36</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:1-20 (edited).

<sup>37</sup> From [929chapters.com](http://929chapters.com) accessed April 8, 2019.

## Outlines of Genesis 33 (Various Commentators)

- 1-15. Jacob and Esau meet in peace
- 1-2. Esau approaches, Jacob puts his family in the order of Bilhah and Zilpah, Leah, then Rachel
- 3-4. Jacob bows before Esau, who greets him peacefully
- 5-7. Esau meets Jacob's family, who bow before him
- 8-11. Jacob urges Esau to accept his gifts
- 12-15. Jacob convinces Esau that the two should not travel together Edom, but that Jacob will follow him
- 16-20. Jacob tricks Esau and heads to Shechem
- 16-17. Instead of travelling to Edom, Jacob settles in Succoth [in Transjordan], a place named for the booths (sukkot) Jacob builds for his cattle
- 18-20. Jacob arrives in Shechem in Canaan [Cisjordan], buys a piece of land, and sets up a

Benson's outline is exactly the same as Henry's.

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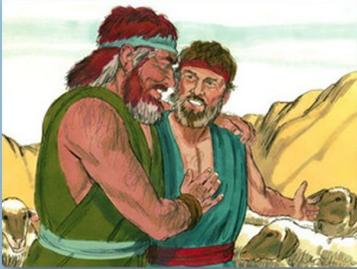
[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

### Genesis 33—a Twofold Outline

(a graphic); from [Slide Player](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

This graphic is actually not too bad of a summary and division of enesis 33G. The bulk of Genesis 33 is all about Jacob and Esau meeting. At the very end, the men go their separate ways.

The slide show where this graphic came from is just so-so.



Esau ran to meet him  
Genesis 33:4-5

Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built a house  
Genesis 33:16-17



## An Outline and Commentary of Genesis 33 (by David Guzik)

### THE MEETING OF JACOB AND ESAU

- A. Esau's warm welcome.
  - 1. (Genesis 33:1–2) Jacob's careful preparations.  
Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.
    - a. He divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants: These preparations were not necessarily carnal. Often the LORD leads us to do very practical things when we follow Him. But the placement of the family shows Jacob was not shy about showing his favoritism to Rachel and Joseph.
    - b. He put the maidservants and their children in front: At least Leah got more protection than the two maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah did.
  - 2. (Genesis 33:3) Jacob demonstrates his submission.  
Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.
    - a. He crossed over before them: The best thing about Jacob is now, after being conquered by

## An Outline and Commentary of Genesis 33 (by David Guzik)

- God, he leads the procession coming to meet Esau.
- b. Bowed himself to the ground: Jacob already sent over gifts and showed he didn't want to take anything materially from Esau. But by bowing down, he showed he is submitted to his brother and wanted no social power over him.
    - i. Of course, if Jacob didn't take things into his own hands more than 20 years ago this would not be necessary. Isaac's promise to Jacob, Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren (Genesis 27:29) would be more immediately fulfilled.
    - ii. We often simply mess things up when we try to "help God out" in the flesh. God never needs us to sin to help Him further His plan in our life.
3. (Genesis 33:4–7) Esau warmly greets Jacob and his family.  
*But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.*
- a. Esau ran to meet him: This probably terrified Jacob. Surely, he thought his life would soon end. Instead, God was working in Esau, and he only wanted to bless Jacob.
  - b. Fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept: Esau and Jacob did not feel a need to "work out" the past. God worked in both their hearts and there was no need to dredge it all up again. What was past was past.
4. (Genesis 33:8–11) Esau receives Jacob's gifts: and he took it.  
*Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "These are to find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it.*
- a. So he urged him, and he took it: This was as important to the reconciliation as Jacob's giving the gifts. When Jacob gave such generous gifts, it was his way of saying to Esau he was sorry and when Esau accepted the gifts, it was his way of accepting Jacob and saying he was forgiven.
    - i. In that culture, you never accepted a gift from an enemy, only from a friend. To accept the gift was to accept the friendship.
  - b. I have enough . . . I have enough: Both Esau and Jacob have a blessed testimony: I have enough. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1Timothy 6:6).
- B. Jacob's travels in the Promised Land.
1. (Genesis 33:12–17) Jacob and Esau part their ways; Jacob goes to Succoth.  
*Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you." But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir." And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.*
  - a. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant: Jacob was glad to be reconciled with his brother, but didn't want to be too close to him. He was still afraid of Esau.
  - b. Jacob journeyed to Succoth: Unfortunately, Jacob still acts like "Jacob," because he said he will go far to the south with Esau to the area of Mount Seir. Instead, he allowed Esau to go a few days beyond him and then headed towards the north to Succoth.

### An Outline and Commentary of Genesis 33 (by David Guzik)

- i. It’s hard to try to be Jacob and Israel at the same time. We could have called him Jak-iel or Israe-ob.
- 2. (Genesis 33:18–20) Jacob comes to Shechem. Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.
  - a. And he pitched his tent before the city: It is good Jacob came to the Promised Land, and he settled there. But he falls short, because it seems God directed him to return to Bethel (Genesis 31:13).
  - b. Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel: Though he made an altar, it was obedience God wanted first, not sacrifice. Jacob will bear bad fruit and waste time because he is in a place he shouldn’t be.

David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 33:1–20.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

### A Synopsis of Genesis 33 from the Summarized Bible

**Contents:** Jacob meets Esau. Settles in Canaan.  
**Characters:** Jacob, Esau, Leah, Rachael, Joseph.  
**Conclusion:** How groundless are all the Christian’s fears and how useless all his self-devised plans. “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”  
**Key Word:** Meeting, Genesis 33:4.  
**Strong Verses:** Genesis 33:11.  
**Striking Facts:** “Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace.” Failure in this, causes one, on every fresh occasion, to doubt and hesitate notwithstanding the evidence of God’s faithfulness through Christ.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 33.

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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.

### The Big Picture (Genesis 27–34)

Scripture	Text/Commentary
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.
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.

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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).

#### Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 33 (from Dr. Bob Utley)

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (FOLLOWS MT)
Jacob Meets Esau	Jacob and Esau Meet	Jacob's Reconciliation with Esau (Gen. 32:1 to Gen. 33:20)	Jacob Meets Esau	Meeting with Esau
Gen. 33:1-3	Gen. 33:1-3	Gen. 33:1-3	Gen. 33:1-5 a Gen. 33:5-7 Gen. 33:8 a Gen. 33:8 b	Gen. 33:1-7  Gen. 33:8-11
Gen. 33:4-11	Gen. 33:4-11	Gen. 33:4-11	Gen. 33:9 Gen. 33:10-11	Jacob Parts Company with Esau
Gen. 33:12-14	Gen. 33:12-14	Gen. 33:12-14	Gen. 33:12 Gen. 33:13-14	Gen. 33:12-17
Gen. 33:15-17	Gen. 33:15-17	Gen. 33:15-17	Gen. 33:15 a Gen. 33:15-17	Gen. 33:12-17
Jacob Settles in Shechem	Jacob Comes to Canaan			Jacob Arrives at Shechem
Gen. 33:18-20	Gen. 33:18-20	Gen. 33:18-20	Gen. 33:18-20	Gen. 33:18-20

From Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33 chapter comments).

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

There is a common mistake made in the previous chapter of Genesis, and this is typified by McGee below:

*J. Vernon McGee: 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. To tell the truth, he is a new man.<sup>38</sup>*

This view of Jacob clouds the judgment of many a commentator. Jacob and the Preincarnate Christ were locked in combat at the end of Genesis 32. Although this really happened, it was a metaphor for Jacob's life—who was very strong-willed and who has resisted God all of his life. Just because God wrestled him, does not mean that Jacob simply agreed to let God's will guide him for the rest of his life. Quite to the contrary, Jacob continues on a path of self-will, even though he is clearly not the scheming Jacob of his early life (what likely changed him in this regard was his 20 years with Laban, who was far greater at manipulation than Jacob).

We will find various aspects of this chapter much easier to understand, if we begin with this understanding of the previous chapter: God did appear to Jacob, God did wrestle Jacob, but Jacob's self-will is still strong. Jacob will get enough from this fight to get him through about half a day (half way through Genesis 33). However, his self-centeredness will be apparent throughout much of Genesis.

Now, near the very end of his life, Jacob will make an impact. Just as his spiritual maturity here is overrated by many commentators, his spiritual impact in Egypt will be underrated. Jacob, in the final years of his life, develops much greater trust in God, and, as a result, many in Egypt will honor him (I take the point of view that the Egyptians are honoring Jacob at the end of his life as much as they are honoring his son Joseph, their prime minister, who survives him).

#### Changes—additions and subtractions (for Genesis 33):

I began to incorporate the **Casual English Bible** into the translations.

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 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.

### The Imperatives of Genesis 33 (Dr. Bob Utley)

This dialogue format has several commands/requests.

1. "let what you have be your own," Genesis 33:9, BDB 224, KB 243, Qal jussive
2. "please take my gifts," Genesis 33:11 BDB 542, KB 534, Qal imperative
3. "let us take our journey," Genesis 33:12, BDB 652, KB 704, Qal cohortative
- 4–5. "go" (twice), Genesis 33:12, BDB 229, KB 246, Qal cohortative
6. "please let my lord pass on before me," Genesis 33:14, BDB 716, KB 778, Qal imperfect used in a jussive sense

<sup>38</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.

## The Imperatives of Genesis 33 (Dr. Bob Utley)

7. "I will proceed at my leisure," Genesis 33:14, BDB 624, KB 675, Hithpael cohortative
8. "please let me leave with you some of my people," Genesis 33:15, BDb 426, KB 427, Hiphil cohortative
9. "let me find favor in the sight of my lord," Genesis 33:15, BDB 592, KB 619, Qal imperfect used in a cohortative sense

Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33 Chapter comments.

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A minor note: If I was dividing these chapters up, there would be no Genesis 33. Vv. 1–17 belong back with Genesis 32 and vv. 18–20 are better placed with Genesis 34.

One thing which stands out is the amount of dialogue included in this chapter. Jacob and Esau have a lot to say to one another, and their communication is much different between them than it was between Jacob and Laban (who both basically kept a mental list of what hacked them off and then they shared that list with the other one).

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## Jacob and Esau Meet After 20 Years Apart

Jacob will travel before his wives and daughters when he meets Esau. This represents a deviation from his original plan back in Genesis 32:7–8, where he separated his family into a second camp, which he would hide from Esau.

There is less introduction to this chapter, simply because it continues the previous chapter.

### An Introduction to Genesis 33:1–3 (a discussion)

*Barnes: Jacob, upon seeing Esau approach with his four hundred men, advances with circumspection and lowly obeisance. He divided his family, arranged them according to their preciousness in his eyes, and walks himself in front. In drawing near, he bows seven times, in token of complete submission to his older brother. Esau, the wild hunter, is completely softened, and manifests the warmest affection, which is reciprocated by Jacob.*<sup>39</sup>

*Bridgeway Bible Commentary: Jacob may have had a dramatic spiritual experience with God, but he still had to face Esau the next day. He took precautions to protect his family against any possible hostility, then went ahead to meet Esau personally (33:1-3).*<sup>40</sup>

What the Bridgeway Bible Commentary is not really accurate, as Jacob, prior to the wrestling match, did try to hide his family from Esau. However, in this chapter, his family is right there with him, upon his meeting with Esau.

An outline by Matthew Henry<sup>41</sup> :

<sup>39</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–3.

<sup>40</sup> Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Commentary*; ©1988, 1994, 2005; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–17.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–4.

## An Introduction to Genesis 33:1–3 (a discussion)

- I. Jacob discovered Esau's approach, Genesis 33:1.
- II. He put his family into the best order he could to receive him, whether he should come as a friend or as an enemy, consulting their decency if he came as a friend and their safety if he came as an enemy, Genesis 33:1, Genesis 33:2.
- III. At their meeting, the expressions of kindness were interchanged in the best manner that could be between them.
  1. Jacob bowed to Esau, Genesis 33:3.
  2. Esau embraced Jacob (Genesis 33:4)
  3. They both wept.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

In the previous chapter we read several times about there being two camps: the second camp comprised of angels; Jacob divides his people into two camps and is surprised that he is able to do that; and he seems to hide the consisting of his wives and children before the end of Genesis 32. However, in this chapter, we will read nothing about two encampments. Whatever clever ideas that Jacob developed regarding the second encampment of his wives and children is no longer hidden.

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:

**And so lifts Jacob his [two] eyes and so he looks and behold Esau is coming; and with him four hundreds a man. And so he divides the children upon Leah and upon Rachel and upon two of the maids. And so he puts the maids and their children first and Leah and her children behind and Rachel and Joseph behind.**

Genesis  
33:1–2

Kukis moderately literal:

**Jacob lifted up his eyes and he looked and he saw [that] Esau is coming; with 400 men. He divided up the children among [lit., upon] Leah and Rachel and the maids. Jacob [lit., he] put the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind [them]; and Rachel and Joseph behind [them].**

Kukis not-so-literal paraphrase:

**Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids. Jacob arranged the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel and Joseph behind them.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation<sup>42</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

<sup>42</sup> I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use [www.latinvulgate.com](http://www.latinvulgate.com).

(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.

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 so lifts Jacob his [two] eyes and so he looks and behold Esau is coming; and with him four hundreds a man. And so he divides the children upon Leah and upon Rachel and upon two of the maids. And so he puts the maids and their children first and Leah and her children behind and Rachel and Joseph behind.
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)	And Jakob lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men; and he divided the children with Leah, and with Rahel, and with the two concubines. And he set the concubines and their children first, and Leah and her children after, and Rahel and Joseph after them. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men of war. And he divided the children unto Leah, and to Rahel, and to the two concubines, and placed the concubines and their sons foremost; <u>for he said, If Esau come to destroy the children and abuse the women, he will do it with them, and meantime we will arise and encounter him in fight;</u> and Leah and her children after, and Rahel and Joseph after them.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob lifting up his eyes, saw Esau coming, and with him four hundred men: and he divided the children of Lia, and of Rachel, and of the two handmaids: And he put both the handmaids and their children foremost: and Lia and her children in the second place: and Rachel and Joseph last.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah, Rachel, and the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children in front, Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Yoseph at the rear.
Peshitta (Syriac) <sup>43</sup>	AND Jacob raised his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maids. Then he brought the maids and their children to the front, and Leah and her children next, and kept Rachel and Joseph in the rear.
Septuagint (Greek)	Peniel - Jacob meets Esau - Jacob's altar at Shechem. Gn.33.1-20 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and beheld, and lo! Esau his brother coming, and four hundred men with him; and Jacob divided the children to Lea and to Rachel, and the two handmaidens. And he put the two handmaidens and their children with the first, and Lea and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.
Significant differences:	The Latin leaves out <i>and behold</i> . One targum has a lot of additional text. At the very end, the same word is found twice; but many of the translations gave it two somewhat different translations ( <i>behind</i> over against <i>last</i> ).

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Easy English	Jacob looked up. He saw Esau with 400 men coming towards him. So, he separated his children into groups. Some went with Leah, some with his 2 female servants and Joseph went with Rachel. He put his female servants and their children at the front of the group. Then came Leah and her children. But Jacob put Rachel and Joseph at the back of the group.
Easy-to-Read Version	<b>Jacob Meets Esau</b> Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob divided his family into four groups. Leah and her children were in one group, Rachel and Joseph were in one group, and the two maids and their children were in two groups. Jacob put the

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<sup>43</sup> From the George Lamsa Translation of the Peshitta, taken from <http://www.studyight.org/>

maids with their children first. Then he put Leah and her children behind them, and he put Rachel and Joseph in the last place.

International Children's B.

### **Jacob Shows His Bravery**

Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming. With him were 400 men. So Jacob divided his children among Leah, Rachel and the two slave girls. Jacob put the slave girls with their children first. Then he put Leah and her children behind them. And he put Rachel and Joseph last.

NIRV

### **Jacob Meets Esau**

Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with his 400 men! So Jacob separated the children. He put them with Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. He put the servants and their children in front. He put Leah and her children next. And he put Rachel and Joseph last.

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

Casual English Bible<sup>44</sup>

### **Here comes Esau with 400 men**

Jacob looked off in the distance and saw Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob divided his four wives and their children into groups. Jacob put his two slave wives and their children on point, front and center. They would make contact with Esau first. Next came Leah and her children. Then came Rachel and her son Joseph, at the back of the caravan.

Common English Bible

### **Esau forgives Jacob**

Jacob looked up and saw Esau approaching with four hundred men. Jacob divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two women servants. He put the servants and their children first, Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Contemporary English V.

Later that day Jacob met Esau coming with his four hundred men. So Jacob had his children walk with their mothers. The two servant women, Zilpah and Bilhah, together with their children went first, followed by Leah and her children, then by Rachel and Joseph.

The Living Bible

Then, far in the distance, Jacob saw Esau coming with his 400 men. Jacob now arranged his family into a column, with his two concubines and their children at the head, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

New Berkeley Version

As Jacob looked up, he saw Esau coming, accompanied by 400 men. So he apportioned the children to Leah, to Rachel and to the two maids respectively. The maids and their children, he put in front; Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel with Joseph in the rear.

New Century Version

### **Jacob Shows His Bravery**

Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and with him were four hundred men. So Jacob divided his children among Leah, Rachel, and the two slave girls. Jacob put the slave girls with their children first, then Leah and her children behind them, and Rachel and Joseph last.

New Life Version

Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two women who served him. He put the women who served him and their children in front, and Leah and her children behind them, and Rachel and Joseph behind them.

New Living Translation

### **Jacob and Esau Make Peace**

Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and his two servant wives. He put the servant wives

<sup>44</sup> From <https://www.casualenglishbible.com/>

and their children at the front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Unlocked Dynamic Bible

Then Jacob joined the rest of his family. Later that day Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and there were four hundred men with him. Jacob was worried because of that, so he separated the children. He put Leah's children with Leah, Rachel's children with Rachel, and the two female slaves' children with their mothers. He put the two female slaves and their children in front. He put Leah and her children next. He put Rachel and Joseph at the rear.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

Well, when Jacob looked up, {Look!} he saw his brother Esau coming with four hundred men. So Jacob divided the children between Leah, Rachel, and the two female servants. Then he put the two female servants and their children out in front, followed by Leah and her children, then Rachel, and [finally, himself] at the rear.

Berean Study Bible

Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming toward him with four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph at the rear.

International Standard V

#### **Jacob Meets Esau**

When Jacob looked off in the distance, there was Esau coming toward him, accompanied by 400 men! So Jacob divided Leah's children, Rachel, and the children of the two servants into separate groups [The Heb. lacks *into separate groups*]. Then he positioned the women servants and their children first, then Leah and her children next, and then Rachel and Joseph after them.

New Advent (Knox)Bible

And now Jacob looked in front of him, and there was Esau coming towards him, with four hundred men at his back. So he divided up his children into families, Lia's sons and Rachel's and those of the two serving-women. He put these first, with their children, and Lia second with hers; Rachel and Joseph came last of all.

Translation for Translators

#### **Jacob and Esau met peacefully**

Then Jacob *joined the rest of his family*. Later that day Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and there were 400 men with him. *Jacob was worried because of that*, so he separated the children. He put Leah's children with Leah, Rachel's children with Rachel, and the two female slaves' children with their mothers. He put the two female slaves and their children in front. He put Leah and her children next. He put Rachel and Joseph at the rear.

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

Awful Scroll Bible

Jacob was to lift up his eyes and perceive Esau, coming with four hundred men, and he was to divide the children, to Leah, Rachel, and the two maid servants. He placed the maid servants and their children first, and Leah and her children subsequent, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Conservapedia

Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold! Here was Esau coming, with four hundred men at his side. Jacob divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two handmaids [That is, Zilpah and Bilhah.]. He set the handmaids and their children in the front rank, then Leah and her children, and Rachel and Joseph in the last rank.

Ferar-Fenton Bible

#### **Meeting of Esau and Jacob**

Then Jacob raised his eyes and saw that Esau approached, and four hundred men with him ; so he separated the children of Leah and of Rachel, and of the two second wives, and placed the second wives and their children in the front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph behind ;...

God's Truth (Tyndale)	Jacob lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Esau come, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Lea and unto Rahel and unto the two maidens. And he put the maidens and their children foremost, and Lea and her children after, and Rahel and Joseph hindermost.
Lexham English Bible	<b>Jacob Meets Esau and Settles at Shechem</b> And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, Esau [was] coming and four hundred men [were] with him. And he divided the children among Leah and among Rachel, and among the two of his female servants. And he put the female slaves and their children first, then Leah and her children next, then Rachel with Joseph last.
H. C. Leupold	<b>9. Reconciliation with Esau; Settlement in Canaan (33:1-20)</b> And Jacob raised his eyes, and looked, and there was Esau coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two handmaidens. And he put the handmaidens and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.
Tree of Life Version	<b>Jacob Meets Esau</b> Then Jacob glanced up and saw, behold, there was Esau coming—and 400 men with him. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children first, then Leah and her children behind them, then Rachel and Joseph behind them.
Unlocked Literal Bible	Jacob looked up and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. Jacob divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two female servants. Then he put the female servants and their children in front, followed by Leah and her children, and followed by Rachel and Joseph last of all.
Urim-Thummim Version	And Jacob raised his eyes and looking, saw Esau coming, and with him 400 men. So he separated the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two women slaves. Then he put the women slaves and their children first, and Leah and her children second, and Rachel and Joseph last.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob lifted his eyes, and he say that here esau is coming, and with him four-hundred men; and he divided the children between Leah and Rachel, and two the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children ahead, and Leah and her children in the rear, and Rachel and Joseph last.

### Catholic Bibles:

New American Bible (2011) <sup>45</sup>	<i>Jacob and Esau Meet.</i> [33:1–20] The truly frightening confrontation seems to have already occurred in Jacob's meeting the divine stranger in the previous chapter. In contrast, this meeting brings reconciliation. Esau, impulsive but largehearted, kisses the cunning Jacob and calls him brother (v. 9). Jacob in return asks Esau to accept his blessing (berakah, translated "gift," v. 11), giving back at least symbolically what he had taken many years before and responding to Esau's erstwhile complaint ("he has taken away my blessing," 27:36). Verses 12–17 show that the reconciliation is not total and, further, that Jacob does not intend to share the ancestral land with his brother. Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and with him four hundred men. So he divided his children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants, putting the maidservants and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.
Revised English Bible	Jacob looked up and there was Esau coming with four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah and Rachel and the two slave-girls. He put the slave-girls

<sup>45</sup> Also called the revised edition.

and their children in front, Leah with her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov raised his eyes and looked out; and there was 'Esav coming, and four hundred men with him. So Ya'akov divided the children between Le'ah, Rachel and the two slave-girls, putting the slave-girls and their children first, Le'ah and her children second, and Rachel and Yosef last.
exeGesés companion Bible	<b><u>YAAQOV MEETS ESAV</u></b> And Yaaqov lifts his eyes and sees, and behold, Esav comes, with four hundred men: and he halves the children to Leah and to Rachel and to the two maids: and he puts the maids and their children first and Leah and her children after and Rachel and Yoseph behind.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Looking up, Jacob saw Esau coming, accompanied by four hundred men. He divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maids, putting the maids and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.
Kaplan Translation	<i>Jacob Meets Esau</i> Jacob looked up and saw Esau approaching with 400 men. He divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two handmaids. He placed the handmaids and their children in front, Leah and their sons behind them, and Rachel and Joseph to the rear. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, hinei, Esav came, and with him arba me'ot ish (four hundred men). And he divided the yeladim unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two shefachot. And he put the shefachot and their yeladim rishonah, and Leah and her yeladim acharonim, and Rachel and Yosef acharonim.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Ya'aqob <sup>l</sup> lifted his eyes and looked and saw Ęsaw coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children among Lě'ah, and Raḥěl, and the two female servants. And he put the female servants and their children in front, and Lě'ah and her children behind, and Raḥěl and Yosěph last.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	<b>Jacob Shows His Bravery</b> Jacob ·looked up [ <sup>L</sup> raised his eyes] and saw Esau coming, and with him were four hundred men. So Jacob divided his children among Leah, Rachel, and the two slave girls. Jacob put the slave girls with their children first, then Leah and her children behind them, and Rachel and Joseph last [ <sup>C</sup> least favorite to most favorite].
Kretzmann's Commentary	<b>Verses 1-7</b> Jacob's meeting with Esau And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. Jacob had joined his caravan and continued his march. He no longer looked for the approach of Esau with anxious apprehension, but with cheerful expectation. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. The division of the caravan was care fully planned. Jacob "himself, as the head of the family, as its protector and representative, takes the lead; then follow the handmaids with their children; then Leah with hers; and at last, Rachel with Joseph. This inverted order,

by which the most loved came last, is not merely chosen from a careful and wise prudence, but at the same time the free expression of the place which they occupied in his affections. "

NET Bible®

*Jacob Meets Esau*

Jacob looked up [*Heb* "and Jacob lifted up his eyes."] and saw that Esau was coming [Or "and look, Esau was coming."] along with four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two female servants. He put the servants and their children in front, with Leah and her children behind them, and Rachel and Joseph behind them. 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. Some of their notes will be reproduced in the exegesis of the chapter.

The Voice

Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and 400 men were with him. Jacob quickly divided the children among Leah and Rachel and their two servants. He put the female servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all.

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov [*He restrains*] lifted up his eyes and he saw and look, Esav [*Doing*] was coming and with him were four hundred men and he divided the boys upon Le'ah [*Weary*] and upon Rahhel [*Ewe*] and upon the two maids, and he set in place the maids and their boys first and Le'ah [*Weary*] and her boys behind and Rahhel [*Ewe*] and Yoseph [*Adding*] behind,...

Concordant Literal Version

And lifting is Jacob his eyes and seeing, and behold! Esau, his brother, is coming, and with him four hundred men. And dividing is Jacob the children to Leah and to Rachel and to the two maids. And placing is he the maids and their children first, and Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph last.

*Emphasized Bible*

Then Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo! Esau, coming in,—and with him, four hundred men. So he divided the children—unto Leah and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids; and put the handmaids and their children first,—and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph next;...

Modern English Version

**Jacob Meets Esau**

Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children in front, then Leah and her children next, and then Rachel and Joseph last.

New European Version

**Jacob Meets Esau**

Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah, Rachel, and the two handmaids. He put the handmaids and their children in front, Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph at the rear.

New King James Version

**Jacob and Esau Meet**

Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Third Millennium Bible

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau came and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindmost.

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob lifts up his eyes, and looks, and lo, Esau is coming, and with him four hundred men; and he divides the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the

two maid-servants. And he sets the maid-servants and their children first, and Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob looks up and see Esau coming toward him with 400 men. So he divides up the children with their mothers into 3 or 4 separate groups.

Genesis 33:1a			
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
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 BDB #669
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
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>ġay-nah-YIM</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

**Translation:** *Jacob lifted up his eyes...*

You may recall that Jacob has just left Laban and his work with Laban and he took his wives and snuck out of there without telling Laban.

Laban caught up with Jacob (Laban traveled with a few men and Jacob was traveling with wives and children). They sorted everything out. After that, Jesus Christ wrestled with Jacob. Jacob was a hard-headed man, and Jesus Christ needed to make a permanent impression on him. So Jesus knocked him around and gave Jacob a (possibly) permanent injury. He was clearly injured at the end of Genesis 32, although still able to walk, apparently.

Genesis 33:1b			
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
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 imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, 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

## Genesis 33:1b

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, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
An argument could be made that this wâw conjunction plus the demonstrative could be translated <i>and suddenly...</i>			
The NET Bible: <i>By the use of the particle הִנֵּה (hinneh, "look"), the narrator invites the reader to view the scene through Jacob's eyes.</i> <sup>46</sup>			
ʿÊsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
bôw' (אוֹב) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>entering [coming, going, advancing] [in]; those entering [going, coming (in)]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Or this might be...			
bôw' (אוֹב) [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 perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

**Translation:** ...and he looked and he saw [that] Esau is coming;...

Jacob left the land of Canaan because he twice took Esau's birthright from him. The first time, Esau was starving and Jacob had some bean soup made, so Jacob said, "You can have the soup, but I get your birthright." Esau agreed to this, but remained somewhat bitter toward Jacob for a long time after.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The statement "Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold" brings the reader alongside of Jacob, capturing the scene for us, heightening the tension of the narrative, indicating the seriousness and magnitude of the moment.*<sup>47</sup>

However, what was the real problem was, Isaac was going to give his end of life blessing to Esau; and they were going to celebrate this with a meal. Before Esau managed to find and kill some wild game, Jacob showed up in his place, pretending to be him, and stole his blessing. Esau was mad enough at this time to kill Jacob—and he would have killed Jacob, had their father been dead.

Jacob left for another land, but the story was, he would go to his Uncle Laban's to meet a wife. The reason for this cover story was, Rebekah, their mother, was a part of this deception. She could not reveal that she knew about the deception or about the real reason that Jacob was leaving; otherwise, this would have revealed her part in the deception and she would have been estranged from her husband, Isaac. To protect Jacob and to get him out of town, she convinced her husband that Jacob would leave to go find a wife. He has been gone for 20 years.

<sup>46</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 3, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

Now these two brothers come face to face 20 years later, and there are 400 men with Esau.

Benson: *[This is the Esau] Who had said, Genesis 27:41, "I will slay my brother Jacob," and with him four hundred men — A force sufficient for him to do what he had threatened.*<sup>48</sup>

Now, Jacob ought to have some confidence, as he has just wrestled the Lord Jesus Christ. What could Esau do to him?

<b>Esau</b>	
NAME MEANS: "Hairy" (Genesis 25:25)	
BIRTH DATA: Firstborn of Isaac's twin sons.	
OCCUPATION: hunter, herdsman, livestock owner.	
BEST KNOWN FOR:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>forsaking his birthright for a bowl of stew</li> <li>being cheated out of Isaac's end-of-life blessing</li> <li>being the patriarch of the Arab nations (the Edomites)</li> </ul>
<i>The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 56 (footnote) (slightly edited).</i>	

Lifting up one's eyes and seeing is also found in Genesis 18:2 24:63 31:10.

<b>Genesis 33:1c</b>			
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
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<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
'ar <sup>e</sup> ba <sup>c</sup> (עֲבָרָא) [pronounced <i>ahr<sup>e</sup>-BAHG</i> ]	<i>four</i>	masculine singular noun; numeral	Strong's #702 BDB #916
mê'ôwth (מֵאוֹת) [pronounced <i>may-OHTH</i> ]	<i>hundreds</i>	feminine plural noun; numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<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

**Translation:** ...with 400 men.

Esau, like Abraham and Isaac before him, developed quite a successful business and he appears to have 400 employees. Their exact function and what they did is left up to our imagination. However, to Jacob, this is a small formidable army. There is nothing that Jacob can do but take whatever Esau is going to do to him.

Genesis 33:1a-c [Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men.](#)

**Genesis 33:1c: Jacob sees Esau approach with 400 men (various commentators)**

Clarke takes the most logical approach, apart from the men being armed or not—of course they were trained militarily and most of them had weapons.

<sup>48</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1.

## Genesis 33:1c: Jacob sees Esau approach with 400 men (various commentators)

Clarke: *It has been generally supposed that Esau came with an intention to destroy his brother, and for that purpose brought with him four hundred armed men. But, 1. There is no kind of evidence of this pretended hostility. 2. There is no proof that the four hundred men that Esau brought with him were at all armed. 3. But there is every proof that he acted towards his brother Jacob with all openness and candour, and with such a forgetfulness of past injuries as none but a great mind could have been capable of. Why then should the character of this man be perpetually vilified? Here is the secret. With some people, on the most ungrounded assumption, Esau is a reprobate, and the type and figure of all reprobates, and therefore he must be everything that is bad. This serves a system; but, whether true or false in itself, it has neither countenance nor support from the character or conduct of Esau.*<sup>49</sup>

College Press Bible Study: *looked ahead “and behold, Esau was coming,” and one glance was sufficient to show that the brother was accompanied by his contingent of four hundred men.*<sup>50</sup>

Matthew Henry: *Some think that when Esau came out to meet Jacob it was with no bad design, but that he brought his 400 men only for state, that he might pay so much the greater respect to his returning brother. It is certain that Jacob understood the report of his messengers otherwise (Genesis 32:5–6).*

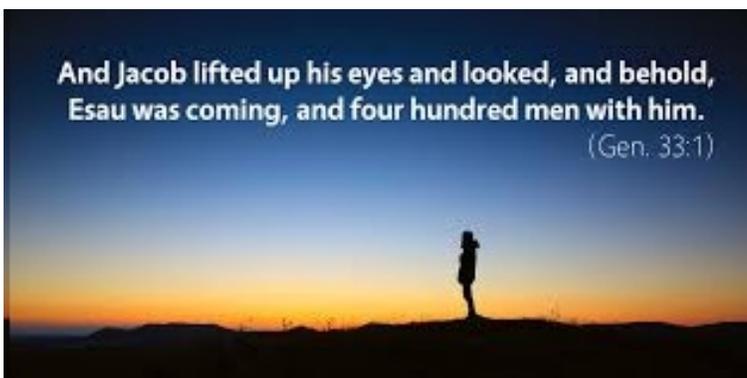
William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The four hundred men was the standard size of a militia in the days of the patriarchs (1 Samuel 22:2; 25:13; 30:10; cf. Genesis 14:14).*<sup>51</sup>

In the previous chapter, Esau traveled with 400 men; that was how he rolled. So, when he heard that Jacob was coming, he did not disperse his people, he did not tell them to cool their heels here or there; he simply went strait on to meet Jacob. Although this could be perceived as threatening (and it was by Jacob), that does not mean that this was Esau's intent. I don't know that Esau had any intent apart from—and we really don't know this for certain—to show off his status.

It is clear in the timing that Esau did not gather up 400 men to see Jacob; they were already with him.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines



**Genesis 33:1** (a graphic); from **Free Daily Bible Study**; accessed April 14, 2019.

There is no doubt that, this large company of men, with Esau in the lead, gave Jacob pause. Twice his fear is spoken of in the previous chapter; but in this chapter, he faces them with his family right there with him, indicating that he is exercising some faith in the Revealed God. Whereas, I do not believe that Jacob's faith here indicates a high level of spiritual maturity, I think it is reasonable to assert that Jacob has more faith today than he did in Genesis 32.

Now, Matthew Henry goes off on a tangent about God's ability to overwhelm a person: *God had the hearts of all men in His hands, and can turn them when and how He pleases, by a secret, silent, but resistless power. He can, of a sudden, convert enemies into friends, as He did two Sauls, one by restraining grace (1 Samuel 26:21, 25), the other by renewing grace (Acts 9:21–22).*<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1.

<sup>50</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>51</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–4.

The problem is not with what God can do. Obviously, God, since He made us, could also change our volition 180° any time He feels like it. The problem is, our volition appears to play an important part in God’s plan; and God continually holds us accountable for the decisions that we make. If God typically reached into our souls and changed positive to negative and vice versa, how does anything have meaning? Could we assign any meaning to positive volition to God’s Word if, whenever God felt like it, He would reach into our souls and just turn it off, for whatever reason? Or, on the other hand, we as believers live a life filled with innumerable sins and God decides, one day, to simply stop us from sinning by changing our souls from green to red—again, what would life mean, and what would our relationship to God mean? How does our positive or negative volition have anything to do with the Angelic Conflict if it is God who turns us off and on? And how could God hold us accountable at any time for any decision, when we could justly complain, “Well, then, You should have just changed our volition for that!”

I believe that there is great Biblical evidence for the coexistence of God’s sovereignty and man’s free will; and that is by God’s decree.

We don’t really know how Jacob feels at this time. In the previous chapter, his fear was expressed twice—particularly when hearing that Esau was coming with 400 men. As I have emphasized, Jacob did not change overnight. He was not a believer filled with fear and apprehension 10 hours ago; but now, he stands before Pharaoh with no reason to fear. I do not believe that Jacob went from 50 to 100 overnight; but wrestling with God gave him enough strength to get most of the way through this meeting. Does he have some fear and apprehension? I suspect that he does. At the same time, Jacob is standing right in front with his family directly behind him. That is a big change from the previous chapter. Is he half-daring God to prove His promises? Perhaps. Is Jacob completely at ease with this meeting? I don’t think I would go that far. I believe that Jacob suffered a nearly paralyzing fear in the previous chapter, but clearly, not as much in this chapter.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to ask, *just how does Jacob’s leg play into this at this point?* I would assume that Jacob is in some amount of pain—although his injury is not even mentioned in this chapter (or any other subsequent chapter, for that matter). Could the pain from walking and this injury combined take Jacob’s mind off his fear? Speculation is all that we have to go on at this point, when evaluating Jacob’s inner thoughts and emotions.

I have no doubts that Jacob has developed some faith in God, given that he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord the night before—but the power and transformation of that meeting is, in my opinion, overestimated by most commentators. This gave Jacob enough faith to get through, essentially, half a day.

Genesis 33:1d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (וַ) [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
châtsâh (חָצַח) [pronounced <i>khaw-TSAW</i> ]	<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
’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
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדָיִם) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>-law-DEEM</i> ]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong’s #3206 BDB #409

## Genesis 33:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<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
BDB gives the following meanings for this verb: 1) <i>upon, on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, beside, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by, on to, towards, to, against (preposition); 1a) upon, on the ground of, on the basis of, on account of, because of, therefore, on behalf of, for the sake of, for, with, in spite of, notwithstanding, concerning, in the matter of, as regards; 1b) above, beyond, over (of excess); 1c) above, over (of elevation or pre-eminence); 1d) upon, to, over to, unto, in addition to, together with, with (of addition); 1e) over (of suspension or extension); 1f) by, adjoining, next, at, over, around (of contiguity or proximity); 1g) down upon, upon, on, from, up upon, up to, towards, over towards, to, against (with verbs of motion); 1h) to (as a dative); 2) because that, because, notwithstanding, although (conjunction).</i>			
Lê'âh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i> ]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
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
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<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
There must be a specific meaning when we find this preposition used twice like this.			
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i> ]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
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
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<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

## Genesis 33:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
sh <sup>e</sup> nêy (שְׁנַי) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> n-Ā]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
This is a different spelling than I have of my alternate spellings.			
shiph <sup>e</sup> châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced shif-KHAW]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046

**Translation:** He divided up the children among [lit., upon] Leah and Rachel and the maids.

Jacob has 11 sons and at least one daughter (if memory serves) and he divides them up the stand with their respective mothers.

Recall from the previous chapter that this reveals a change in Jacob's thinking. Originally, Jacob was going to hide his woman and children in another camp, just in case Esau decided to kill him. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the night before, Jacob placed the camp of his wives and children in somewhat of a secluded spot (on the other side of a river and a stream).

Jacob's attitude seems to be very different today. He has his wives and children and they are going to be there right with him. There are many things that we are not told. Nowhere does it read, *and Jacob had new, profound trust in God, and, therefore, brought his family out of hiding*. That verse cannot be found; however, that appears to be the situation here. Whereas, he was originally intending to hide his family where they might be safe (Genesis 32:7–8, 22–23); as he meets Esau, his wives and children are right here with him—all of them.

What happened in between? Jacob wrestled with God, and he would not let God go unless God blessed him. Jacob emerged with a leg injury, but he also had God's words that he could stand on (Genesis 32:26–29). He was unable to stand on his own, but he could stand on God's blessings and promises.

Genesis 33:1 **Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids.**

Genesis 33:1 **Jacob lifted up his eyes and he looked and he saw [that] Esau is coming; with 400 men. He divided up the children among [lit., upon] Leah and Rachel and the maids.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

In the Hebrew, often when there are a series of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, we are looking at a set of consecutive (or coterminous) actions. Remember in the previous chapter where it appeared that Jacob was going to hide his family in a second camp, out of Esau's sight? That does not appear to be the case now.

What happened in between Jacob making two camps and now Jacob approach Esau with his whole family in tow? Jacob wrestled with God. God renamed Jacob. Jacob has a bad leg injury to remind him of this event. And now, he is approaching Esau differently. Jacob is limping and he appears to have a different mental attitude.

Jacob was concerned about his meeting with Esau. He originally left the Land of Promise because Esau had promised to kill him. He left, essentially taking Esau's blessing with him. Remember, that the Hebrews believed that, when you said something, it meant something. That is, when you made a vow, or gave a blessing or a cursing, this was more than just empty words uttered into the wind. These things all involved God. A vow was taken before God, telling God that there was something that you would or would not do. A blessing indicated that you were, in essence, praying to God to do this or that on behalf of the person you are blessing. Cursing is pretty much the same thing, except to ask for God to curse that person. Because they believed strongly in an interactive God, these things were significant. The very words you spoke were significant, no matter who was around.

As we will observe near the end of Genesis, Jacob will bless his 12 sons prior to his death, and his blessings will be significant and fulfilled.

What is said and done by God's people is significant to the angels who observe us. They see us, they see what we do, they hear what we say; and they see what God does as a result. It is problematic for the words of God's people to just filter out aimlessly into thin air, to be completely ignored by God.

Genesis 33:2a			
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
sîym (שׂים) [pronounced <i>seem</i> ]; also spelled sûwm (שׂום) [pronounced <i>soom</i> ]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
'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
shiph <sup>e</sup> châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i> ]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [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
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדִים) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>-law-DEEM</i> ]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
rî'shônâh (רִשׁוֹנָה) [pronounced <i>ree-show-NAW</i> ]	<i>first [in time, in degree, chief, former [in time], ancestors, former things; foremost; beginning</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #7223 BDB #911

**Translation:** *Jacob [lit., he] put the maids and their children in the forefront;...*

There are some details in the Bible which I am hard-pressed to explain why they are there. Jacob appears to be spreading out his possession and his family as much as possible; and he will be out in front of them all.

I am still considering the order of the mothers and children. After all, Jacob goes ahead of everyone.

Genesis 33:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [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
'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 33:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
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
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדֶיהָ) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
'achârôwn (אֲחֵרֹן) [pronounced ah-kha-ROHN]	<i>coming after, behind, later, following, last; end</i>	masculine plural adjective (or substantive)	Strong's #314 BDB #30

**Translation:** ...with Leah and her children behind [them];...

The second group or second family will be Leah, who had the most sons. Although Jacob ended up with Leah by default, he had many sons by her.

Genesis 33:2c			
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
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
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
Yôwçêph (יוֹסֵף) [pronounced yoh-SAYF]	<i>he adds, he increases; transliterated Joseph</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3130 BDB #415
'achârôwn (אֲחֵרֹן) [pronounced ah-kha-ROHN]	<i>coming after, behind, later, following, last; end</i>	masculine plural adjective (or substantive)	Strong's #314 BDB #30

**Translation:** ...and Rachel and Joseph behind [them].

The only woman that Jacob wanted to marry was Rachel. You may recall that she did not bear any children for Jacob for a long time; but she eventually gave him Joseph.

Genesis 33:2 Jacob [lit., *he*] put the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind [them]; and Rachel and Joseph behind [them]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:1–2 Jacob lifted up his eyes and he looked and he saw [that] Esau is coming; with 400 men. He divided up the children among [lit., upon] Leah and Rachel and the maids. Jacob [lit., he] put the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind [them]; and Rachel and Joseph behind [them]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:1–2 Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids. Jacob arranged the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel and Joseph behind them. (Kukis paraphrase)

**Jacob and His Family Meet Esau** (a graphic); from [La Santa Biblia](#); accessed April 14, 2019. I like this one especially because it shows Rachel and Leah. I do not know who painted this.



Here we have a little faith-rest. Jacob is able to trust God and place his children and his wives along the road right behind him when he is about to meet up with Esau. God has told him that his progeny would be like the sand of the sea so Jacob decides to believe this. When he places his children and wives in front, he was not creating a barrier (recall, he only the previous day, had left them by themselves on the other side of the river) but calling on God to prove that He would fulfill his promises to him.

Note the order of his wives—Jacob has the least emotional connection to the two personal maids, and the most to Rachel and her son—so he places the maids at the very front.

Some claim that Jacob is worried that Esau will still be angry with him and want to harm him; and that somehow, setting up his families in this way gave more protection to Rachel and Joseph, who were in the back.

*Syndein/Thieme: Many of Jacob/Israel's problems have come and will continue to stem from the fact that he showed great partiality toward his wives and his individual children.*<sup>53</sup>

*The NET Bible: This kind of ranking according to favoritism no doubt fed the jealousy over Joseph that later becomes an important element in the narrative. It must have been painful to the family to see that they were expendable.*<sup>54</sup>

The NET Bible is right about the favoritism; but the arrangement of the mothers and children did not mean that the ones in front were expendable and the ones in back were safer. If Jacob truly believed that he and his family were in danger, then why not hide Rachel and Joseph as he had done originally? It should have been clear that, if Esau had been hostile, setting his favorite wife and son in the rear would have only postponed the inevitable by a few seconds.

Interestingly enough, Jacob places his wives and mistresses right behind him. If Jacob is still in fear, then let me suggest that he hopes that Esau will see them, and not want to harm them; and, in addition, not want to harm their husband.

Or, in the alternative, Jacob now has new-found confidence in his own future. I think that this is more likely. Remember, Jacob fought with God, and he is still alive. How can he fear Esau now? If God chose not to kill him—and quite obviously, God could have done that quite easily—then how can Jacob fear Esau?

Now, to be clear, I don't think that Jacob has gone from 50 to 100 in the spiritual life overnight. I think that he has enough faith to get him through til about midmorning of this day.

Genesis 33:1–2 *Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids. Jacob arranged the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel and Joseph behind them.*

What seems to be pretty clear is, the wife with the greatest approbation was placed in the rear; the two non-wives at the very front. The idea that those in back would somehow have a better chance to escape—that is absurd to me.

### **Genesis 33:2: Jacob placed his family to allow those in back to escape (discussion)**

Whedon points out what is undeniable: *Jacob evidently arranged his companies according to his special affection for each; for the handmaids least, for Rachel most.*<sup>55</sup>

*The Cambridge Bible: Jacob disposes of his household, placing in the rear those who were most dear to him, so that in the event of an attack by Esau they might have the best chance of escape.*<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> From [http://syndein.com/Genesis\\_33.html](http://syndein.com/Genesis_33.html) accessed November 3, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 3, 2016.

<sup>55</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 33:2.

<sup>56</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:1.

## Genesis 33:2: Jacob placed his family to allow those in back to escape (discussion)

College Press Bible Study: *Jacob then took certain other precautionary measures. He arranged his wives and his children "in climactic order" so that the most beloved came last and hence were in the proper position to be spared if none else, were. The maids with their children were in the front, Leah with hers were in the middle, and Rachel with Joseph were at the rear of the procession. Jacob then put himself in the forefront, thus to be first in the way of danger should any develop.*<sup>57</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Jacob having crossed the ford and ranged his wives and children in order - the dearest last, that they might be the least exposed to danger - awaited the expected interview.*<sup>58</sup>

The Geneva Bible: *[Jacob thought] if the one part were assailed, the other might escape.*<sup>59</sup>

NIV Study Bible: *Jacob wanted to keep his favorite wife and child farthest away from potential harm.*<sup>60</sup>

Stephen Armstrong takes this point of view: *As they walked toward an uncertain encounter with Jacob's estranged brother, they look around and take note of where Jacob has positioned everyone. The handmaids see that they will be first to die should a battle ensue. Leah can see that she is clearly less valuable to Jacob than Rachel. And likewise, her children count for less.*<sup>61</sup>

Clarke: *Was Jacob still apprehensive of danger, and put those foremost whom he least esteemed, that if the foremost met with any evil, those who were behind might escape on their swift beasts? Genesis 32:7, Genesis 32:8. Or did he intend to keep his choicest treasure to the last, and exhibit his beautiful Rachel and favourite Joseph after Esau had seen all the rest, in order to make the deeper impression on his mind?*<sup>62</sup>

Jacob with a very small force stands before Esau with his wives and children. If Esau was vengeful and aggressive, there would have been no way on earth for Jacob and any of his family to escape. To suggest such a thing completely misses out on what happened in the previous chapter.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr. gives the more reasonable explanation: *So we see that Jacob arranged his family in ascending order of their social status. In the case of Rachel and Leah, they are arranged based upon Jacob's affections. Jacob doesn't put Rachel and Joseph at the rear so as to give them maximum protection from Esau since he doesn't fear Esau attacking him because the Lord reassured him at Peniel that he would be victorious. Rather, Jacob puts Rachel and Joseph at the rear because they were the most precious to him and he wants Esau to meet them last because of this. Unfortunately, the family of Jacob is still plagued by favoritism.*<sup>63</sup>

It should be clear to anyone that, if Esau meant to do harm to Jacob, he could easily inflict it upon everyone in his family; and no one would escape. The fact that Jacob is there with his family in tow indicates that he has some faith in God at this point.

When Jesus Christ wrestled with Jacob, the effect on Jacob may not have been long-lasting, but it would last long enough to get Jacob through this meeting without him falling apart or inoperative due to fear.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

This, of course, leaves us with the question, *why did Jacob put his family in this particular order?* First of all, we are not told, suggesting to us that it is unimportant. Secondly, we reject the idea that Jacob was somehow insuring

<sup>57</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1.

<sup>59</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 33:1.

<sup>60</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 56 (footnote).

<sup>61</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>62</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:2.

<sup>63</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

the safety of his favorite wife followed by the safety of his second favorite wife. That strikes me as absurd—but many good commentators take that position.

This is speculation, of course, but I see this as Jacob simply saving the best for last. He is proudest of Rachel and he will introduce her last. We do the same thing with music acts all of the time. The opening act is usually not as good as the mainliner; and the songs of the mainliner are arranged so that the final songs and encore just takes the house down. Obviously, this opinion, although it is most likely correct, really provides us with little spiritual enrichment (which is why God the Holy Spirit left it out).

Genesis 33:1–2 Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids. Jacob arranged the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel and Joseph behind them.

Many translations began a new paragraph with v. 4.

**And he went over to their faces. And so he bows himself ground-ward seven times as far as his coming as far as his brother. And so runs Esau and he embraces him and so he falls upon his necks and so he kisses him and so they weep.**

Genesis  
33:3–4

**Jacob [lit., he] then went over before them. He bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet him and he embraced him, and he fell upon his neck and he kissed him and they [both] wept.**

**Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And he went over to their faces. And so he bows himself ground-ward seven times as far as his coming as far as his brother. And so runs Esau and he embraces him and so he falls upon his necks and so he kisses him and so they weep.
Targum (Onkelos)	And he passed over before them, and bowed to the earth seven times, until he came nigh to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him [Or, "to prevent him."], and embraced him, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him; and they wept.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he himself went over before them, <u>praying and asking mercy before the Lord</u> ; and he bowed upon the earth seven times, until he met with his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him, and they wept. <u>Esau wept on account of the pain of his teeth which were shaken; but Jakob wept because of the pain of his neck.</u> [JERUSALEM. And Esau ran to meet him, and hugged him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. <u>Esau wept for the crushing of his teeth, and Jakob wept for the tenderness of his neck</u> ].
Revised Douay-Rheims	And he went forward and bowed down with his face to the ground seven times until <u>his brother came near</u> . Then Esau ran to meet his brother, and embraced him: and clasping him fast about the neck, and kissing him, wept.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He himself passed over in front of them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his neck, kissed him, and they wept..
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he himself went on before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept.

Septuagint (Greek) But he advanced himself before them, and did reverence to the ground seven times, until he drew near to his brother. And Esau ran on to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they both wept.

Significant differences: There is additional text in two of the targumim, some of that text being very weird (and it will be discussed later in the exegesis). Esau draws near to Jacob in the Latin, but vice versa everywhere else.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And he himself, going before them, went down on his face to the earth seven times till he came near his brother. Then Esau came running up to him, and folding him in his arms, gave him a kiss: and the two of them were overcome with weeping.

Easy English Jacob went in front of the group. He bowed down to the ground. He did this 7 times as he came close to his brother Esau. But Esau ran to meet Jacob. And he hugged him. He hugged Jacob's neck. And Esau kissed him. And they both wept.

Easy-to-Read Version Jacob himself went out before them. While he was walking toward his brother Esau, he bowed down to the ground seven times. When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. He put his arms around Jacob, hugged his neck, and kissed him. Then they both cried.

God's Word™ He went on ahead of them and bowed seven times with his face touching the ground as he came near his brother. Then Esau ran to meet Jacob. Esau hugged him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. They both cried.

International Children's B. Jacob himself went out in front of them. He bowed down flat on the ground seven times as he was walking toward his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob. Esau put his arms around him and hugged him. Then Esau kissed him, and they both cried.

The Message He led the way and, as he approached his brother, bowed seven times, honoring his brother. But Esau ran up and embraced him, held him tight and kissed him. And they both wept.

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

Casual English Bible Jacob alone walked out in front of them all. As he approached his brother he bowed seven times along the way. Esau ran right into Jacob's arms with a bear hug. Esau threw his arms around Jacob's neck and kissed him. They both cried.

Contemporary English V. Jacob himself walked in front of them all, bowing to the ground seven times as he came near his brother. But Esau ran toward Jacob and hugged and kissed him. Then the two brothers started crying.

The Living Bible Then Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother he bowed low seven times before him. And then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him affectionately and kissed him; and both of them were in tears!

New Berkeley Version He then advanced to the front and bowed to the ground seven times until he came close to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, threw his arms around him, fell on his neck and kissed him; then they both wept.

New Century Version Jacob himself went out in front of them and bowed down flat on the ground seven times as he was walking toward his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and put his arms around him and hugged him. Then Esau kissed him, and they both cried.

Unlocked Dynamic Bible He himself went ahead of them all, and as he continued to approach his older brother, he prostrated himself with his face on the ground seven times. But Esau

ran to Jacob. He hugged him, put his arms around his neck, and kissed him on the cheek. And they both cried.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But then he walked ahead of them all and bowed to the ground seven times, as he got closer to his brother. Then Esau ran up to meet him, hugged him, fell around his neck and kissed him... and they both started crying.
Berean Study Bible	But Jacob himself went on ahead and bowed to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. Esau, however, ran to him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept.
International Standard V	Then he went out to meet Esau [The Heb. lacks <i>went out to meet Esau</i> ], passing in front of all of them, and bowed low to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him. Then he fell on his neck and kissed him. And they wept.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	He himself, as he came up, prostrated himself seven times before his brother reached him. Seeing this, Esau ran to meet his brother, embraced him, clung to his neck and kissed him, in tears.
Translation for Translators	He himself went ahead of them all, and as he continued to approach his older brother, he prostrated himself with his face on the ground seven times. 4 But Esau ran to Jacob. He hugged him, put his arms around his neck, and kissed him on the cheek. And they both cried.

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

Awful Scroll Bible	He is to have passed over being turned before him, and was to bow down on the solid grounds seven times, even is he to draw near to his brother. Esau was to run to encounter him, and was to embrace him, and was to fall on his neck, and was to kiss him, even was he to weep.
Conservapedia	He then passed in front of them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came close to his brother. Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and both men were weeping.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...but he passed to the front of them and bowed to the earth seven times whilst approaching to his brother. But Esau rushed forwards, and called to, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and wept.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he went before them and fell on the ground seven times, until he came unto his brother. Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.
H. C. Leupold	But he himself went on ahead of them, and bowed low seven times until he had come close to Esau. And Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.
Urim-Thummim Version	And he passed through them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, and drew near to his brother. Then Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and dropped his arms around his neck, embracing him and they shed tear.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he passed before them, and they bowed deep down seven times, until his approach to his brother. And Esau ran toward him and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they cried.

### Catholic Bibles:

The Heritage Bible	And he crossed over before their face, and prostrated himself to the earth seven times until he drew near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and they wept.
New American Bible (2002)	He himself went on ahead of them, bowing to the ground seven times, until he reached his brother. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, and flinging himself on his neck, kissed him as he wept.
New Jerusalem Bible	He himself went ahead of them and bowed to the ground seven times, until he reached his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, took him in his arms, threw himself on his neck and wept as he kissed him.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then he himself passed on ahead of them and prostrated himself on the ground seven times before approaching his brother. 'Esav ran to meet him, hugged him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him; and they wept.
exeGeseges companion Bible	And he passes over at their face and prostrates to the earth seven times, until he comes near his brother. And Esav runs to meet him and embraces him and falls on his neck and kisses him: and they weep:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	He himself went on ahead and bowed low to the ground seven times until he was near his brother. Esau ran to greet him. He embraced him and, falling on his neck, he kissed him; and they wept.
Kaplan Translation	[Jacob] then went ahead of them, and he prostrated himself seven times as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet them. He hugged [Jacob], and throwing himself on his shoulders [A sign of emotion, see Genesis 45:14, 15. Literally, 'falling on his neck,' but 'neck' here denotes the shoulders (Sh'muel ben Chofni Gaon on Genesis 45:14).], kissed him. They [both] wept.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground sheva pe'amim, until he came near to achiv (his brother). And Esav ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his tzavar (neck), and kissed him; and they wept.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Jacob crossed over [the stream] ahead of them and bowed himself to the ground seven times [bowing and moving forward each time], until he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and hugged his neck and kissed him, and they wept [for joy].
The Expanded Bible	Jacob himself ·went out [passed] in front of them and bowed down flat on the ground seven times ·as he was walking toward [or until he came near] his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and ·put his arms around [hugged] him and ·hugged him [fell on his neck]. Then Esau kissed him, and they both cried.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, in the Oriental manner, in which men stoop over forward until their forehead practically touches the ground, a sign of the deepest reverence, until he came near to his brother. The six fold repetition of the deep obeisance was a form of humiliation which indicated that he wanted to atone fully for any offense against his brother Esau, that he was willing to show him the utmost reverence. <b>And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept.</b> If Esau had still been cherishing his old grudge when he left his home, this was now fully overcome and removed by the humility of his brother. His brotherly feeling took hold of him at this point, and in a spontaneous outburst of affection he embraced

him and kissed him, whereupon these two gray headed men, separated for a score of years, are overcome with joy and burst into weeping. In this moment Esau became a different man, who willingly bowed himself under the will of the Lord and showed truly noble traits of character.

NET Bible®

But Jacob [*Heb* “and he”; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] himself went on ahead of them, and he bowed toward the ground seven times as he approached [*Heb* “until his drawing near unto his brother.”] his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, hugged his neck, and kissed him. Then they both wept.

The Voice

He himself went on ahead of them, and he bowed to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet him. He embraced Jacob, kissed his neck, and they both cried. Esau looked up and saw the women and children.

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

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.

...and he crossed over to their face and bent himself down unto the land seven times until drawing near him, until his brother, and Esau <sup>[Doing]</sup> ran to meet him and he embraced him and he fell upon the back of his neck and he kissed him and they wept,...

Concordant Literal Version

And he passes before them and is prostrating himself to the earth seven times till he is close to his brother. And running is Esau to meet him. And embracing him is he, and falling on his neck and kissing him, and they are weeping.

Emphasized Bible

...but he himself, passed over before them, and bowed himself to the earth seven times, until he had come near unto his brother. Then ran Esau to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck,—and they wept.

NASB

But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Young’s Updated LT

And he himself passed over before them, and bowes himself to the earth seven times, until his drawing nigh unto his brother, and Esau runs to meet him, and embraces him, and falls on his neck, and kisses him, and they weep.

**The gist of this passage:**

Jacob and Esau meet and they embrace and weep.

Genesis 33:3a			
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
hûw’ (אוה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<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	Strong’s #1931 BDB #214
‘âbar (אָבַר) [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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ’]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510

### Genesis 33:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
pānîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *before them, before their faces, in their presence, in their sight, in front of them.*

**Translation:** Jacob [lit., he] then went over before them.

With all of his family organized and arranged, Jacob went out in front of them. Many have assumed that, if there is trouble, Jacob might be able to negotiate to save their lives, and those in the back were those nearest and dearest to him. However, what I believe is far more likely is, Jacob now has enough confidence in God to meet his brother now. Jacob is not a spiritual giant at this point, nor did he advance immeasurably due to his wrestling with God the night before—but he is clearly more confident in God at this point.

Genesis 33:3 Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau.

#### Genesis 33:3a: Is this a brand new totally improved Jacob? (A discussion)

One of the biggest misinterpretations that I observed commentators make in the previous chapter is, Jacob wrestles the Angel of God at the end of Genesis 32, and then he emerges from this match a mature believer. It is undeniable that Jacob shows some improvement in this chapter—but that improvement cannot be considered spiritual maturity.

Dr. Thomas Constable: *His going ahead of them to meet Esau shows the new Israel overcoming the fear that had formerly dominated the old Jacob. His plan does not seem to me to reflect lack of trust in God as much as carefulness and personal responsibility.*<sup>64</sup>

I think Jacob's new attitude may be described as one of less fear and more faith. He may still have some reticence and concern at this point, but this really comes down to, *do I trust God, Who led me safely back here, or do I trust my fears?* Jacob may not be bold and fearless at this point, but he has allowed his trust in God to tip the scales against his fears.

Constable, I believe, takes this too far, where he writes: *This attitude is evidence of a basic change in Jacob's approach to life... Whereas he had previously been dishonest and devious, now he was honest and forthright about his intentions (Genesis 33:10).*<sup>65</sup>

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Jacob has gone through a lot of spiritual growth during the last twenty years, but not finally at Penial he finally realizes that he truly needs to rely upon God and the fact that God was going to provide for him. He is truly a different person after that. This is not when Jacob gets saved, that has already happened. This is where he reaches a level of spiritual adulthood, of spiritual maturity, because he comes to truly understand grace and to trust God. But even though we reach maturity there are still failures and flaws from our sin nature that are going to continue to pester us.*<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

<sup>65</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

<sup>66</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

### Genesis 33:3a: Is this a brand new totally improved Jacob? (A discussion)

Dean's comments are more measured, but even he places Jacob at a spiritual adulthood or spiritual maturity; and I think that is just going too far. Throughout most of Jacob's life, he is going to come across as a very flawed man. He will do things that will make us cringe.

Now, is Jacob in a better place than he was 20 years previous? There is no doubt about that. But is he spiritually mature? No way.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that Jacob passed ahead of his wives and children and put himself ahead of them to meet Esau demonstrated that he had no fear of his twin brother but was a demonstration of his faith, his confident assurance that God has given him the victory and reconciliation with Esau.*

Wenstrom: *Therefore, it is clear that Jacob did not fear or mistrust Esau prior to meeting him or even after making contact with him since Jacob was operating in faith, resting in the promise of God to protect him and his family. If he was living in unbelief, he would have never have initiated contact with Esau.*<sup>67</sup>

It is a mistake to think that Jacob's *experience* of wrestling with the Angel of God has changed him completely. If this were the case, why doesn't every believer demand God to come upon him and wrestle him into complete and perfect submission?

This wrestling match will get Jacob through most of this meeting, but do not expect, in future chapters, to see a completely new and improved Jacob. The very fact that the Bible goes back and forth between the use of the names *Jacob* and *Israel* ought to be proof enough that Jacob did not change overnight (after receiving the name *Abraham*, he never used the name *Abram* again).

We advance spiritually because we learn principles of Bible doctrine and then we believe those principles. We reach spiritual maturity when spiritual principles dominate our thinking and guide our actions far more than human viewpoint and the desires of our sin nature.

Jacob is clearly knowledgeable of his past and his future; but it is just as clear that his faith waivers—particularly in the previous chapter where twice we hear that he was afraid. In this chapter, he may have some fear, but it seems to be outweighed by his confidence in God. Apparently, there was some additional confidence gained by his struggle with the Angel of God in the previous chapter (which is the night before).

I have had two immature believers, after having **rebound** explained to them, ask me point blank, "So, this means I name my sins to God every 10 seconds?" And the answer is, *yes, that is exactly how rebound works.* This question suggests a momentary insight into one's own sinful life.

What might shock these young believers even more is, at some point in time, they may find themselves naming their sins to God every hour or every few hours or even just once or twice a day.

Although I don't believe that Jacob had full and complete trust in Esau, I believe that his fears subsided considerably when Esau warmly greets him.

The biggest problems that commentators have is, they see Jacob as having gone through a life-changing experience and that his wrestling match with God suddenly catapults him into spiritual maturity. This is not the case, but once a commentator takes this initial point of view, it colors all that Jacob does afterwards. In fact, these same commentators are left scrambling for an explanation when Jacob does some things later in this chapter (for instance, he apparently lies to Esau). As we study about the things that Jacob does after this, the commentators who have the most difficulty with the material are those who claim that Jacob was spiritually transformed after an evening of wrestling.

<sup>67</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

## Genesis 33:3a: Is this a brand new totally improved Jacob? (A discussion)

Also, what makes this and the previous chapter difficult to interpret is, we do not have a side-by-side commentary about Jacob, his thinking, his right ideas and his wrong ideas. A commentator and a teacher are going to inevitably make a wrong call on interpreting a difficult passage; and that wrong call often colors other related subsequent situations. A commentator, when they get something wrong and they find that it throws off their game in later passages, needs to go back, correct their thinking, so that their subsequent comments are accurate. A pastor-teacher needs to be just a nimble.

One of the things which informs us that Jacob is still a long ways from spiritual maturity is his name. God renamed Abraham, and that was his name from thereon in. God renames Jacob, and sometimes we will call him *Jacob* and sometimes we will call him *Israel*.

You may remember how Jacob held onto the Angel of God, demanding just that last bit of blessing. Jacob, prior to this wrestling match, already had all of God's blessing. He simply needed to believe it and claim it.

God's wrestling match is going to get Jacob past his meeting with Esau, but not much past that.

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Dr. John Gill writes: *[By this, Jacob was expressing] cheerfulness and courage, and...he was now not distressed and dejected, as he had been before.*<sup>68</sup>

### Genesis 33:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וַ) [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
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAW</i> ]	<i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005
sheba <sup>c</sup> (שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>she<sup>b</sup>-VAHG</i> ]	<i>seven</i>	numeral masculine construct	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
p <sup>ec</sup> âmîym (פְּעָמַיִם) [pronounced <i>peh-ġaw-MEEM</i> ]	<i>times, beats, feet, occurrences, steps; the connotation is the passage of time</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6471 BDB #821
'ad (עַד) [pronounced <i>ġahd</i> ]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5066 BDB #620

The NET Bible: *The construction uses the preposition with the infinitive construct to express a temporal clause.*<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1.

<sup>69</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 3, 2016.

### Genesis 33:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'âch (אח) [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

**Translation:** He bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

As Jacob moved toward his brother Esau, he bowed himself to the ground before him, showing respect towards him (something that Jacob apparently had not done before).

Recall that Jacob was a chiseler and he cheated Esau out of his birthright and final blessing. So he probably thought that he was smarter than Esau; and therefore, better. Often more intelligent people think that they are better than people who are not as smart as they are.

Jacob had done his brother wrong at least twice (two times which were significant) and it had been twenty years since they had seen one another. Esau could have allowed this situation cause ill will to fester for all these years or he could have taken the high road, which he did. Jacob never did have any dislike or animosity toward Esau that we know of; he was just a person that he chose to use and manipulate (let's say that it was more of a lack of respect). It has been only over the past few years where Jacob has exhibited some spiritual growth to where he began to look upon his brother as a person, and therefore with some measure of respect. Of course, when he heard that Esau was coming with 400 men, that became a very healthy respect.

Jacob sets up his wives and mistresses and children so that they can be seen, but he goes ahead of them, bowing himself before his brother. Before, it appeared that he would gather them into their own camp and hide them, just in case he is attacked and killed.

Genesis 33:3 *Jacob [lit., he] then went over before them. He bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:3 *Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau.*

#### Genesis 33:3: Contrasting the twin brothers (a discussion)

Bowing before Esau indicates subservience. Jacob was no longer trying to elevate himself over Esau; he was placing himself under Esau. He had actually developed a little grace orientation.

*SIBG: This seems to mean that Jacob, on approaching his brother, stopped at intervals and bowed, and then advanced and bowed again, until the seventh bow brought him near to his brother. This was a mark of profound respect, nor need we suppose there was any simulation of humility in it, for it was, and is, customary for elder brothers to be treated by the younger with great respect in the East.<sup>70</sup>*

*Matthew Henry: Observe what a different figure these two brothers made. Esau is attended with a guard of 400 men, and looks big; Jacob is followed by a cumbersome train of women and children that are his care, and he looks tender and solicitous for their safety; and yet Jacob had the birthright, and was to have the dominion.<sup>71</sup>*

Millions upon millions of people know today that they have been descended from Jacob (Israel). How many know that Esau was their patriarch?

<sup>70</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>71</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–4.

### Genesis 33:3: Contrasting the twin brothers (a discussion)

Now, do not become confused at this point. It is not that Jacob is the better man, but he has better availed himself of the grace of God, despite his many shortcomings.

Matthew Henry adds: *A humble submissive carriage goes a great way towards the turning away of wrath. Many preserve themselves by humbling themselves: the bullet flies over him that stoops.*<sup>72</sup>

Does it not appear that Esau is the most relaxed of the brothers?

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Genesis 33:1–3 Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men. Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids. Jacob arranged the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel and Joseph behind them. Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau.

Genesis 33:3 Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau.

### Genesis 33:3a-b: Jacob's obsessive bowing (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob prostrates himself before his brother, in token of complete subservience. Not content with one prostration, he bows seven times to the ground, with which has aptly been compared a letter from a Canaanite king to the king of Egypt in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets: "At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times do I fall."*<sup>73</sup>

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob bowed, advanced a few steps, and bowed again, until seven obeisances were made. Such tokens of respect to the number of seven were the customary homage tendered to kings according to the el-Amarna tablets. Jacob indicates only his deep respect and courtesy toward his brother. Jacob's deceit in the matter of the blessing had made an unceremonious fraternal greeting impossible. Yet Jacob does not indicate Esau to be ruler over him, but he does strongly indicate his willingness to show Esau all due respect and consideration.*<sup>74</sup>

Chuck Smith: *Now according to the Tel Amarna Tablets, it is proper when greeting a king to bow to the earth seven times in approaching him. So Jacob was approaching his brother Esau and greeting Esau as a king, which indeed Esau was. He had become the ruler and the king, so to speak, over the area of Mount Seir, the area known as Edom. And so he is giving honor to his brother's position.*<sup>75</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *The manner of doing this is by looking towards a superior and bowing with the upper part of the body brought parallel to the ground, then advancing a few steps and bowing again, and repeating his obeisance till, at the seventh time, the suppliant stands in the immediate presence of his superior. The members of his family did the same. This was a token of profound respect, and, though very marked, it would appear natural; for Esau being the elder brother, was, according to the custom of the East, entitled to respectful treatment from his younger brother.*<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–4.

<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 33:3.

<sup>74</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019. Leupold adds: *The words from the el-Amarna tablets referred to above run thus: "At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times do I fall." The expression is found on these tablets more than fifty times.*

<sup>75</sup> Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–20.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:3.

### Genesis 33:3a-b: Jacob's obsessive bowing (various commentators)

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Jacob] went in front, and met Esau with sevenfold obeisance. וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה יַעֲקֹב אֶת עֵשָׂו שִׁבְעָה מַעֲבָדִים does not denote complete prostration, like מִיֶּפֶא הַצָּרָא in Genesis 19:1, but a deep Oriental bow, in which the head approaches the ground, but does not touch it. By this [Jacob] manifested [great respect for Esau].<sup>77</sup>*

Lange: *[Jacob] bowed himself seven times with the low inclination of the head [the low oriental bow, in which one bends the head nearly to the ground without touching it. Keil.—A. G.]. But even this courtesy far excels the usual degree in oriental greetings, and finds its explanation in the number seven. The bowing itself expresses the recognition of an external princely prerogative, from which Esau believed that he had robbed him; the sevenfold utterance of this recognition stamps it with the... seal of the certainty which belongs to the covenant. Thus Jacob atones for his offence against Esau. The manifestation of this courtesy is at the same time.<sup>78</sup>*

I think that Lange reads too much into this. I think that Jacob is just being excessively polite and respectful.

NIV Study Bible: *[This was a] sign of total submission, documented also in the texts found at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt and dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C..<sup>79</sup>*

The Open Bible: *Jacob bowed himself, either in full prostration or upon his knees with hands and face on the ground. Such sevenfold bowing of minor city princes before Pharaoh is documented from Egypt.<sup>80</sup>*

Dr. Bob Utley: *This was a gesture of submission (i.e., El Amarna Letters, 14th century B.C.).<sup>81</sup>*

The Geneva Bible: *By this gesture he partly revered his brother and partly prayed to God to appease Esau's wrath.<sup>82</sup>*

The Geneva Bible pulls the second part of their comment out of the sky.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *This term denotes touching the nose and forehead to the ground in a prostrate position as a symbol of submission before a superior. In the days of the patriarchs bowing to the ground "seven times" is a well attested practice of a vassal to his lord in ancient court protocol. Therefore, Jacob greets Esau as a vassal greets a patron with the ceremony of a royal court.*

Whether or not this revealed Jacob's humility is another thing to Wenstrom.

Wenstrom: *However, we must not think this act of humility on the part of Jacob was intended as an acknowledgement of servility on his part, but simply as a token of respect and recognition of Esau as ruler of the region.<sup>83</sup>*

Whedon: *Not as in Gen.19:1, "with the face to the ground," which denotes complete prostration, but groundward, so that though the face does not touch the ground, it is brought low towards it.<sup>84</sup>*

Hard to say if Jacob overdid it here, but he certainly owed his twin brother some sort of apology. His bowing before his brother, his many references to him as *my lord*, and Jacob's many references to himself as *your servant* certainly drives home Jacob's attempt at humility.

<sup>77</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:1–4 (edited).

<sup>78</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 32:3–33:16 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>79</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 56 (footnote).

<sup>80</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 50 (footnote).

<sup>81</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:1–3.

<sup>82</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 33:3.

<sup>83</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

<sup>84</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 33:3.

One might contrast Jacob's approach to his brother with his wrestling match with the Angel of God. Where is Jacob's humility when encountering God?

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines



**Jacob Seeking Forgiveness of Esau** (a painting by Jan Victoors—1652); from [Pixels](#); accessed April 14, 2019. Apparently, you can get this as wall art, on a beach towel, on a coffee mug or even on a tee-shirt from Pixels.

It is my opinion that Esau was not wavering between, *should I kill Jacob or let him live?* I believe that there is every indication that Esau had missed his brother, has placed everything in the past, and that he looks forward to their meeting. If anything, Esau may have seen Jacob's gift and obsessive bowing as overdoing it.

Keil and Delitzsch continue: *At the sight*

*of Jacob, Esau was carried away by the natural feelings of brotherly affection, and running up to him, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they both wept.*<sup>85</sup>

Later, Keil and Delitzsch say, *if there was some malice still in Esau's heart;* but I don't see any indication of that at any point in this chapter.

**The reconciliation of Jacob and Esau** (oil on copper by Abraham Willemsens—1605–1672); from [Wikimedia](#); accessed April 14, 2019.



There are a number of things which catch my eye here in this painting—the horses upon which Esau's men are riding; the camels upon which Jacob's people are riding.

Esau's men look like Roman soldiers (which is highly unlikely). However, each artist takes into account how he reads the passage and how he sees it in his own mind's eye.

The woman pictured with the child is no doubt Rachel with baby Joseph.

<sup>85</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:1–4 (slightly edited).

Interestingly enough, there is quite a similar painting done by Paul Rubens:

**Reconciliation of Jacob and Esau** (by Peter Paul Rubens, 1624); from [FLUMC](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

There is no doubt that Abraham Willemsens based his own painting on Rubens'. They are just too similar to see it in any other way. Although it makes sense that ancient artists must have done this, this is the first time that I have come across it.

[Wikipedia](#) informs us that *It was the model for a painting by Abraham Willemsen.*



**The Meeting of Jacob and Esau** (by Gerrit Claesz Bleaker 1592–1656); from [The Times of Israel](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

This particular meeting apparently inspired a number of artists.

**Pray for the Peace of Israel** (a graphic); from [Free Republic](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

The picture is of Jacob (the father of the Hebrew people) and Esau (the father of many Arab groups), embracing one another despite long-standing problems between the two men.

I checked on several pages, but could not find the origin of this graphic. If this is a famous painting or famous artist, I am unaware.

I hesitated about the title, which this picture is given on Free Republic. However, is this not appropriate, as Jacob is the father of all Israel and Esau is the progenitor of many Arab peoples.

Just so there is no misunderstanding, I do not believe that there is any expectation of peace in the middle east, apart from one of two things: (1) a softening of the hearts of Arabs, which I think is just not going to happen (individual hearts aside). Or (2) the continued strong military in Israel enforcing peace in their region. This latter approach appears to be Israel's thinking in this era, and that thinking has maintained peace in that region, despite all of the hatred found on all sides of Israel.



Peace between the people of Israel and the people of Esau is not an impossibility due to long-standing generational hatred; but it is impossible because of the hatred of *this current generation of Arabs*. Every generation decides for itself what they will do, and it is clear that this generation of Arabs has made their decision.

We can never blame such hostility on actions in the past or on previous generations. Each generation comes along and they make their own decision.

This is why it is possible for the United States to have a great partner in Japan, politically and economically (I write this in 2019). Either party could justify perpetual anger and hatred between our two countries; but the current generations do not. That is why there is peace between the United States and Japan; and that is why there are continued hostilities between Israel and the Muslims in Palestine.

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Grace orientation is a more modern designation for the word *humility*.

### Robert Dean on Humility

What is humility? Humility is a primary virtue in the spiritual life. Humility in the Scripture is always contrasted with pride, arrogance, and self-absorption. Too often people think that humility is some sort of self-deprecation, low self-esteem, somebody who is walked all over by somebody else, and never asserts themselves in any situation. But that is not the biblical concept of humility. The biblical concept of humility is authority orientation. It is a biblical perception of who one is—understanding who you are properly in the plan of God and who you are in the chain of command, so to speak. And it is orientation to divine authority. That is at the core of being able to advance in any circumstance in Scripture. So humility is a biblical perception of who one is an orientation to God's authority. We are told in the Old Testament that Moses was the most humble man in the Old Testament. The reason was that he was completely oriented to the authority of God. The New Testament picture of humility is given in Philippians 2:5-11. It gives us that picture of humility in the person of the Lord

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## Robert Dean on Humility

Jesus Christ.

Humility is foundational to grace orientation. Grace orientation means that we recognize that all that we are and all that we have is from God, and this is what Jacob expresses in the main part of this chapter. In arrogance we think that any part of what we have and any part of what we are is what we have accomplished. The emphasis is on our own achievements as opposed to what God has provided for us.

Humility is foundational to learning, to growing, and to loving others, because humility is authority orientation. To learn anything we have to submit to an authority. We have to be willing to be taught, willing to admit we are wrong, willing to admit that the ideas that we have might not be correct. So there has to be a level of humility and teachability. Humility is foundational for learning, for growing spiritually, and to loving others. When we are self-absorbed we can't love anybody because we are too busy focusing on ourselves.

Humility, then, is foundational to forgiveness and reconciliation. In any human relationship there has to be forgiveness and reconciliation because we are all sinners and every one of us fails at times.

From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.

Dean continues: *Jacob is demonstrating this expression of humility toward his brother Esau. There is genuine humility here. He is not just bowing and scraping because he was afraid Esau was going to do something. There has been a real and genuine transformation in his character.*<sup>86</sup>

### Genesis 33:4a

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
rûts (רוץ) [pronounced <i>roots</i> ]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
ʿÊsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced <i>gay-SAWV</i> ]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<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 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896

**Translation:** [Esau ran to meet him...](#)

Esau had changed dramatically over this time and apparently missed his brother Jacob; so he ran to meet Jacob.

Let me suggest that Jacob cannot easily get up from his 7<sup>th</sup> bow and run towards Esau, having been injured the night before.

<sup>86</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.

## Genesis 33:4b

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
châbaq (חָבַק) [pronounced <i>khaw-BAHK</i> ]	<i>to clasp, to embrace; to fold one's hands with idleness</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2263 BDB #287

**Translation:** ...and he embraced him,...

Esau appears to be genuinely moved that Jacob has returned. The person who is initiating the action would be reasonably Esau, as the older brother.

## Genesis 33:4c

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
nâphal (לָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i> ]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply; to desert</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
'al (לְעַ) [pronounced <i>gah</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
tsavvâ'ym (מִירְאוֹ) [pronounced <i>tzahv-vawr-EEM</i> ]	<i>neck, back of neck</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6677 BDB #848

There are several alternate spellings.

**Translation:** ...and he fell upon his neck...

This is apparently a part of the embrace.

Dr. John Gill: *and fell on his neck; laid his head on his neck, where it remained for a while, not being able to lift it up, and speak unto him; the word is in the dual number, and signifies, as Ben Melech thinks, the two sides of the neck, the right and the left; and he might lay his head first on one side, and then on the other, to show the greatness of his affection.*<sup>87</sup>

Jacob's *neck* is an interesting study.<sup>88</sup> The word *neck* occurs 9 times in the book of Genesis, and 4 of those times reference Jacob directly (Genesis 27:16 33:4 46:29) and twice Jacob is peripheral to the use of the word (Genesis 27:40 49:8). The neck in Scripture represents volition. The direction that you turn your neck (or your head, which is atop your neck) is the direction in which you go. The most problematic thing to Jacob's life is his

<sup>87</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>88</sup> I credit the [NEV commentary](#) for catching this little detail. Accessed April 14, 2019.

volition. He makes wrong decisions; he makes bad decisions and he makes weird decisions. Half of Jacob's problems are the result of his bad volitional choices. Therefore, it is more than coincidence that we find Jacob associated with the word *neck* as often as we do. 3 of those times, someone is falling on Jacob's neck with familial love; how many times has God desired to fall on Jacob's neck in love? However, the problem was getting through Jacob's volition.

Genesis 33:4d			
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
nâshaq (נשק) [pronounced naw-SHAHK]	<i>to kiss, to touch, to have close contact with</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5401 BDB #676

**Translation:** ...and he kissed him...

Esau kisses Jacob. This indicates great affection of Esau's part. My guess is, Jacob was somewhat apprehensive about this meeting, but not unable to attend.

This is one of those traditions which has mostly gone by the wayside. I've never been a fan of guys kissing each other.

Genesis 33:4 Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.

### Genesis 33:4d: The kiss (various commentators and discussion)

There has been some very weird commentary on this kiss. The Cambridge Bible shares some of it: *On the Hebrew word for "kissed him" the Massoretic, or traditional, Hebrew text has this note: "All of it punctuated," i.e. every letter dotted. Probably the text was at an early date uncertain. The Rabbinic explanation is strange, i.e. "because he did not come to kiss him, but to bite him," and the tradition goes on to say that Jacob's neck was turned into marble! What are these people thinking?*

The Cambridge Bible continues: *The Targum of pseudo-Jonathan, following up the absurd Rabbinic tradition arising from the Israelite hatred of Edom, explains that Jacob wept because his neck was painful, and Esau because he had pain in his teeth!*<sup>89</sup>

This is not what the Cambridge Bible is teaching; this stuff struck them as weird as well.

Adam Clarke: *And kissed him* - וַיִּשְׁקֵהוּ *vaiyishshakehu*. In the Masoretic Bibles each letter of this word is noted with a point over it to make it emphatic. And by this kind of notation the rabbins wished to draw the attention of the reader to the change that had taken place in Esau, and the sincerity with which he received his brother Jacob. A Hindoo when he meets a friend after absence throws his arms round him, and his head across his shoulders, twice over the right shoulder and once over the left, with other ceremonies according to the rank of the parties.

<sup>89</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:4.

### Genesis 33:4d: The kiss (various commentators and discussion)

E. W. Bullinger has a completely different view: *This is one of the Hebrew words with "extraordinary points", to show that the Massorites thought it should be omitted...It should read, "and fell on his neck and wept"; without kissing. This is the custom in Genesis. Compare Genesis 45:14; Genesis 46:29.*<sup>90</sup>

Both of those passages have men embracing after a long period of time, but without kissing. That's better.

I do not think we should read any more into this other than, this is just a tradition of that era and family.

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Genesis 33:4 Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.

### Genesis 33:4: Esau's attitude in meeting Jacob (a discussion)

Dr. John Gill: *And Esau ran to meet him,... If he rode on any creature, which is likely, he alighted from it on sight of his brother Jacob, and to express his joy on that occasion, and affection for him, made all the haste he could to meet him, as did the father of the prodigal, Luke 15:20.*<sup>91</sup>

The Cambridge Bible describes this meeting exactly right: *Esau's conduct on this occasion is that of a good-natured and forgiving disposition. There is no statement of his having intended any mischief to Jacob. His appearance with four hundred men seems to have been accidental, and not with hostile intent against Jacob. He behaves throughout magnanimously and simply.*<sup>92</sup>

Adam Clarke: *How sincere and genuine is this conduct of Esau, and at the same time how magnanimous! He had buried all his resentment, and forgotten all his injuries; and receives his brother with the strongest demonstrations, not only of forgiveness, but of fraternal affection.*<sup>93</sup>

Gill points out that: *Jewish writers are divided about [Esau's thinking at this meeting]; (1) some think that this points at the insincerity of Esau in kissing his brother when he hated him; (2) others [think], on the contrary, [that Esau showed] sincerity and heartiness in [this kiss]; and (3) [others believe]...that [Esau]...laid up hatred in his heart against his brother, and had bore him a grudge for so many years, and he...came out now, with an intention to destroy Jacob, [yet]...his heart so turned toward him, as to behave in this affectionate manner, which must be owing to the power of God working upon his heart, changing his mind, and making him thus soft, flexible, and compassionate.*<sup>94</sup>

NIV Study Bible: *All Jacob's fears proved unfounded. God had been at work and had so blessed Esau (v. 9) that he no longer held a grudge against Jacob.*<sup>95</sup>

I believe that the NIV Study Bible caught the balance just right. God did nothing inside of Esau to change him; but God blessed Esau to the point where, Esau had no reason to continue his anger towards Jacob.

<sup>90</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>91</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>92</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>93</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>94</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4 (edited).

<sup>95</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 56 (footnote).

## Genesis 33:4: Esau's attitude in meeting Jacob (a discussion)

Some completely misunderstood this meeting. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Esau ran to meet him — What a sudden and surprising change! Whether the sight of the princely present and the profound homage of Jacob had produced this effect, or it proceeded from the impulsive character of Esau, the cherished enmity of twenty years in a moment disappeared; the weapons of war were laid aside, and the warmest tokens of mutual affection reciprocated between the brothers.*<sup>96</sup>

It is the height of irrationality to think that (1) Esau nourished a grudge against his brother for 20 years. When people bury themselves in mental attitude sins, they are rarely able to do much in their lives. (2) It makes even less sense for Esau to be filled with anger towards Jacob but then, he sees this present from Jacob—these animals—and suddenly, everything is all better.

This may help us out with regards to Jacob's thinking. If he felt guilty about his past actions and believed that a present for his brother was in order, then that is reasonable. If Jacob believed that, with this present, he could change his brother's attitude, that would reveal some seriously flawed thinking.

In my opinion, Jacob may have begun with the present idea in order to change Esau's anger. However, the day that this occurs, I believe that Jacob's trust was more in God than in his own manipulative actions.

I lean towards Esau having his own mind and his own affections, having left their disagreements in the long forgotten past (remember, this is 20 years later). It is clear by this entourage that Esau did not sit around and mope for two decades about Jacob's manipulative actions. Was Esau mad for 2 months after Jacob left? Very likely. But, at some point, with Jacob gone, Esau had to recognize, "I cannot blame Jacob now for my life."

When some commentators speak of God changing Esau's heart—if God provided Esau with some experiences which helped to guide Esau away from his anger towards Jacob, then I can accept that. But God reaching into Esau's soul and turning his attitude from bad to good—I just don't buy that.

I object to God making wholesale changes in Esau's soul on the basis of two reasons: (1) of what meaning is our volition if God, on a whim, changes it? I do not doubt that this is within God's power (Proverbs 21:1), but I do not see how it would further His plan. (2) There is nothing in Scripture which states this explicitly.

If you are thinking, *well, placing Esau in situations and circumstances which help him to get over his anger—isn't that the same thing as God just changing his volition?* That would be a hard no. Recall Pharaoh of Egypt, who was put under all kinds of pressure, and yet, his negative volition towards the God of Israel continued unabated. When circumstances wore him down, God gave Pharaoh strength, and he used his renewed strength in such a way as to be negative towards God.

What do you personally get out of this discussion? Your volition is 100% your responsibility. If you recognize just how negative you have been towards God, then the way to change your soul is through Bible doctrine.

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Genesis 33:3–4 [Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.](#)

<sup>96</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:4.

## Exodus 33:4: Did God change the malice in Esau's heart? (A discussion)

Benson: *Esau ran to meet him* — *Not in anger, but in love: so wonderfully and suddenly had God, who hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them when and how he pleases, changed his heart; and of an implacable enemy, made him a kind and affectionate friend!*<sup>97</sup>

Several commentators took this point of view.

Keil and Delitzsch suggest<sup>98</sup> that God's influence had removed the malice from Esau's heart. Time softens one's memory and it heals a great many wounds. Jacob and Esau are twin brothers, and though Jacob's actions often put them into competition with one another, this was likely not the entire scope of their relationship. Furthermore, 20 years of maturing is no doubt a factor in this reunion being a happy one. This is how God has designed man; so, ultimately, one might say their mutual love and respect at this point in time can be attributed to God.

Hamilton: *Only the restraining intervention of God kept Laban from retaliation against Jacob (Genesis 31:24, 29). Esau is apparently in no need of a similar divine check. His own good nature acts as a check on him. Since his rage and hate of ch. 27, Esau himself has undergone his own transformation. No longer is he controlled by vile passions.*<sup>99</sup>

Although God can change the malice in a person's heart; and, on occasion, God can, through Bible doctrine, remove or tamp down hatred in a person's heart; it makes sense that this happens within the volition of the person who changes. Our lives make less sense if God is constantly reaching into our volition and turning us from green to red.

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**Esau—a Believer in the Revealed God** (or, *giving Esau his due*): I don't believe that I have ever read a commentator who puts Esau into the proper perspective. He is mentioned by every commentator of this chapter, but he and his life receive little specific examination.

Since the Bible really focuses upon the line of promise more than it does those outside that line, we know a great deal about Jacob and much less about Esau. Everything that I read in this chapter indicates that this is a new Esau, not filled with hatred, jealousy and revenge motivation. What happened? Normal human maturity and probably some spiritual growth. When we last left him, he could not get over Jacob's deception (taking from him his blessing) and he even still talked about Jacob taking away his birthright when they were much younger.

Time passes, Jacob is out of the picture, so Esau has little reason to continually fantasize about killing Jacob. The whole end-of-life blessing thing is over and done with and even his father Isaac is unwilling to revisit this any more than he already has. So Esau can either allow himself to be eaten up on the inside over all this injustice, or he can just grow the hell up, and he (seemingly) chose the latter option.<sup>100</sup>

He apparently got out from under the roof of his parents, he made a life for himself, and he finds out that he is a natural leader. I would suggest that some of this reflects spiritual growth as well as human maturity. Even though Esau is not in the line of promise (he missed it by *that much*), this does not mean that he just rejected God and God's plan for his life. There is an entire chapter in the book of Genesis dedicated to the line of Esau [**Genesis 36** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))]. Do you think that God would dedicate a chapter from the Bible to a heathen and to his heathen progeny? *Of course not!*

<sup>97</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>98</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 32:4–7.

<sup>99</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

<sup>100</sup> I should stop and indicate that much of what I am writing here is speculative, but I believe it to be accurate and very much in keeping with all that we read about Esau.

Esau simply moved on with his life. He stopped focusing on Jacob and he stopped blaming Jacob for all his ills (let me suggest that he has done this over much of his life). When Esau sets this anger and jealousy aside, he finds that his life is much better and that he even has great leadership potential. In short, both Jacob and Esau enjoyed some personal and spiritual growth over these past 20 years.

I am of the opinion that the Bible does not simply throw names into the Scriptures just because *there were some people who lived at some point, so, here are their names*. I think that most of the people named in the Bible—including in the genealogies—were believers in the **Revealed God**. I am not saying that every person named in the Bible is a believer; nor am I saying that this represents a list of all believers in Old Testament times; I am simply suggesting that Genesis 36 with a list of Esau's associations and progeny is not simply thrown into the book of Genesis because, *it is about time for another genealogy*. Let me suggest that all of these were believers; that Esau's interaction with Seir resulted in Seir and his sons becoming believers in Esau's God. Furthermore, let me suggest that many of these lines, which begin, and go out for 2 or 3 or 4 generations, often simply name those males in the family who believed in the Revealed God.

So, the Old Testament Bible is about the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and so, we study them and their descendants. However, this does not mean that God completely rejected and set aside Ishmael or Esau. We know enough about these two men to know that God looked out for both men and prospered them both as well.

Every believer is an individual before God and God has a unique plan for every believer. Just because Jacob continues the line of blessing does not mean that God has determined Esau's life will be crappy. If you recall, the chosen person in Abraham's line was Isaac and not Ishmael. However, Ishmael became quite an important figure and greatly bless as well. The same is true of Esau.

You cannot look at another believer and say, "He's got a better house than me, or a better family, or better kids, or more money, or whatever." God has a plan designed specifically for you, and that plan includes great happiness for the believer who gets on board with God's plan.

One of the things which I have observed on numerous occasions on the internet is people expressing negative opinions about a pastor in the city of Houston because they think that he is far too wealthy and successful. Also I have seen rude comments and vicious memes about him. That is ridiculous and uncalled for. If you believe his ministry is not right for you, then you go elsewhere and you don't support it. If you believe that a particular pastor provides you with sufficient growth opportunities, then you get in that church every chance that you have in order to grow spiritually. The material status of the pastor is not an issue. He might be poor as a church mouse (most pastors are) and he might be beyond-imagination rich. These things do not matter. The only thing that you take with you out of this world is your soul filled with (or bereft of) Bible doctrine. You, another believer you know, or the pastor of your church might drive the greatest car in the world. But when God calls that person home, the car stays here on earth. The same thing is true of all material things.

And just so you know—when you criticize or tear down a pastor (or simply another believer) in front of others, God will turn that against you. What you think of fellow believer Charley Brown is really not important and you have no reason to share your personal opinions of Charley Brown with others. Now, there might be an exception to this. Let's say Lucy Van Pelt is think of attending Charley Brown's church. You might want to suggest that they come to your church for comparison. But, what you do not do is spread rumors about the pastor that you don't like. You don't say, "Well, this is what I have heard about pastor so-and-so." Whether you like that pastor or not is never the issue; and whatever stories you have heard about the pastor are irrelevant. You may attend the greatest church on earth, and you want to share that with people you know. That is fine; but you never try to demean another pastor in order to convince them.

When I tell people about Berachah Church, I tell them that the emphasis is on the teaching of the Word of God and that I think it is an excellent church. Now and again, I mention their monetary policy, as some believers are wary of a church that seems to have its hand in your back pocket all of the time. But, what I don't do is run down

churches A, B and C; nor do I run down the pastors of those churches. I get enough discipline as it is; I don't need more discipline for attacking pastors.

Now and again, there are things which we sometimes must evaluate, and we need to do this carefully. There was a pastor who was ordained in Berachah and he became a charismatic type pastor. Sometimes people or ordained in Berachah Church and they leave dispensationalism and begin to teach covenant theology. These are important, fundamental concepts and fundamental ways to interpret the Word of God. Once in a great while, you may find yourself sharing that information about the doctrines taught at a specific church (most people will never need to do that).

In any case, if you start spreading rumors about a pastor, then expect the discipline to follow.

Genesis 33:4e			
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
bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	<i>to weep [for] (in grief, humiliation, or joy), to weep [bitterly], to weep upon [i.e., to embrace and weep], to cry [for], to bewail</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113

**Translation:** ...and they [both] wept.

At this point, they both begin weeping, having been separated for such a long time from one another.

There appears to be no vindictiveness; no anger; no long-term mental attitude sins which have been stewing. Both men meet and embrace one another. What had been before was left in the past.

The interaction between these two men is fascinating. Jacob is bowing and scraping; but Esau runs to him, to embrace him; seeing him as a long lost brother or friend, more than a former enemy.

Genesis 33:4 **Esau ran to meet him and he embraced him, and he fell upon his neck and he kissed him and they [both] wept.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:3–4 **Jacob [lit., he] then went over before them. He bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet him and he embraced him, and he fell upon his neck and he kissed him and they [both] wept.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:3–4 **Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.** (Kukis paraphrase)

*College Press Bible Study: This is an exact description of a meeting between relatives in the East, especially to a member of the family who has returned home after a long absence. They place their hands on his neck, kiss each cheek, and then lean their heads for some seconds, during their fond embrace, on each other's shoulders. It is their customary mode of testifying affection.<sup>101</sup>*

<sup>101</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.*

Genesis 33:3–4 Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.

### Genesis 33:4e: What do we know about what Esau and Jacob were thinking?

Benson: *They wept* — Jacob wept for joy to be thus kindly received; Esau, perhaps, with grief and shame, to think of the ill design he had conceived against his brother.<sup>102</sup>

Stephen Armstrong: *Esau seems sincerely happy to see Jacob again after 20 years apart • Whatever animosity existed earlier has long since been forgotten. His tears are tears of joy and happiness. Jacob, on the other hand, is probably shocked and a bit mystified over his brother's reaction. He assumed he was moments away from death by the sword, and now his enemy is hugging him and kissing him. I suspect Jacob's tears are tears of relief and thankfulness.*<sup>103</sup>

I believe that we should have a slightly more nuanced view of this situation than Armstrong has, although he is no doubt close to accurately explaining the emotions of both men. Bear in mind, Jacob is there with his wives and children right there with him. So, for however long, Jacob is trusting God.

As I have stated many times in Genesis 32, I do not believe that Jacob turned his whole spiritual life around after wrestling with the Angel of God; but he has enough faith to present his nearest and dearest to Esau (you may recall that he had shuffled them off to a hidden encampment prior to his wrestling with God).

Quite obviously, we do not know, with certainty, exactly what is in the mind of Esau or Jacob. Could it even be in Jacob's thinking that, "Okay, I am supposed to trust you, Lord? Then I am marching right out to meet Esau with my wives and children right there with me." Almost challenging God. Was that Jacob's attitude? We do not really know.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Notice that the statement "they wept" indicating that both Jacob and Esau were weeping in each others arms. Jacob emotional response also expressed his relief that Esau did not still harbor bitterness towards him for stealing the blessing of the birthright but rather was desirous to reconcile as he was.*<sup>104</sup>

I believe that both men were relieved and emotional to see one another again; and both appeared ready to start from scratch. It is difficult to pin down either man on a single emotion (or two), as there are often a myriad of feelings when you are with family.

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Genesis 33:3–4 Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.

Jacob and Esau are meeting for the very first time 20 years after their falling out (for which, Jacob was to blame).

<sup>102</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:4.

<sup>103</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>104</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

## Genesis 33:4: The Meeting Between Esau and Jacob (a discussion)

Whedon best summarizes this meeting: *Ran to meet... embraced... fell... kissed... wept* — *Five forms in which they exhibited the first fervent emotions of brotherly affection. The whole interview is characterized with a life-like simplicity, as though detailed by an eye-witness of the scene.*<sup>105</sup>

Esau has also shown some personal change. 20 years ago, he wanted to kill Jacob. Now he welcomes Jacob enthusiastically, with both love and interest.

Just as fascinating is, Esau will initiate the conversation throughout, speaking first and asking most of the questions. This suggests that he has been thinking about Jacob, about his life, about his brother whom he had not seen for 20 years, and that he simply had a lot of say to him. This may even suggest some guilt felt by him over this time.

Sailhamer: *As the narrative unfolds, however, it was not Jacob's plan that succeeded but his prayer [Genesis 32:9–12]. When he met with Esau, he found that Esau had had a change of heart. Running to meet Jacob, Esau embraced and kissed him and wept ( Genesis 33:4). All of Jacob's plans and schemes had come to naught. In spite of them all, God had prepared Jacob's way.*<sup>106</sup>

Chuck Smith: *So that prayer of Jacob's was answered. His brother's anger was assuaged. And the meeting, rather than being tense, rather than being bitter, rather than with great recriminations and anger, it's a sign of acceptance, a sign of forgiveness, a sign of love as they embraced each other. They kissed each other. They wept together. The work of God's spirit had been wrought.*<sup>107</sup>

Spurgeon: *[Jacob] met Esau as a brother, not as an enemy, and the four hundred men were willing to become his protectors.*<sup>108</sup>

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. has an excellent description of this meeting: *Up to this point all the action is what Esau did. Then we are told, "they wept," both of them. But the other part of the picture that we see here is that Jacob appears to be rather reserved and cautious in his attitude toward Esau, in contrast to this open exuberance and enthusiasm that Esau has for his brother Jacob. Jacob is stiff; Esau is excited, open, free, he shows genuine affection and happiness in seeing Jacob. He hasn't seen his brother for 20 years. He is excited, and there is no indication at all in the text that he is harboring any level of resentment toward his brother whatsoever. Nevertheless, Jacob is cautious, careful, guarded, and unwilling to entrust himself to Esau. Esau treats Jacob as a long lost brother and a friend, and it is clear that he cares more for Jacob and the restoration of their relationship. But they both weep, and there is real emotion here. They are just thrilled to see one another again.*<sup>109</sup>

When commentators are speculating, they ought to say that is what they are doing. Obviously, that is easier to do today, since that are no space limitations.

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Genesis 33:3–4 **Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.**

<sup>105</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 33:4.

<sup>106</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-32.html>; accessed March 7, 2019.

<sup>107</sup> Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–20.

<sup>108</sup> Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon's Expositions Volumes 1-3A*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:3–4.

<sup>109</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

## Genesis 33:4: Esau's anger mollified by Jacob (a discussion)

This is an important discussion, because quite a number of commentators believed that Esau considered harming Jacob and his family. Or, they present this as an option in the back of Esau's mind.

Skinner: *That Esau's intention was hostile, and that Jacob gained a diplomatic victory over him, cannot reasonably be doubted.*<sup>110</sup>

Genesis 32–33 should have been a singular chapter—at least to v. 17—in order to preserve the context.

Most importantly, Esau did not gather up 400 men in order to go speak to Jacob; they were already with him. That sequence of events is crucial. Secondly, there is nothing even implied in the text that Esau is looking this situation over carefully and wondering, “Should I kill Jacob and his family or not?”

What Jacob did in his effusive obeisance was fine; he had wronged his brother. A little humble pie never hurt anyone. However, Esau's only evil intent had been expressed 20 years previous; and there is no reason for us to assume that he is carrying a grudge of some sort.

What Esau does clearly indicates that he has missed his brother. He expresses nothing other than unrestrained affection towards Jacob.

Speiser correctly assesses the situation: *The meeting between the two brothers turned out to be an affectionate reunion. Jacob's apprehensions had proved unfounded and his elaborate precautions altogether unnecessary. While the intervening twenty years could not erase Jacob's sense of guilt, Esau's resentment had long since vanished.*<sup>111</sup>

H. C. Leupold similarly observes: *[T]he sincerity of Esau's approach need not be doubted; nothing casts suspicion on his attitude. He is frank and straightforward.*<sup>112</sup>

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

You may remember the Rebekah, the mother of the twins, told Jacob that she would contact him when the coast was clear and he could return to Canaan. The coast is clear, yet she does not contact him. There could be a variety of reasons for this: (1) She did contact Jacob, but it was not recorded in Scripture. (2) She was unable to keep tabs on Esau, so she did not know his affections changed. Why this would be the case is also speculative: Esau found out what she had done and they were no longer on speaking terms; or Esau's move away from his family put her out of touch with him. The third possibility (3) Rebekah has passed from this life. (4) Esau is off on his own, away from Rebekah. I don't believe that there is Scriptural evidence to back any of these possibilities. After she helps Jacob deceive Isaac, Rebekah is never found in any narrative after that.

Genesis 33:3–4 **Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.**

I find it quite amazing as to the amount of human behavior that can be explained based upon these two verses. If you read through the preceding doctrines, there is a lot to be learned about human volition.

<sup>110</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>111</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>112</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

**Meeting of Jacob and Esau** (a painting by Francesco Hayez); from [Amazon](#); accessed April 14, 2019.



I think a lot of Esau's attitude can be attributed to growing up, getting away from his parents, and establishing himself on his own. For the longest time, he was concerned about getting the blessing that Jacob was going to inherit—but Esau found that God blessed him greatly on his own terms.

Gen. 33:1–4 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and noticed that Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children to Leah, and to Rachel, and to the two female slaves. And he put the female slaves and their children first, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph last. And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. (UPDV)

Jacob has lined up his family, each wife with her children, in order, apparently, of his preference. His surrogate mothers (the personal slaves of Leah and Rachel) come first, then Leah, then Rachel, each woman with her respective children. It is likely that each woman is accompanied by a slave.

Jacob moves out ahead of them, and bows before Esau.

*Bridgeway Bible Commentary: Esau showed a generous spirit of forgiveness, with the result that the dreaded meeting proved to be a happy reunion. Jacob had gained Esau's birthright and blessing by cunning and deceit, but he was not allowed to enjoy them fully till he humbled himself before Esau,*

and Esau acknowledged that he had no claim against Jacob. Esau did this by accepting Jacob's gift (Genesis 33:4-11).<sup>113</sup>

**Esau's thinking and motivation:** Let me speculate on Esau for a moment. It is my opinion that Esau had no bitterness or rancor towards his younger brother. He did for awhile—perhaps for months—after Jacob took away his blessing. But he no longer felt that way. Remember that Esau made his own way after Jacob left. If he ever blamed Jacob before for this or that, he could no longer do that, because Jacob was gone far away. He had to completely take responsibility for himself, his life and his future; and that is apparently what he did. So, Esau has made a life and a way for himself (perhaps he recognizes that he has been blessed by God, perhaps not), but he can no longer hold Jacob responsible for his own inadequacies or his own life.

Something which happens between brothers, between sisters or even between married persons is, they get involved in inordinate competition. They are competitive, even when there is no need to be. That very much describes Esau and Jacob's relationship for many years. As a result, there can be bitterness, anger and jealousy (all mental attitude sins).

I believe at some point, with Jacob gone, Esau began to miss his younger brother, and have some genuine sibling love develop at Jacob's absence. Now, this is certainly guessing on my part. We are not let into Esau's inner life over this period of time. However, given his enthusiasm to see his brother, his many questions about Jacob's life and family, and his desire for Jacob to be with him, all of those things indicate to me a genuine brotherly love.

Certainly, many commentators speculate as to the thinking and feeling of Esau.

H. C. Leupold makes a few assumptions at this point: *Esau was impulsive. All rancor and bitterness are forgotten at the sight of his only brother. If Esau had himself not been clear in his own mind at first as to the attitude he would take, now all thoughts of vengeance evaporate.*<sup>114</sup>

Based upon what I have read, I do not see any of this as reasonably representing Esau and his thinking at this time. Any commentator who suggests that Esau saw Jacob coming, and he thought, "Hmm, should I kill him or should I greet him?" has made far more assumptions than I have.

Ron Snider's translation: Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. And he put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

### Summary of Genesis 33:1–4 (Ron Snider)

1. Just after he crossed the Jabbok early that morning, he looks up and sees that Esau is upon him.
2. Jacob observes that Esau is not alone, but accompanied by the four hundred man army.
3. Jacob is sure that he is a goner, so he makes plans on how to deliver his family.
4. All he does here is based on his STA fear and not on BIBLE DOCTRINE.
5. He divides the children with their respective mothers and places his least favorite in the front of the line.
6. He places his next favorite with her children behind her and they are followed by Leah and her children.
7. He places his beloved wife Rachel and her son Joseph at the rear.
8. He goes on ahead of them to meet Esau, which is an improvement over his previous approach, where he brought up the rear.
9. He does not not know how the five groups of animals were received so he still fears the wrath of Esau.

<sup>113</sup> Don Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Commentary*; ©1988, 1994, 2005; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–17.

<sup>114</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

### Summary of Genesis 33:1–4 (Ron Snider)

10. As he approaches Esau, in full view of everyone, he bows down and then moves on a small distance.
11. He repeats this six times, which was the customary homage one would pay to a king or ruler.
12. All this activity was operation energy of the flesh to deliver him from the supposed wrath of Esau.
13. All this planning and dividing and sending of gifts and obeisance were completely unnecessary.
14. As Jacob finds out, Esau does not hold a grudge and gives him a warm and emotional greeting.
15. That such a dreaded encounter resolved itself into such a warm and friendly reception was more than Jacob could have hoped.
16. Esau makes the first move and runs to Jacob and embraces him, falls on his neck and kisses him.
17. There can be no doubt that this was not contrived and the emotion of the moment coupled with the relief brought Jacob to tears, as well.
18. Esau apparently had long forgotten what his brother had done to him and was just happy to see him once again.
19. This demonstrates the principle that God can make those who may be against us very amiable toward us. Prov. 16:7
20. This is also a wonderful type of the UB coming to God, loaded with sin and guilt and a guilty conscience.
21. He fears the presence of one he has wronged, but instead receives grace and love.
22. His favor is not deserved or earned, and all the schemes of the UB do not commend him to God.
23. The same is true for the believer who strays from the straight and narrow and comes to his senses. Lk. 15:11ff

From [Markaios Bible Church](#) (link will open up in Word or WP); accessed April 13, 2019.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

What will follow is a short conversation here in v. 5, which picks us again in vv. 8–15, in which there is no sign of animosity, no attempt by either man to open up old wounds. This is very different from the conversation that Jacob had with his Uncle Laban only a few days before. See **Genesis 31** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Both Jacob and Esau were content to leave their past in the past.

Because v. 5 contains two quotations, many translations separate them into separate paragraphs.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Notice that in the narrative here there is a lot of conversation but it is Esau who has the initiative. He is the one asking questions. Jacob is the responder.*<sup>115</sup>

If anything, Jacob is there over-thinking the entire situation, trying to ingratiate himself to his brother, trying to keep in mind God's promises, and hoping that Esau does not wipe him out. Esau is much more relaxed and far more interested in seeing his estranged brother from so long ago.

**And so he lifts his [two] eyes and so he sees the women and the children. And so he says, "Who [are] these to you?" And so he says, "The children whom has shown grace Elohim to your servant."**

Genesis  
33:5

**Esau looked up [lit., *lifted up his eyes*] and he saw the women and the children. He said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob answered [lit., *And he said*], "[These are] the children that Elohim has graciously [given] to your servant."**

**Esau looked at those with Jacob, and saw the women and children. He asked Jacob, "Who are these people who are with you?" Jacob answered, "God has given these children to me."**

<sup>115</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he lifts his [two] eyes and so he sees the women and the children. And so he says, "Who [are] these to you?" And so he says, "The children whom has shown grace Elohim to your servant."
Targum (Onkelos)	And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said, What are these to thee? And he said, The children whom the Lord <u>hath given</u> to thy servant.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he lifted up his eyes and saw the wives and the children, and said, Who are these with thee? And he said, They are the souls which have been given to me through mercy from before the Lord upon thy servant.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And lifting up his eyes, he saw the women and their children, and said: <u>What mean these? And do they belong to you?</u> He answered: They are the children which God has given to me your servant.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, "Who are these with you?" He said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then Esau raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, <u>Where did you get these?</u> And Jacob said to him, They are the children whom God has graciously given your servant.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Esau looked up and saw the women and the children, and said, What are these to you? And he said, The children with which God has mercifully blessed your servant.
Significant differences:	Esau's question is weird in the Latin and possibly in the Syriac (the ESV of the Peshitta is often different from George Lamsa's translation—and I have no idea why).

One targum and the Latin have *hath given* rather than *has shown grace*.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Esau, lifting up his eyes, saw the women and the children, and said, Who are these with you? And he said, The children whom God in his mercy has given to your servant.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When Esau looked around and saw the women and the children, he asked, "Who are these people with you?" "These, sir, are the children whom God has been good enough to give me," Jacob answered.
<i>The Message</i>	Then Esau looked around and saw the women and children: "And who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children that God saw fit to bless me with."
Names of God Bible	When he saw the women and children, Esau asked, "Who are these people here with you?" "The children <i>Elohim</i> has graciously given me, sir," Jacob answered.
NIRV	Then Esau looked around and saw the women and children. "Who are these people with you?" he asked.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob answered, "They are the children God has so kindly given to me." Esau looked around and saw the women and the children. He asked: »Who are these people with you?« Jacob answered: »These are the children whom God has been good enough to give me.«

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

Casual English Bible	Then Esau took a look at the women and children behind Jacob and said, "Who are these people with you?" Jacob said, "These children are God's gift to me, your humble servant."
Contemporary English V.	When Esau noticed the women and children he asked, "Whose children are these?" Jacob answered, "These are the ones the LORD has been kind enough to give to me, your servant."
The Living Bible	Then Esau looked at the women and children and asked, "Who are these people with you?" "My children," Jacob replied.
New Century Version	When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he asked, "Who are these people with you?" Jacob answered, "These are the children God has given me. God has been good to me, your servant."
New Life Version	Then Esau looked up and saw the women and the children. He said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "They are the children whom God, in His loving-favor, has given your servant."
New Living Translation	Then Esau looked at the women and children and asked, "Who are these people with you?" "These are the children God has graciously given to me, your servant," Jacob replied.

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, when Esau noticed the women and children, he asked: 'What are they to you?' And Jacob replied: 'They're the children that God has so mercifully blest your servant with.'
Berean Study Bible	When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he asked, "Who are these with you?"
International Standard V	When Esau eventually looked around, he saw the women and the children. "Who are these people [The Heb. lacks <i>people</i> ] with you?" he asked. "The children, whom God has graciously given [The Heb. lacks <i>given</i> ] your servant," he answered.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	Then, as he looked round him and saw the women with their sons, he asked, What are these? Are they part of thy company? And he was told, They are the children God has granted to thy servant.
Translation for Translators	Then Esau looked up and saw the women and the children. He asked, "Who are these people who are with you?" Jacob replied, "These are the wives and children that God has graciously/kindly given to me."

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

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to lift up his eyes, and was to perceive the women and the children. He was to say: These are? He was to say: The children, with he of mighty ones is to have favored your servant.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then he lifted his eyes and saw the wives and children and asked. " Who are these with you ? " And he replied, "The children which GOD has given me, your servant."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he lifted up his eyes and saw the wives and their children, and said: what are these which you there hast? And he said: they are the children which God has given your servant.
H. C. Leupold	And he lifted up his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said: What relation are they to thee? And he said: The children whom God hath graciously bestowed upon thy servant.
Tree of Life Version	His eyes glanced up and he saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?"

Urim-Thummim Version	"The children whom God has graciously given your servant," he said. And he raised his eyes and saw the women and the children and said, who are these with you? And he replied, the children that Elohim has graciously given your servant.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he lifted his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said "Who are these to you?" And he said, the children which God has graced your servant.

**Catholic Bibles:**

The Heritage Bible	And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are these with you? And he said, The children with whom God has stooped down in grace to your servant.
New American Bible (2011)	Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children and asked, "Who are these with you?" Jacob answered, "They are the children with whom God has graciously favored your servant."
New Jerusalem Bible	Then looking up he saw the women and children. 'Who are these with you?' he asked. Jacob answered, 'The children whom God has bestowed on your servant.'

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	Esau looked up; on seeing the women and children, he asked, "Who are these with you?" Ya'akov answered, "The children God has graciously given to your servant."
exeGesés companion Bible	...and he lifts his eyes and sees the women and the children; and says, Who are these with you? And he says, The children which Elohim granted charism to your servant.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Looking about, he saw the women and the children. "Who," he asked, "are these with you?" He answered, "The children with whom God has favored your servant."
Kaplan Translation	Esau looked up and saw the women and children. 'Who are these to you?' he asked. 'They are the children whom God has been kind enough to grant me,' replied [Jacob].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the nashim and the yeladim; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The yeladim which Elohim hath graciously given thy eved.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

The Expanded Bible	When ·Esau looked up [ <sup>†</sup> he raised his eyes] and saw the women and children, he asked, "Who are these people with you?" Jacob answered, "These are the children God has graciously given me, your servant."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. Jacob humbly expressed the gratitude of his heart in giving the Lord all honor for His blessings.
NET Bible®	When Esau [ <i>Heb</i> "and he"; the referent (Esau) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] looked up [ <i>Heb</i> "lifted up his eyes."] and saw the women and the children, he asked, "Who are these people with you?" Jacob [ <i>Heb</i> "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] replied, "The children whom God has graciously given [The Hebrew verb means "to be gracious; to show favor"; here it carries the nuance "to give graciously."] your servant."
The Voice	Esau looked up and saw the women and children.

**Esau:** Who are these people with you?

**Jacob:** These are the children God has graciously given your servant.

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he lifted up his eyes and he saw the women and the boys and he said, who are these belonging to you and he said, the boys which Elohiym <sup>[Powers]</sup> showed beauty to your servant,...
Concordant Literal Version	And lifting is he his eyes and seeing the women and the children. And saying is he, "What are these to you? And saying is he, "The children which the Elohim graciously gives your servant.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Then lifted he up his eyes, and beheld the women and the children, and said What are these to thee? And he said—The children wherewith God hath favoured thy servant,...
English Standard Version	And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."
Green's Literal Translation	And he lifted up his eyes and saw the women and the children. And he said, Who are these <i>with</i> you? And he said, The children <i>with</i> whom God has favored your servant.
Modern English Version	When Esau looked up and saw the women and the children, he said, "Who are those with you?"
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

**The gist of this passage:** Esau looks up and sees the women and children and asks Jacob about them. Jacob says that the children are his that God has given him.

Genesis 33:5a			
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
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 BDB #669
'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
'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 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

**Translation:** Esau looked up [lit., *lifted up his eyes*]...

Of course, Esau warmly greeted and concentrated upon his long-lost brother. But, after they spent a reasonable amount of time hugging, Esau looks at all that is behind Jacob. Esau and Jacob are both intelligent men and observant.

Genesis 33:5b			
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
râ'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 imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'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
nâshîym (נָשִׁים) [pronounced naw-SHEEM]	<i>women, wives</i>	feminine plural noun; irregular plural of Strong's #802; with the definite article	Strong's #802 BDB #61
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 (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדִים) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

**Translation:** ...and he saw the women and the children.

Now, Jacob has everything that he owns with him, included great flocks of lambs and goats. But Esau, of course, focuses on the women and children that he sees. Remember that Jacob had gone to the east in order to find a wife. This would be the normal interest of one brother towards another.

Both Jacob and Esau have multiple wives.

You may not realize it, but this is an apparent contradiction. You may recall from Genesis 32 that Jacob divided his camp into two camps. Gen. 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."* (ESV) However, in our text it appears that he since changed his mind about that. No reason is given; but instead of having his wives and sons hidden off in a second camp, Jacob has them right out in the open with him (vv. 1–3).

This is easily explained. Jacob at first wanted to hide and thereby protect his wives and children in a second camp (Genesis 32:7–8). However, at the beginning of this chapter (vv. 1–3), he leads this second camp right behind the presents which he had sent before him. So, for whatever reason—perhaps as a result of his prayer, the blessing and/or the wrestling match—Jacob decided not to hide his family from Esau (the reason is never stated outright). Did he determine that it was better to trust in God? Did he reason that, even if he kept a second hidden camp, Esau would have found them and killed them anyway (if Esau was ill-disposed toward Jacob still)? Jacob may have considered that, after he meets Esau face to face, it is going to be somewhat awkward to then say, "Well, I have two wives and children, but I hid them a few miles back, as I was worried you might kill them."

My thinking is, Jacob developed a little courage after wrestling with the Lord the night before; and after being blessed again. He sent forward his present to Esau, with him right behind it, with his wives and children right behind him. Jacob is not in some state of high spiritual maturity; but he has it more together today than he did yesterday.

Genesis 33:5c			
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
mîy (מי) [pronounced mee]	<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 ALE-leh]	<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 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 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** He said, "Who are these with you?"

Esau asks, "Who are these women and children with you?" He uses the lâmed preposition, which can be used to indicate something that belongs to Jacob.

Esau inquires about the women and children (obviously, he assumes that they all belong to Jacob). I believe this to be genuine and not feigned interest on the part of Esau.

20 years have passed. Esau expected Jacob to return with a wife and a few children (that was the stated reason *why* Jacob had gone to Paddan-Aram in the first place). What he did not expect was 2 wives, 2 mistresses, 11 sons and at least 2 daughters. Now, I think that Esau got it immediately; but he was asking for and expecting a full and complete introduction (which I believe that he received; it is just not recorded in the text).

There are some indications that some sort of communication took place during these 20 years. This would be suggested by the fact that Jacob knew how to get in touch with his brother Esau upon nearing the land of their birth. Because of Jacob's great uncertainty and fear at meeting his brother, my guess would be that this communication may have come from either Isaac or Rebekah—there may have one or two messages from Rebekah, the final one being that Esau had moved to Seir. In the alternative, there may have been some trading which took place between Laban and those in Canaan and Seir, and Laban found out that Esau had moved to Sier.

Whether Esau had any clue as to Jacob's marital status or his number of children is unlikely. The reason for coming to this conclusion is, not that Esau asks this question, *who are these with you?* We would infer this from the fact that Jacob had considered trying to hide his family from Esau.

Interestingly enough, Esau is the one doing most of the speaking and asking of questions here. To be fair, this does not mean that Jacob is uninterested in Esau. Remember that Jacob was originally afraid of Esau, particularly after hearing that he had 400 men with him. So he might be getting over the shock and still adjusting to Esau's warm attitude towards him. At the very least, Jacob did not have any idea how this meeting would go; and I think a warm brotherly embrace between them was low on his list of expectations.

Furthermore, if you remember back to Jacob and Laban's final meeting, where each man let fly with whatever was on their mind concerning their relationship, airing each and every grievance for their 20 year relationship. Had Jacob been thinking about how he might respond to a meeting with Esau that went the same way? However, much to Jacob's surprise, this meeting with Esau was pretty much at the other end of the spectrum. Neither man seems to have any interest in hashing out old arguments.

Twice in the previous chapter, Jacob was said to be frightened of Esau. So, upon meeting one another, I believe that Esau's mind is clear and focused, and he sincerely enjoys seeing his brother again and he is filled with brotherly love. Jacob, on the other hand, was somewhat apprehensive, not knowing what Esau would do. Everything seems okay, but is it really? So Esau is unconflicted and enthusiastic; Jacob is uncertain, apprehensive and he is watching Esau's every move just in case.

### Genesis 33:5d

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
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (ילדים) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
'âsher (אשר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
chânan (חנן) [pronounced khaw-NAHN]	<i>to bend, to stoop over, to show grace [favor] [often as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior], to show mercy, to be gracious; to be favorably inclined [toward someone]; to give [someone something] out of grace</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2603, #2589 BDB #335

This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture.

Genesis 33:5d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿĒlōhîym (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
ʿêth (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
ʿebed (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

**Translation:** Jacob answered [lit., *And he said*], “[These are] the children that Elohim has graciously [given] to your servant.”

Although Esau’s question could have applied to the wives and children, Jacob focuses upon the children, who are *Esau’s nephews and nieces, [his] blood relatives.*<sup>116</sup>

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. catches something here which I missed: there are 4 references to grace in this chapter: here and in vv. 8, 10 and 15. There is no doubt that Jacob is a testimony to God’s grace.

*Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: Humility is foundational to grace orientation. Grace orientation means that we recognize that all that we are and all that we have is from God, and this is what Jacob expresses in the main part of this chapter. In arrogance we think that any part of what we have and any part of what we are is what we have accomplished. The emphasis is on our own achievements as opposed to what God has provided for us*

*Humility is foundational to learning, to growing, and to loving others, because humility is authority orientation. To learn anything we have to submit to an authority. We have to be willing to be taught, willing to admit we are wrong, willing to admit that the ideas that we have might not be correct. So there has to be a level of humility and teachability. Humility is foundational for learning, for growing spiritually, and to loving others. When we are self-absorbed we can't love anybody because we are too busy focusing on ourselves.*

*Humility, then, is foundational to forgiveness and reconciliation. In any human relationship there has to be forgiveness and reconciliation because we are all sinners and every one of us fails at times.*<sup>117</sup>

Genesis 33:5 Esau looked up [lit., *lifted up his eyes*] and he saw the women and the children. He said, “Who are these with you?” Jacob answered [lit., *And he said*], “[These are] the children that Elohim has graciously [given] to your servant.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:5 Esau looked at those with Jacob, and saw the women and children. He asked Jacob, “Who are these people who are with you?” Jacob answered, “God has given these children to me.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 33:5 Esau looked at those with Jacob, and saw the women and children. He asked Jacob, “Who are these people who are with you?” Jacob answered, “God has given these children to me.”

<sup>116</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:5.

<sup>117</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

## Genesis 33:5d: The children God has graciously given to Jacob (commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Jacob...a pious man...could not give even a common answer but [he spoke] in the language of piety (Psalm 127:3; Psalm 113:9; Psalm 107:41).*<sup>118</sup>

Jacob recognizes and states that his children are graciously given to him by God.

Matthew Henry: *Jacob speaks of his children, 1. As God's gifts; they are a heritage of the Lord, Psalm 128:3; Psalm 112:9; Psalm 107:41. 2. As choice gifts; he has graciously given them. Though they were many, and now much his care, and as yet but slenderly provided for, yet he accounts them great blessings.*<sup>119</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *"Graciously given" is the verb chanan...which refers to the act of God bestowing Jacob with the gift of four wives and twelve children and indicates Jacob's recognition that his wives and children were an unmerited gift from God meaning he neither earned or deserved these blessings.*

Wenstrom continues: *Grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross—and our eternal union with Him. Grace is God treating us in a manner that we don't deserve and excludes any human works in order to acquire eternal salvation. Grace means that God saved us despite ourselves and not according to anything that we do but rather saved us because of the merits of Christ and His work on the Cross. Grace excludes any human merit in salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) and gives the Creator all the credit and the creature none.*

Wenstrom continues: *Here we see Jacob giving God the credit. He learned through the discipline that he could not merit the blessing of God, nor could he do anything that could merit the blessing of God. Therefore, Jacob has learned what God's grace is all about, namely, that we can not 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.*

Wenstrom concludes: *Jacob tactfully avoids the term barakh, "bless" in order to avoid provoking Esau to jealousy and reminding him of the stolen blessings of the birthright. "Tact" is a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense and is the skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.*<sup>120</sup>

The Bible has much to say about children: Genesis 30:2 48:9 Ruth 4:13 1Samuel 1:27 1Chronicles 28:5 Psalm 127:3 Isaiah 8:18 Hebrews 2:13.<sup>121</sup>

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What Esau sees is not an army of men to meet him but Jacob's family, whom Jacob has placed at Esau's mercy. Jacob can do that because of God's specific promises to him. We find in Jacob some serious measure of comprehension of God's plan here—he understands that these children and wives are a gracious gift from God, as well as his great possessions and wealth. He also seems to understand that he and his family have a future in God's plan.

I need to make an aside at this point. Actually, this is a parallelism which could have been brought out at any time in the previous several chapters or in the next few chapters. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all dwelt in tents. They had been given the promised land by God's promise, but it had not been delivered to them. So they inhabited temporary homes awaiting their permanent residence. We as believers also occupy a temporary residence, our bodies as we await our resurrection bodies. In this way, the promised land is both real and a shadow of the good things to come. There will be an exception to this—Jacob will, for a time, live in a house.

<sup>118</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:5.

<sup>119</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15 (slightly edited).

<sup>120</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

<sup>121</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:5.

Genesis 33:5 Esau looked at those with Jacob, and saw the women and children. He asked Jacob, “Who are these people who are with you?” Jacob answered, “God has given these children to me.”

Whereas, Jacob is far from being spiritually mature, he has placed his life and the lives of his children on the line by meeting boldly with Esau. Jacob knows that he can do this because God is with him and that his children are the heritage of Israel (although, I don’t know that Jacob fully appreciates what that means). But, Jacob understands that God has a purpose for his family, and obviously, that purpose cannot be fulfilled if Esau kills all of them. So, for this instance, Jacob puts his trust (mostly) in God, and not as much in himself.

At the very least here, Jacob recognizes that his children (the oldest one is perhaps 13 or 14) are gifts from God.

**And so draw near the maids, they and their children and so they bow down. And so draws near also Leah and her children and so they bow down. And after is drawn near Joseph and Rachel and so they bow down.**

Genesis  
33:6–7

**The maids and their children drew near [to Esau] and bowed down [before him]. So also Leah and her children drew near and they bowed down [as well]. And after [them], Joseph draws near, and [his mother] Rachel and they bow down [to Esau].**

**The maids and their children came closer to Esau and bowed down before him. Leah and her children also came closer to Esau and bowed down as well. And after all of them, Joseph came near to Esau, along with his mother Rachel, and they both bowed down to Esau.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so draw near the maids, they and their children and so they bow down. And so draws near also Leah and her children and so they bow down. And after is drawn near Joseph and Rachel and so they bow down.
Targum (Onkelos)	And the concubines approached, they and their children, and bowed. And Leah also approached and her children, and bowed; and afterward Joseph and Rahel approached, and bowed.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the concubines came near, they and their children, and bowed themselves; and Leah also approached, and her children, and bowed; and afterward Joseph came near and stood before Rahel, <u>and hid her by his stature</u> , and they bowed.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Then the handmaids and their children came near, and bowed themselves. Lia also with her children came near, and bowed down in like manner, and last of all Joseph and Rachel bowed down.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Then the handmaids came near with their children, and they bowed themselves. Leah also and her children came near, and bowed themselves. After them, Yoseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed themselves.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then the maids drew near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her children drew near, and bowed themselves; and afterwards came Rachel and Joseph who also drew near, and bowed themselves.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the maid-servants and their children drew near and did reverence. And Lea and her children drew near and did reverence; and after this drew near Rachel and Joseph, and did reverence.

Significant differences: There are some additional words in one of the taramim.

#### **Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	Then the servants and their children came near, and went down on their faces. And Leah came near with her children, and then Joseph and Rachel, and they did the same.
Easy English	Then the female servants and their children came to Esau. As they came close to him, they bowed down. Then Leah and her children came and bowed down in front of Esau. Last of all, Joseph and Rachel came and bowed down to Esau.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the concubines came up with their children and bowed down; then Leah and her children came, and last of all Joseph and Rachel came and bowed down.
International Children's B.	Then the two slave girls and their children came up to Esau. They bowed down flat on the earth before him. Then Leah and her children came up to Esau. They also bowed down flat on the earth. Last of all, Joseph and Rachel came up to Esau. And they, too, bowed down flat before him.
NIRV	Then the female servants and their children came near and bowed down. Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel. They bowed down too.

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

Casual English Bible	Jacob's two slave wives and their children stepped forward to meet Esau, bowing to honor him. Leah and her children came next, also bowing to Esau. Finally Joseph and his mother Rachel stepped forward and bowed.
The Living Bible	Then the concubines came forward with their children, and bowed low before him. Next came Leah with her children, and bowed, and finally Rachel and Joseph came and made their bows.
New Berkeley Version	The maids then approached with their children and bowed deeply. Leah, too, came forward with her children and they bowed to the ground. After them Joseph and Rachel came up and bowed deeply [Each bowing involved kneeling on both knees and touching the ground with the forehead.].
New Century Version	Then the two slave girls and their children came up to Esau and bowed down flat on the earth before him. Leah and her children also came up to Esau and also bowed down flat on the earth. Last of all, Joseph and Rachel came up to Esau, and they, too, bowed down flat before him.
New Life Version	Then the women who served Jacob came near with their children, and they bowed to the ground. Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed to the ground. Then Joseph and Rachel came near and bowed to the ground.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the female servants and their children came up and bowed low, followed by Leah and her children who also came up and bowed low. And then Rachel [arrived] and bowed next to Joseph.
Berean Study Bible	Jacob answered, "These are the children God has graciously given your servant." Then the maidservants and their children approached and bowed down. 7 Leah and her children also approached and bowed down, and then Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed down.
International Standard V	Then the women servants approached, accompanied by their children, and bowed low. Leah also approached, and she and her children bowed low. After this, Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed low.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So the serving-women and their children came up first, and made their obeisance, then Leah with her children; and when they had done the like, Joseph and Rachel made theirs last of all.
Translation for Translators	Then the female slaves and their children came near and bowed in front of Esau. Then Leah and her children came and bowed down. Finally Joseph and Rachel came near and bowed down.

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

Awful Scroll Bible	The maid servants were to draw near, and their children, and were to bow down. Leah and her children were to draw near, and were to bow down. Afterwards was to draw near Joseph, and was to draw near Rachel, and they were to bow down.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then the second wives approached with their children and they bowed. Leah also came forward and her children, and they bowed, and afterwards Joseph and Rachel, and they bowed.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then came the maidens forth, and did their obeisance. Lea also and her children came and did their obeisance. And last of all came Joseph and Rahel and did their obeisance.
H. C. Leupold	And the handmaidens approached—they and their children— and bowed. Leah also drew near and her children and bowed; and then Joseph and Rachel drew near and bowed.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then the women slaves came near with their children, and they bowed down. And Leah also with her children came near bowing down, and after that came Joseph with Rachel close by, and they bowed themselves down too.

**Catholic Bibles:**

The Heritage Bible	And the maids came near, they and their children, and they prostrated themselves. And Leah also with her children came near, and prostrated themselves; and afterward Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they prostrated themselves.
New American Bible (2011)	Then the maidservants and their children came forward and bowed low; next, Leah and her children came forward and bowed low; lastly, Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed low.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	<b>(iv)</b> Then the slave-girls approached with their children, and they prostrated themselves; Le'ah too and her children approached and prostrated themselves; and last came Yosef and Rachel; and they prostrated themselves.
exeGesés companion Bible	Then the maids come near - they and their children; and they prostrate: and Leah also with her children comes near and they prostrate: and after Yoseph and Rachel come near and they prostrate.
Kaplan Translation	The handmaids approached along with their children, and [the women] bowed down. Leah and her children also approached and bowed down. Finally, Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed down.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Then the shefachot came near, they and their yeladim, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her yeladim came near, and bowed themselves; and after came Yosef near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	Then the female servants came near, they and their children, and bowed themselves. And Lě'ah also came near with her children, and they bowed themselves. And Yosěph and Raḥěl came near, and they bowed themselves.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

The Expanded Bible	Then the two slave girls and their children came up to Esau and bowed down flat on the earth before him. Leah and her children also came up to Esau and also
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bowed down flat on the earth. Last of all, Joseph and Rachel came up to Esau, and they, too, bowed down flat before him.

Kretzmann's Commentary

Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves; and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. They all followed the example of Jacob in his humble behavior toward Esau, thus doing their share in gaining the heart of Esau for Jacob. It is noted particularly that Joseph came near before his mother; he seems to have run ahead in childlike trustfulness in order to meet his uncle first. Altogether, the scene is a fine illustration of the ideal painted by the psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," Psalm 133:1.

NET Bible®

The female servants came forward with their children and bowed down [*Heb* "and the female servants drew near, they and their children and they bowed down."]. Then Leah came forward with her children and they bowed down. Finally Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed down.

The Voice

Then the female servants came closer, along with their children, and they bowed down. Leah did likewise; she and her children approached and bowed down. Finally Joseph and Rachel came forward, and they bowed down as *well*.

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and the maids drew near, they and their boys and they bent themselves down, and Le'ah <sup>[Weary]</sup> also drew near and her boys and they bent themselves down and after, Yoseph <sup>[Adding]</sup> was drawn near and Rahhel <sup>[Ewe]</sup> and they bent themselves down,...

Concordant Literal Version

And close are coming the maids, they and their children, and they are prostrating themselves. And, moreover, close are coming Leah and her children, and prostrating themselves. And, afterward, close come Joseph and Rachel, and they are prostrating themselves.

Modern English Version

Then the female servants came near, they and their children, and they bowed down. Leah also with her children came near and bowed themselves. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed themselves.

NASB

Then the maids came near with their children, and they bowed down. Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down.

Young's Updated LT

And the maid-servants draw near, they and their children, and bow themselves; and Leah also draws near, and her children, and they bow themselves; and afterwards Joseph has drawn near with Rachel, and they bow themselves.

**The gist of this passage:**

Jacob's family comes near to Esau and bows before him.

Genesis 33:6a			
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
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
shiph <sup>e</sup> châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i> ]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046

Genesis 33:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hēnnâh (הַנָּה) [pronounced hayn-nawh]	<i>they, those; these</i> [with the definite article]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #2007 BDB #241
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
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדָיִם) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

**Translation:** [The maids and their children drew near \[to Esau\]...](#)

It is unclear how much Jacob told his family about Esau and what had occurred between them. He got them out of Laban's control rather suddenly, and there is no indication that he had a family meeting and said, "Look, I don't know how Esau is going to receive me." I rather think that he did not say anything too cryptic or anything that would frighten his family, despite worrying himself that Esau might kill him (I believe that Jacob's fear was unquestionably mollified, which is why we find his wives and children there with him).

Remember that God told Jacob to return to the Land of Promise. Therefore, if he adheres to this, then he must expect to survive in Canaan, if only because of the promises which God has made to him and to his father and grandfather (through whom he inherits these promises).

I would still guess, given the approach of these sub-families, that there is some kind of apprehension and uncertainty. Women tend to be quite perceptive, so, even if nothing has been said, they might realize that something is not quite right. They have to know that Jacob, whether he says anything about it or not, has some apprehensions about returning home.

Genesis 33:6b			
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
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced shaw-KHAW]	<i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005

**Translation:** [...and bowed down \[before him\].](#)

Logically, the maids would be bowing before Esau. He would have seemed quite impressive, since there are 400 men with him. Furthermore, they observed their husband bowing low before Esau; so they did the same.

Quite obviously, they are not worshipping him, but showing him respect. Although they may simply be following Jacob's lead, he likely prepared them to show this respect.

Dr. John Gill: *and they bowed themselves; in token of respect to Esau, as Jacob had done before them, and set them an example, and no doubt instructed them to do it.*<sup>122</sup>

Jacob, no doubt, introduces them, person by person, in groups of the mother with their children. Each servant-mistress has two sons (and we don't know how many daughters).

Genesis 33:6 *The maids and their children drew near [to Esau] and bowed down [before him]. So also Leah and her children drew near and they bowed down [as well].* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:7a			
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
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced naw-GASH]	<i>to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
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
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדָיִם) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
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
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced shaw-KHAW]	<i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005

**Translation:** *So also Leah and her children drew near and they bowed down [as well].*

After the maids have gone forward, Leah and her children go near to Esau and they bow down before him as well.

Dr. John Gill: *[This would be] the next division or company; their children were seven, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah, six sons and one daughter.*<sup>123</sup>

At some point previously in Genesis, we have seen the plural *daughters*, so there may be 2 or more daughters in these groups.

<sup>122</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:6.

<sup>123</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:7.

Genesis 33:7b			
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
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
nâgash (נִגַּשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to draw near, to be brought near</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphil perfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
Yôwçêph (יוֹסֵף) [pronounced <i>yoh-SAYF</i> ]	<i>he adds, he increases; transliterated Joseph</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3130 BDB #415
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
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i> ]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAW</i> ]	<i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005

**Translation:** And after [them], Joseph draws near, and [his mother] Rachel and they bow down [to Esau].

You will recall that Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah; but soon afterwards, also married her younger sister, Rachel (he worked an additional 7 years for Rachel, but apparently married her soon after marrying Leah). Rachel is the woman that Jacob was in love with.

Dr. John Gill: *it is observed that Joseph is mentioned before his mother; it may be, because they might put him before her in the procession, for greater safety; or she might present him to Esau, being a child of little more than six years of age, and teach him how to make his obeisance to him, which she also did herself.*<sup>124</sup>

Stephen Armstrong: *[S]ince Jacob had bowed to Esau, the family of Jacob was obligated to do the same.*<sup>125</sup>

I don't know whether to make anything at all of this naming Joseph before his mother.

If memory serves, he has had 6 sons and at least one daughter by Leah; and 1 son by Rachel. This would indicate that Jacob did not hate Leah; and, as we have previously studied, it appears that Leah refocused her attention upon God rather than upon Jacob, which would have made her an easier woman to live with.

Joseph is the youngest of Jacob's sons, and the only son of Rachel.

What we read here is actually somewhat unusual. In the previous sentences, it is the mothers who draw near to Esau, and their children. Here, Joseph is drawn near (Niphal stem, which is the passive voice). Let me suggest that, Esau, after seeing and possibly even meeting the other members of the family, looks to the youngest child

<sup>124</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:7.

<sup>125</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/Genesis\\_33.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/Genesis_33.pdf) accessed April 8, 2019.

among them and perhaps extends his hands, calling them forward. Joseph, it appears, come forward first; and then his mother.

I don't know the significance of this, but it is different than the order of the others.

Then entire family took from Jacob's precedence and all of them showed great deference to Esau. They were likely confused as Jacob first sets up his two camps and sets up a parade of gifts and then he hides his family. And suddenly, he takes them with him toward Esau and bows down to Esau.

Joseph, the youngest, was apparently impressed by all that was occurring and he moved ahead of his mother, who, by way of conversations with Jacob possibly feared Esau (Rachel would have known more about what Jacob was thinking than any other wife). Joseph, not privy to these conversations and too young to understand all that was going on, moved forward quickly.

Genesis 33:7 So also Leah and her children drew near and they bowed down [as well]. And after [them], Joseph draws near, and [his mother] Rachel and they bow down [to Esau]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:6–7 The maids and their children drew near [to Esau] and bowed down [before him]. So also Leah and her children drew near and they bowed down [as well]. And after [them], Joseph draws near, and [his mother] Rachel and they bow down [to Esau]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:6–7 The maids and their children came closer to Esau and bowed down before him. Leah and her children also came closer to Esau and bowed down as well. And after all of them, Joseph came near to Esau, along with his mother Rachel, and they both bowed down to Esau. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 33:6–7 The maids and their children came closer to Esau and bowed down before him. Leah and her children also came closer to Esau and bowed down as well. And after all of them, Joseph came near to Esau, along with his mother Rachel, and they both bowed down to Esau.

Ballinger's translation: Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. He put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?"

So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

Then the maids came near with their children, and they bowed down. Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down.

### Arranging the Family before Esau (vv. 1-7) (Jack Ballinger)

1. In this scene Jacob faces the long-dreaded reunion with his brother.
2. The scene opens with Jacob seeing the impressive approach of Esau and his four hundred man army.
3. The visual in the moment becomes more real to Jacob than the promises of God guaranteeing safety for Jacob and his family.
4. The eyes of the flesh trump the eyes of the soul which should have been focused on the divine promises.
5. When Jacob first heard the news of the visitation of Esau with the four hundred he immediately resorted to a ploy of dividing his assets into two companies.
6. This was followed up by the sending of a generous gift of livestock so as ameliorate his brother's wrath.
7. Here he reacts to the test by dividing his wives and children into three groupings.
8. Jacob continues to resort to an energy of the flesh tactic.
9. The fact he knows better from the truth within as evidenced by his wonderful prayer does not win out over

## Arranging the Family before Esau (vv. 1-7) (Jack Ballinger)

- his fear grid.
10. Jacob arranges his wives and their respective offspring according to those he holds most dear (v.1).
  11. The idea being that Rachel and Joseph (last grouping) may have the best chance of escape when violence breaks out.
  12. This was Jacob's motive in 32:8-22.
  13. The same verb "divided" (chatsah) is used here as in 32:7.
  14. There is also the possibility that Jacob arranges his family according to precedence, in order that they may be presented to prince Esau.
  15. The order was: Bilhad with her two sons and Zilpah with her two sons out front, followed by the center grouping of Leah and her seven children, with Rachel and Joseph at the rear (v.2).
  16. To Jacob's credit he demonstrates that he is not caught up in craven fear as he "passed on ahead of them" (v.3).
  17. Thus signaling the new Israel versus the old fear-dominated Jacob.
  18. Unlike the first instance of his dividing his family, with himself in the rear so he could lead the flight, he approaches the threat head-on.
  19. What is more, "he bowed down to the ground seven times until he reached his brother."
  20. Bowing down seven times was the act of respect of a vassal to an overlord (cf. Aramana letters).
  21. What Jacob is really trying to accomplish here is to offset the great act of deception whereby he "cheated" Esau out of the blessing.
  22. But to Jacob's utter amazement Esau responds as if the bad blood between them didn't exist (v.4).
  23. In this initial encounter there is no hint of the murderous intent that separated the brothers twenty years previously.
  24. The greeting is that of long-lost brothers who are reunited.
  25. Four verbs are used in v.4 in connection with the normal greeting of separated relatives: "ran," "embraced," "kissed," and "wept."
  26. Jacob has an emotional moment joining in the weeping and this breaks the ice.
  27. Esau begins the conversation asking the identity of the women and children (v.5).
  28. Jacob's reply to his brother is somewhat striking in that he articulates the fact that the children are his by the grace of God ("The children whom God has graciously given to your servant.").
  29. The key term here is "favor" (chen) which in theological parlance means "grace."
  30. Jacob, it would seem, avoids the term "blessing" which occurs 88x in Genesis versus the 17x for "favor."
  31. He does not say, "the children with whom God blessed me."
  32. The term "blessing" might stir up the past that led to their sudden separation.
  33. Even though they are brothers Jacob maintains the deferential tone by referring to himself as "your servant" and Esau as "my lord" (vv. 5,8,13,14,15).
  34. Jacob introduces his family in groups who in turn prostrate themselves (v.6-7).
  35. By giving gifts and bowing down Jacob seeks to undo the rift and the sin of the past.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen33.htm> accessed April 9, 2019.

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As before, Jacob and Esau each speak in this verse, so many translations place these in separate paragraphs.

**And so he says, "Who [is] to you all the company the this whom I have met?" And so he says, "To find grace in [two] eyes of my adonai."**

Genesis  
33:8

**Esau [lit., he] asked, "Who [is] all this company to you, [the droves] which I have just met?" And he answered, "[This is all a gift to you] To find grace in the eyes of my adonai."**

**Esau asked, “So what about these droves of animals that I have just encountered?” And Jacob answered him, “I hope that by them, I will discover grace in your sight.”**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says, “Who [is] to you all the company the this whom I have met?” And so he says, “To find grace in [two] eyes of my adonai.”
Targum (Onkelos)	And he said, What to thee is all this troop which I have met? And he said, To find mercy in the eyes of my lord.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said, What to thee is all this troop that I have met? And he said, It is <u>a present I have sent</u> to find mercy in the eyes of my lord.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Esau said: What are the droves that I met? He answered: That I might find favour before my lord.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" Ya'aqub said, "To find favour in the sight of my lord."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Esau said to Jacob, Where did you get all this company which I met? And Jacob said to him, Because I have found favor in the sight of my lord.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, What are these things to you, all these companies that I have met? And he said, That your servant might find grace in your sight, my lord.
Significant differences:	The name <i>Esau</i> is not in the MT; but it appears to be in the Latin and Aramaic (I believe that there is a better flow with Esau's name at the beginning).

There are additional words found in one targum.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And he said, What were all those herds which I saw on the way? And Jacob said, They were an offering so that I might have grace in my lord's eyes.
Easy English	Esau asked 'Why did you send all those animals in front of you?' Jacob replied, 'So that you would be happy to see me, my lord.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Esau said, “Who were all those people I saw while I was coming here? And what were all those animals for?” Jacob answered, “These are my gifts to you so that you might accept me.”
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Then Esau asked, “Why did you send this whole group of people and animals I met?” He answered, “To win your favor, sir.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	Esau asked, “What about that other group I met? What did that mean?” Jacob answered, “It was to gain your favor.”
International Children's B.	Esau said, “I saw many herds as I was coming here. Why did you bring them?” Jacob answered, “They were to please you, my master.”
<i>The Message</i>	Esau then asked, “And what was the meaning of all those herds that I met?” “I was hoping that they would pave the way for my master to welcome me.”
NIRV	Esau asked, “Why did you send all those herds I saw?” “I hoped I could do something to please you,” Jacob replied.
New Simplified Bible	Esau asked: »What about that other group I met? What do you mean by all this company?« Jacob answered: »It was to gain your favor.«

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

Casual English Bible	Esau asked his brother, "What's up with all those flocks and herds I met along the way?" Jacob said, "They are yours—my gift in the hope that you would be happy to see me again."
Common English Bible	Esau said, "What's the meaning of this entire group of animals that I met?" Jacob said, "To ask for my master's kindness."
Contemporary English V.	Esau asked Jacob, "What did you mean by these herds I met along the road?" "Master," Jacob answered, "I sent them so that you would be friendly to me."
The Living Bible	"And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?" Esau asked. And Jacob replied, "They are my gifts, to curry your favor!"
New Century Version	Esau said, "I saw many herds as I was coming here. Why did you bring them?" Jacob answered, "They were to please you, my master."
New Life Version	Esau said, "What do you mean by all these animals I have met?" And Jacob said, "They are a gift so I may find favor in the eyes of my lord."
New Living Translation	"And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?" Esau asked. Jacob replied, "They are a gift, my lord, to ensure your friendship."
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Esau asked, "What is the meaning of all the animals that I saw?" Jacob replied, "I am giving them to you, sir, so that you will feel good toward me."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So [Esau] asked: 'Then, what did all those groups that I met along the way have to do with you?' And [Jacob] replied: 'This was done so that your servant might find favor in your eyes, my lord.'
Beck's American Translation	"What do you mean by this whole caravan I met?" he asked. "I want my lord to think kindly of me," he answered.
Berean Study Bible	"What do you mean by sending this whole company to meet me?" asked Esau. "To find favor in your sight, my lord," Jacob answered.
International Standard V	Then Esau asked, "What are all these livestock for?" "To solicit favor from you [Lit. <i>from your eyes</i> ], sir [Lit. <i>you, my lord</i> ]," Jacob answered.
New Advent (Knox)Bible	And when Esau asked, What of those companies I met on my way? Jacob answered, A gift, my lord, to secure me thy good will.
Translation for Translators	Esau asked, "What is the meaning of all the animals that I saw?" Jacob replied, "I am giving them to you, sir, so that you will feel good toward me."

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

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to say: I have encountered a camp. He was to say: They are to come upon favor in the eye of my lord.
Conservapedia	Then Esau said, "What did you mean by sending that big cattle drove that I encountered?" And Jacob said, "I sent it to find grace in the eyes of my lord."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So he asked, " What is all this camp with you which approaches me ? " When he replied, "To find favour in the eyes of my Lord ! "
HCSB	So Esau said, "What do you mean by this whole procession I met?" "To find favor with you, my lord," he answered.
H. C. Leupold	And he said: What about all this host that I met? And he said: To find favor in the sight of my lord.
NIV, ©2011	Esau asked, "What's the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?" "To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said.
Tree of Life Version	"What do you mean by this whole caravan that I've met?" So he said, "To find favor in your eyes, my lord."
Unlocked Literal Bible	Esau said, "What do you mean by all these groups that I met?" Jacob said, "To find favor in the sight of my master."

Urim-Thummim Version	And he said, what's the meaning of all these herds that I encountered? And he replied, these are to find favor in the eyes of my master.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he said, "Who are they to you, all this camp which I encountered; and they said, 'to find grace with my lord.'"

**Catholic Bibles:**

Christian Community (1988)	Esau said, "What is the meaning of all this company I have met?" Jacob replied, "It is to win your favor."
The Heritage Bible	And he said, Who is all this army with you which I have met? And he said, These are to cause grace to come forth toward me in the eyes of my lord.
New American Bible (2011)	Then Esau asked, "What did you intend with all those herds that I encountered?" Jacob answered, "It was to gain my lord's favor."
New Jerusalem Bible	Esau asked, 'What was the purpose of that whole camp I just met?' 'To win my lord's favour,' he replied.
Revised English Bible	Esau asked, "What was all that company of yours that I met?" "It was meant to win favour with you, my lord," was the answer.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	'Esav asked, "What was the meaning of this procession of droves I encountered?" and he answered, "It was to win my lord's favor."
exeGesés companion Bible	And he says, What are this to you - all this camp I meet? And he says, These are to find charism in the eyes of my adoni.
Israeli Authorized Version	And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my YY.
Kaplan Translation	'What did you have to do with that whole camp that came to greet me?' asked [Esau]. 'It was to gain favor in your eyes,' replied [Jacob].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he said, What meanest thou by all this machaneh which I met? And he said, These are to find chen (grace) in the eyes of adoni.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

The Expanded Bible	Esau said, "·I saw many herds as I was coming here. Why did you bring them [·What is all this camp that I encountered]?" Jacob answered, "They were to ·please you, my master [·find grace/favor in the eyes of my master/lord]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	<b>Verses 8-15</b> Jacob presses his gifts upon Esau And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. Jacob's answer to Esau's question as to the meaning of the train of small caravans which he had met is not an act of fawning servility, of cringing humility, but rather an expression by which he hoped to be restored fully to the favor of his brother, somewhat strongly accented, perhaps, after the Oriental manner.
NET Bible®	Esau [ <i>Heb</i> "and he"; the referent (Esau) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] then asked, "What did you intend [ <i>Heb</i> "Who to you?"] by sending all these herds to meet me [ <i>Heb</i> "all this camp which I met."]" Jacob [ <i>Heb</i> "and he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] replied, "To find favor in your sight, my lord."
The Voice	<b>Esau:</b> What was your intent in sending all of your men and herds ahead of you?

**Jacob:** *I hope to find favor with you, my master.*

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he said, who belongs to you of all this campsite which I encountered, and he said, to find beauty in the eyes of my lord,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he, "What is all this camp to you which I encountered? And saying is he, "To find grace for your servant in the eyes of my lord.
English Standard Version	Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."
Webster's Bible Translation	And he said, What <i>meanest</i> thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, <i>these are to find grace in the sight of my lord.</i>
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "What to you <i>is</i> all this camp which I have met?" And he says, "To find grace in the eyes of my lord."

**The gist of this passage:** Esau asks about the herds of animals which he passed along the way, and Jacob says that they are for him. Jacob suggests that they are a means to find grace in Esau's eyes.

Genesis 33:8a			
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
mîy (מי) [pronounced mee]	<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
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 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
kôl (כּל) [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
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
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

## Genesis 33:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb to be is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
pāgash (פָּגַשׁ) [pronounced paw-GASH]	to rush upon [anyone]; to attack; to meet, to encounter	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #6298 BDB #803

**Translation:** Esau [lit., he] asked, “Who [is] all this company to you, [the droves] which I have just met?”

Esau asks Jacob to tell him about these groups of animals which he had encountered first. He certainly understands meeting Jacob's wives and children; but, prior to them, Esau was met by a half dozen groups of animals led by Jacob's servants. “What's that all about?” Esau asked.

Genesis 33:8 Esau asked, “So what about these droves of animals that I have just encountered?” And Jacob answered him, “I hope that by them, I will discover grace in your sight.”

### Genesis 33:8a: Esau asks about the droves of livestock (various commentators)

Stephen Armstrong: *Esau, we now learn, didn't know what to make of the odd greeting Jacob prepared. Instead of appeasing Esau and winning him over, the gifts simply confused Esau. Esau never imagined they were gifts, since he had no reason to expect such a gift.*<sup>126</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *all this company*] Lit. “all this camp.” Esau refers to the droves sent on ahead as a present by Jacob (Genesis 32:13–22).<sup>127</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[Esau] chose not to take the present on what they said, but was willing to have it from Jacob's own mouth, and that he might have the opportunity of refusing it.*<sup>128</sup>

Matthew Poole: *[Esau] knew his meaning before from the servants' mouths; but he asks, that he might both be more certainly informed of the truth, and have an occasion for a civil refusal of the gift.*<sup>129</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *When Esau asked about the gifts of animals, Jacob replied that they were meant to seek Esau's favor or in other words to seek his forgiveness for stealing the blessing of the birthright twenty years before.*

Wenstrom continues: *As we noted in our study of Genesis 32:20, when Jacob sent the gifts he states that they were to “appease” Esau meaning the gifts were designed to reconcile or repair their relationship and by implication “cover” the sin that Jacob had committed against Esau some twenty years earlier.*<sup>130</sup>

In all that we study, we have the circumstances, the words of Jacob and Esau; but there is some speculation as to what each man was thinking.

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<sup>126</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>127</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:8.

<sup>128</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:8.

<sup>129</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:8.

<sup>130</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

Esau was polite in this, but in the back of his mind, remembering Jacob as he was, may have even been thinking, "What the hell is he trying to pull this time?" Maybe. Again, we do not know what is in Esau's mind.

Esau's show of force of 400 men might have been to impress Jacob, but not to overpower him. Although some ascribe some nefarious thinking on the part of Esau for bringing all these men, it is my opinion that he simply traveled this way. Furthermore, Esau did not know what he was going to find with Jacob and had no idea as to what Jacob would do. Jacob left under some very negative circumstances after causing Esau a great deal of grief, so Esau did not know what to expect. Whatever came his way, Esau was ready to handle it. However, I don't believe that any part of Esau's thinking was along the lines of, "I'll show him who the older brother is." His warm greeting and his true interest in Jacob's family suggests that Esau simply misses his brother.

When the brothers were last together, it is clear that there was sibling rivalry and many other issues that they were dealing with; but 20 years is a long time to allow each man to develop some perspective on their relationship. Jacob spent 20 years away from their parents, and I suspect that Esau was at least 10 years away from their parents. Sometimes life away from parents helps a young man grow up (even though Jacob and Esau were no longer young men).

Genesis 33:8b			
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 (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 imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	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; acceptance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2580 BDB #336
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<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
'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; construct form	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

## Genesis 33:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
<p>ʾădônîy (אָדוֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i>]</p>	<p><i>my Lord, my Master, my Sovereign; my lord [master]; can be used to refer to a possessor, an owner; transliterated Adoni, adoni</i></p>	<p>masculine singular noun with the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular suffix</p>	<p>Strong's #113 &amp; #136 BDB #10</p>

**Translation:** And he answered, “[This is all a gift to you] To find grace in the eyes of my adonai.”

Jacob answers that they are all before Esau to find grace in his sight. It appears in this exchange, although it is hard to find it in the Hebrew, that Jacob is saying, “This is a present by which I am hoping will gain me grace in your sight, my lord.”

What was sent ahead was all of the animals, which was put before Esau, as a gift to him. This was the first camp that Esau was met with. Then came Jacob leading his family. All of these would have been classified as Jacob's possessions.

Dr. John Gill: *[This present] was a token of Jacob's good will to him, so, by his acceptance of it, he would know that he bore the same to him also. It was usual in the eastern countries to carry presents to friends, and especially to great men, whenever visits were paid, as all travellers in general testify to be still the usage in those parts, to this day.*<sup>131</sup>

Stephen Armstrong: *Jacob had only succeeded in outsmarting himself. He thought he was making a sacrifice to reconcile himself with an enemy. In the end, his sacrifice wasn't even accepted as such. It was pointless and did nothing to gain an advantage for Jacob.*

Armstrong continues: *Clearly, we now see that Jacob's tricks amounted to nothing in protecting him and his family. God had already addressed the issue in Esau's heart. Before Jacob's schemes and plans, God had already put a plan in place to heal the wound and make Jacob's worthless gesture unnecessary.*<sup>132</sup>

Genesis 33:8 Esau [lit., *he*] asked, “Who [is] all this company to you, [the droves] which I have just met?” And he answered, “[This is all a gift to you] To find grace in the eyes of my adonai.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:8 Esau asked, “So what about these droves of animals that I have just encountered?” And Jacob answered him, “I hope that by them, I will discover grace in your sight.” (Kukis paraphrase)

This is all Jacob's idea; and he hopes that all of these animals will be accepted by Esau, so that Esau would feel gracious towards Jacob. Now, Esau has already demonstrated great graciousness towards Jacob in v. 4. In the previous chapter, the servants were to tell Esau, “These are for you from your servant, Jacob.” So Jacob is merely confirming what his servants told Esau.

Given Esau's graciousness *before* he knows what the animals are all about, it is apparent that Esau was ready and willing to be gracious towards Jacob, with or without this gift.

Genesis 33:8 Esau asked, “So what about these droves of animals that I have just encountered?” And Jacob answered him, “I hope that by them, I will discover grace in your sight.”

<sup>131</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:8.

<sup>132</sup> From [https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/Genesis\\_33.pdf](https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/Genesis_33.pdf) accessed April 8, 2019.

**And so says Esau, “There [is] to me much, my brother. He is to you which [is] to you.”**      Genesis 33:9      **Esau then said, “There [is] much [which] I have, my brother. What is yours is yours.”**

**Esau then said, “I am very well off, my brother. What is yours belongs to you.”**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Esau, “There [is] to me much, my brother. He is to you which [is] to you.”
Targum (Onkelos)	And Esau said, I have much, my brother; let what is thine own profit thee [Or, "prosper with thine own."].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Esau said, I have much substance, my brother; let what thou hast be confirmed to thee.
Revised Douay-Rheims Aramaic ESV of Peshitta (Syriac)	But he said: I have plenty, my brother, keep what is yours for yourself. Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; let that which you have be yours."
Septuagint (Greek)	Then Esau said to him, I have plenty, my brother; keep what you have to yourself. And Esau said, I have much, my brother; keep your own.

Significant differences:      The second phrase is difficult to translate; generally speaking, it means, *what's yours is yours*. That appears to be the general notion of the ancient translations.

#### **Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Easy English	But Esau said ‘Keep your animals for yourself my brother. I have enough of my own.’
Easy-to-Read Version <i>The Message</i>	But Esau said, “You don’t have to give me gifts, brother. I have enough for myself.” Esau said, “Oh, brother. I have plenty of everything—keep what is yours for yourself.”
New Simplified Bible	»But, brother, I already have plenty,« Esau replied. »Keep them for yourself.«

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

The Living Bible	“Brother, I have plenty,” Esau laughed. “Keep what you have.”
New Berkeley Version	Esau rejoined, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have remain yours.”
New Century Version	But Esau said, “I already have enough, my brother. Keep what you have.”
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	But Esau replied, “My younger brother, I have enough animals! Keep for yourself the animals that you have!”

#### **Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	Then Esau said: 'But I [already own] much, my brother. Keep what is yours!'
Berean Study Bible	“I already have plenty, my brother,” Esau replied. “Keep what belongs to you.”
International Standard V	But Esau replied, “I already have so much, my brother, so keep what belongs to you.”
Revised Knox Bible	I have abundance, said he; keep what is yours.
Translation for Translators	But Esau replied, “My younger brother, I have enough animals! Keep for yourself the animals that you have!”

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

Awful Scroll Bible Conservapedia	Esau was to say: I persist in abundance, my brother. Esau said, "I have a lot of substance myself, brother. Keep what you have for yourself."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Esau, however, answered, " I have plenty, my brother : let your own remain to yourself."
Tree of Life Version Wikipedia Bible Project	But Esau said, "I have plenty! O my brother, do keep all that belongs to you." And Esau said, "I have much, brother, that which you have will be thine."

**Catholic Bibles:**

The Heritage Bible New American Bible (2002) New Jerusalem Bible Revised English Bible	And Esau said, There exists to me abundance, my brother; what is yours is yours. "I have plenty," replied Esau; "you should keep what is yours, brother." 'Brother, I have plenty,' Esau answered, 'keep what is yours.' Esau said, "I have more than enough. Keep what you have, my brother."
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**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	'Esav replied, "I have plenty already; my brother, keep your possessions for yourself."
Hebrew Roots Bible Kaplan Translation Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Esau said, I have much, my brother. Let what you have be to yourself. 'I have plenty, my brother,' said Esau. 'Let what is yours remain yours.' And Esav said, I have enough, achi (my brother); keep that thou hast unto thyself.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

The Expanded Bible Kretzmann's Commentary	But Esau said, "I already have enough, my brother. Keep what you have." And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself. The kindness and courtesy of Esau are now apparent throughout: he addresses Jacob with the tender "my brother," he gently urges him to keep his unusually large gift, he states that he is provided with all that he needs.
NET Bible® The Voice	But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother. Keep what belongs to you." <b>Esau:</b> I have enough, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself.
	<hr/> <u>Jacob expects trouble from Esau, but he finds the pain of the past healed. Now Esau wants nothing from his brother.</u>

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> said, there is an abundance belonging to me my brother, he will exist for you which is to you,...
Concordant Literal Version English Standard Version Green's Literal Translation NASB Young's Literal Translation	And saying is Esau, "Forsooth, mine is much, my brother. Be yours what is yours. But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." And Esau said, I have much, my brother. Let what you have be to yourself. Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

**The gist of this passage:** Esau politely declines the gift, having more than enough possessions. "What's yours is yours," he says.

Genesis 33:9a			
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
'Êsâv (עשו) [pronounced éy-SAWV]	<i>handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
yêsh (יש) [pronounced yaysh]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); there [is, are]; to be present, to be ready, to exist</i>	substantive with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #3426 BDB #441
lâmed (ל) [pronounced lé]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
rab (רב) [pronounced rah <sup>bv</sup> ]	<i>many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912
'âch (אח) [pronounced awhk]	<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:** Esau then said, “There [is] much [which] I have, my brother.

Esau is not necessarily bragging here. Since Jacob left, Esau, for a time, was possibly the CEO of his father's business. Recall that Isaac had inherited a very successful ranching business from his father Abraham. It is certainly not clear how Isaac decided to divide things up, or what has happened in these past 20 years, but it would be logical for Esau to build his business upon his father's.

On the other hand, given that Isaac is still alive and Esau is living elsewhere, that what Esau has accomplished has been on his own terms. It is clear, by any perspective, that Esau is quite successful. Today, this would be equivalent to Esau founding a business with 400 employees (actually, to be fair, a business with 40,000 employees might be even more the parallel situation).

At some point, Esau moved to Seir, and has had a great life there.

**Jacob and Esau's true relationship:** To this point in time, Jacob has referred to himself as Esau's *servant* and to Esau as *his lord*. The Bible itself refers to them as brothers back in v. 3 and Esau himself calls him *my brother* right here. In fact, 7 times in Genesis 32–33 are Jacob and Esau referred to as brothers, in some way or another. The implication is, Jacob could have forgone the *my lord, your servant* stuff and simply related to Esau as his estranged, but much loved brother. This is their true relationship. Furthermore, no matter how much bowing and scraping the Jacob does, he is not going to submit his will to Esau's. If Jacob is truly the servant and Esau is his

lord, then whatever Esau says, Jacob is going to try to go along with. But, that is not the case here. At least 3 times, Esau will suggest something to Jacob and Jacob will reject Esau's suggestions all 3 times (this is apart from the back and forth about the present). So, no matter what Jacob says, he still sees himself as an autonomous entity with regards to Esau.

This is very much like the Jacob that we know—he might say one thing, but he has something else entirely going on. What he says is simply to further his own ends. This is not this great spiritually mature Jacob, as some commentators make him out to be. He is not much different from the Jacob of a few chapters ago. He might be manipulating Esau, but, at least he is not trying to take anything from Esau. So, there's that.

Watch these two men in this chapter. Jacob's primary focus is to insure that Esau does not kill him or his family. He feels badly about how he has treated Esau in the past and will offer him a present to hopefully remove whatever stain remains. Esau, on the other hand, is going to appear to be sincerely interested in Jacob and his life.

Genesis 33:9 *Esau then said, "I am very well off, my brother. What is yours belongs to you."*

### Genesis 33:9a: Esau has all that he needs (commentators/discussion)

J. Vernon McGee: *Esau is saying, "You didn't need to send that to me. I have plenty already."*<sup>133</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Esau's] roving life suited his nature had procured him such wealth and power. At this time, he was quite equal to his brother in earthly possessions.*<sup>134</sup>

Matthew Henry: *Esau had what was promised him, the fatness of the earth and a livelihood by his sword...Even Esau can say, I have enough.*<sup>135</sup>

H. C. Leupold: *[Esau] seems to have been quite rich himself. He does not say: "I have enough" (A.V. and Luther), but: "I have much" (rabh). He actually does not want anything from Jacob.*<sup>136</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Esau does not want such favours from his brother. They are not necessary, for he is reasonably wealthy and has the means of obtaining more.*<sup>137</sup>

Matthew Poole channels Esau: *I neither need it for my use, nor desire it as a compensation for thy former injuries.*<sup>138</sup>

Trapp points out something interesting: *Here [in Esau's mention of plenty, there] is no mention of God: God is not in all the wicked man's thoughts: he contents himself with a natural use of the creature, as brute beasts do.*<sup>139</sup>

Although I believe that Trapp's comments are a bit harsh, Jacob acknowledged God in his own blessings (v. 5), yet Esau does not take the same view.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The etiquette of the Middle East in that day required Esau to make a show of refusing the gift and Jacob to press it on him.*<sup>140</sup>

<sup>133</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>134</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:1–4 (edited).

<sup>135</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15.

<sup>136</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>137</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:9.

<sup>138</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:9.

<sup>139</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 33:8.

<sup>140</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

I think that Esau's refusal was simply eastern good manners.

I also believe that Esau would have reacted the same way in meeting Jacob, present or not (note that Esau has not offered Jacob a present).

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

God informed Jacob that, when he was leaving Canaan, that this was okay; and then God called Jacob to return to Canaan when the time was right. Jacob's mother, Rebekah, was supposed to be the one who would send for Jacob when Esau's anger had subsided, but it is God who is able to look into the hearts of men.

I part company with many commentators who suggest that God reached into Esau's heart and turned his volition towards Jacob in the right direction. However, God may have allowed circumstances and time to work on Esau's heart; and God clearly chose the exact right time for Jacob to leave Haran and return to Canaan. It is clear when Jacob came face to face with Laban that they had a lot of angry things to say to one another; but they were able to leave it there and part company forever. It was the right time for Jacob to leave. And, we can tell by how this meeting between Esau and Jacob is going that this was the exact right time for Jacob to return to Canaan.

### Genesis 33:9b

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 imperfect; the apocopated jussive	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
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 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, so that, in that; for that, since; which; when, at what time; who, whom; where, wherever; the fact that = how; because that, because; as, like as; yea, even, yea even; until that; then, so [in an apodosis]</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
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 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** What is yours is yours."

Esau's jealousy and anger is long gone. He is not necessarily trying to impress Jacob; but he accepts what has happened and has put it behind them.

Esau has become quite wiser in his older age. He has already been duped by Jacob twice and is understandably suspicious of whatever Jacob might have in mind. Or, what Esau states could be his entire thinking on this matter. "I have so much already; this is yours; you should keep it."

Matthew Henry: *Esau, for his part, needs it not, either to supply him, for he was rich, or to pacify him, for he was reconciled.*<sup>141</sup>

Fuller: *Whatever effect Jacob's present had upon him, he would not be thought to be influenced by anything of that kind; especially as he had great plenty of his own.*<sup>142</sup>

Jacob's gift to Esau was not one of love or friendship or deference, but one given in order to manipulate Esau or to appease Esau. It was therefore a gift which was given with strings. Esau didn't know exactly what was occurring, but he was no doubt careful about Jacob's manipulation techniques. Remember, this was probably a goodly part of Jacob's wealth, and the livestock were all set up in parade of sorts. Jacob did not come out to meet Esau directly but set up this parade of gifts first. Esau was understandably taken aback and he was properly suspicious (Scripture does not tell us that Esau is suspicious or even reticent; I have made that assumption).

Esau has been greatly blessed in life with material things—probably more than Jacob up to this point in time. He is the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham; so he would be blessed by God.

In any case, normal oriental custom would require Esau to refuse such a large present.

Matthew Henry: *Esau modestly refused it because he had enough, and did not need it.*<sup>143</sup>

Genesis 33:9 *Esau then said, "There [is] much [which] I have, my brother. What is yours is yours."* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:9 *Esau then said, "I am very well off, my brother. What is yours belongs to you."* (Kukis paraphrase)

**Generational Hatred:** As we have studied, Esau and Ishmael were not terrible people (they are the heads of the lines *not* of promise). They were sons of the patriarchs and they had been raised by Isaac and Abraham respectively. Therefore, they would have clearly had faith in the God of Abraham. Both men clearly exercised faith in the God of Abraham.

The problem is with their progeny but not with them. Esau had a reason to be mad at Jacob, but he has gotten over it. Ishmael had a reason to feel some anger toward his father, as well as possibly some jealousy toward Isaac, but he appeared to get over it as well. However, the lines of Esau and of Ishmael eventually cultivated great animus against the Jews, developing the longest standing grudge in world history.

And so that there is no misunderstanding, this anger and hatred so prevalent today is renewed with each generation. It is incorrect to say, "Well, this conflict goes back hundreds of years; they cannot help it." We Americans were at war with Japan and we were at war with Germany; and these wars required the killing of millions of people in order to end the conflict. Now, these two nations are great allies of the United States. We do not hold a grudge against present-day Japan and the current people of Japan because of Pearl Harbor. Each new generation either renews its hatred or it leaves that hatred behind with the previous generations. This is a generational decision—one certainly influenced by the words of their parents.

I should add that, part of the reason that we are allies today is that, we summarily and decisively defeated the Germans and the Japanese. We did not simply *end the war*. We defeated them militarily; we defeated them completely, we defeated them by killing so many of their people, that they could endure it no longer. This was a military solution. It was known as unconditional surrender, and President Truman would take nothing less from Japan (Japan first tried to offer up a partial surrender and Truman rejected it).

<sup>141</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15.

<sup>142</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:9.

<sup>143</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15.

A complete and total surrender by Japan put the United States in control of Japan and its people. After WWII, America did that which was unthinkable at the time. We oversaw Japan and Germany's recovery, providing them with missionaries and the gospel message of Jesus Christ, law and order, and guidance; and then, when the time was right, we restored to them their freedom and independence. Simultaneously, Russia tried to suck up and subjugate every square foot of conquered land that they could. In the modern era, Russia has been successful in selling the propaganda today that the United States is the imperialist nation, even while they to this day continue to conquer more land either with their military or with their influence.

Every generation determines its own attitudes. The next generation of Americans could hate the Japanese and vice versa—and they could blame it all on WWII. This is a choice that each generation makes. So it is with the Arabs and Jews today—each side can point back to, *but they did this to us!* However, the onus today is upon the Arabs and the other Muslims—are they able to accept Israel as a legitimate country or not? After all, Israel is a postage stamp of a country in the midst of the great darkness of that region (I refer to the darkness of Islam).

Back to Jacob meeting Esau.

Genesis 33:9 Esau then said, "I am very well off, my brother. What is yours belongs to you."

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Notice that Esau never mentions God once in their conversation and Jacob eventually mentions God twice. The fact that Esau does not mention God once does "not" mean that he was an atheist but it does indicate that he is an unbeliever and has failed to acknowledge the hand of God in his life.*<sup>144</sup>

As I have already stated, there is no reason to assume that Esau (or Ishmael for that matter) were unbelievers. Being raised as they were, there is very little doubt in my mind that they were raised to believe in the revealed God.

And so says Jacob, "No, please; if please I have found grace in your [two] eyes, and you have taken my present from my hand. For if upon so I have seen your face like seeing a face of Elohim. And so you will accept me. Take please my blessing which was brought to you. For has graced me Elohim and for there [is] to me much." And so he urges in him and so he takes [it].

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Jacob then said, "No, please; if, please, I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take [this] present from me [lit., *my hand*]. For this reason, I have seen your face [and it is] like seeing the face of Elohim. Furthermore, you have accepted me [despite my actions in the past]. [Therefore] take my blessing, please, which was brought to you. Elohim has graced me because there [is] much [given] to me [as well]." So he urged him and he took [the present].

Jacob then said, "Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have accepted me. Therefore, take the blessing which I brought here for you. God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well." Jacob continued to urge Esau until he took the present.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says Jacob, "No, please; if please I have found grace in your [two] eyes, and you have taken my present from my hand. For if upon so I have seen your face like seeing a face of Elohim. And so you will accept me. Take please my blessing

<sup>144</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

	which was brought to you. For has graced me Elohim and for there [is] to me much." And so he urges in him and so he takes [it].
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob said, I pray thee, if I have now found mercy in thine eyes, that thou wouldst accept the present from my hand, because I have now seen thy face as the vision of the face of the Great, and thou art pleased with me. Receive, I pray, my offering which is brought to thee, because the Lord hath been merciful to me, and because I have all. And he was urgent on him, and he took it.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob said, Say not so, I beseech thee. If now I have found favor in thy eyes, accept my present from my hand; because I have seen the look of thy face, and it is to me as the vision of the face of <u>thy angel</u> ; for, lo, thou art propitious to me. Receive now the present which is brought to thee, because it hath been given me through mercy from before the Lord, and because I have much substance. And he urged upon him, and he received.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob said: Do not so I beseech you, but if I have found favour in your eyes, receive a little present at my hands: for I have seen your face, as if I should have seen the countenance of God: be gracious to me, And take the blessing, which I have brought you, and which God has given me, who gives all things. He took it with much ado at his brother's earnest pressing him.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub said, "Please, no, if I have now found favour in your sight, then receive my present at my hand, because I have seen your face, as one sees the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please take the gift that I brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." He urged him, and he took it.
Peshitta (Syriac)	But Jacob said to him, If now I have found mercy in your sight, then receive my present from my hands; because now I have seen your face, as I saw the face of <u>an angel</u> , and you were pleased with me. Now accept my blessings that I have brought to you; because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And Jacob urged him, and he did accept them.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob said, If I have found grace in your sight, receive the gifts through my hands; therefore have I seen your face, as if any one should see the face of God, and you shall be well-pleased with me. Receive my blessings, which I have brought you, because God has had mercy on me, and I have all things; and he constrained him, and he took <i>them</i> .
Significant differences:	Jacob starts out with a negative; but that negative is not found in the Syriac <sup>145</sup> (?), the Greek or in one of the targums. A targum and the Syriac have <i>an angel</i> instead of <i>God</i> .

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Jacob said, Not so; but if I have grace in your eyes, take them as a sign of my love, for I have seen your face as one may see the face of God, and you have been pleased with me. Take my offering then, with my blessing; for God has been very good to me and I have enough: so at his strong request, he took it.
Easy English	But Jacob replied 'No! If you are happy to see me, accept these as a gift from me. I was afraid to see you. I was as afraid as if I could see the face of God. But I have seen you. And I did not die. Please accept the gift that I brought to you. Accept it because God has given me many good things. And I have everything that I need.' So, Esau accepted the gifts because Jacob wanted him to.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob said, "No, please, if I have gained your favor, accept my gift. To see your face is for me like seeing the face of God, now that you have been so friendly to

<sup>145</sup> Syriac = Aramaic, but these two translations differ often.

	me. Please accept this gift which I have brought for you; God has been kind to me and given me everything I need.” Jacob kept on urging him until he accepted.
International Children’s B.	Jacob said, “No! Please! If I have pleased you, then please accept the gift I give you. I am very happy to see your face again. It is like seeing the face of God because you have accepted me. 11So I beg you to accept the gift I give you. God has been very good to me. And I have more than I need.” And because Jacob begged, Esau accepted the gift..
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob said, “Please. If you can find it in your heart to welcome me, accept these gifts. When I saw your face, it was as the face of God smiling on me. Accept the gifts I have brought for you. God has been good to me and I have more than enough.” Jacob urged the gifts on him and Esau accepted.
Names of God Bible	Jacob said, “No, please take the gift I’m giving you, because I’ve seen your face as if I were seeing the face of <b>Elohim</b> , and yet you welcomed me so warmly. Please take the present I’ve brought you, because <b>Elohim</b> has been gracious to me and has given me all that I need.” So Esau took it because Jacob insisted.
NIRV	“No, please!” said Jacob. “If I’ve pleased you, accept this gift from me. Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God. You have welcomed me so kindly. Please accept the present that was brought to you. God has given me so much. I have everything I need.” Jacob wouldn’t give in. So Esau accepted it.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob said: »Please accept these gifts as a sign of your friendship for me. When you welcomed me and I saw your face, it was like seeing the face of God. »Take my offering then, with my blessing. God has been very good to me and I have enough.« So at his strong request, he took it.

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

Casual English Bible	“No,” Jacob answered. “If you’re happy to see me, please accept these gifts. I’m so happy to see you. It’s like looking into the face of God now that I know you are happy to see me, too. Please accept the gift I brought you. God has taken good care of me. I have more than I need.” Because Jacob insisted, Esau eventually accepted the gift.
Common English Bible	Jacob said, “No, please, do me the kindness of accepting my gift. Seeing your face is like seeing God’s face, since you’ve accepted me so warmly. Take this present that I’ve brought because God has been generous to me, and I have everything I need.” So Jacob persuaded him, and he took it.
Contemporary English V.	"No!" Jacob said. "Please accept these gifts as a sign of your friendship for me. When you welcomed me and I saw your face, it was like seeing the face of God. Please accept these gifts I brought to you. God has been good to me, and I have everything I need." Jacob kept insisting until Esau accepted the gifts.
The Living Bible	“No, but please accept them,” Jacob said, “for what a relief it is to see your friendly smile! I was as frightened of you as though approaching God! Please take my gifts. For God has been very generous to me and I have enough.” So Jacob insisted, and finally Esau accepted them.
New Berkeley Version	“No, please,” urged Jacob, “if you will do me a favor, accept my present, because being in your presence is like being in God’s presence; you have been pleased with me. I beg of you, do accept my blessing [Jacob definitely refers to “the blessing” he had unfairly taken from his brother and which he now returns.] that has been brought to you; for God has treated me lavishly and I have everything.”
New Century Version	Jacob said, “No! Please! If I have pleased you, then accept the gift I give you. I am very happy to see your face again. It is like seeing the face of God, because you have accepted me. So I beg you to accept the gift I give you. God has been very good to me, and I have more than I need.” And because Jacob begged, Esau accepted the gift.

New Life Version	But Jacob said, "No, I ask of you, if I have found favor in your eyes, then receive my gift. For I see your face as one sees the face of God. You have received me with favor. Take my gift that has been brought to you. For God has shown loving-kindness to me, and I have all I need." So he begged him until he took it.
New Living Translation	But Jacob insisted, "No, if I have found favor with you, please accept this gift from me. And what a relief to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the face of God! Please take this gift I have brought you, for God has been very gracious to me. I have more than enough." And because Jacob insisted, Esau finally accepted the gift.
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	But Jacob said, "No, please, if you feel good toward me, accept these gifts from me. You have greeted me very kindly. Seeing you smile at me assures me that you have forgiven me. It is like seeing the face of God! Please accept these gifts that I have brought to you, because God has acted kindly toward me, and I still have plenty of animals!" Jacob kept on urging him to accept the animals, and finally Esau accepted them.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Jacob said: 'If I've found favor in your eyes, take the gifts from my hands; for seeing your face is like seeing the face of God. If you are happy with me, take the blessings that I've brought to you, because God has been merciful to me, and I have everything.' And he kept insisting, so [Esau] took them.
Berean Study Bible	But Jacob insisted, "No, please! If I have found favor in your sight, then receive this gift from my hand. For indeed, I have seen your face, and it is like seeing the face of God, since you have received me favorably. 11 Please take my present that was brought to you, because God has been gracious to me and I have all I need. So Jacob pressed him until he accepted.
International Standard V	"Please," Jacob implored him, "don't refuse. If I'm to receive favor from you, then receive this gift from me, because seeing your face is like seeing the face of God, since you have favorably accepted me. So receive my blessing, which has been sent to you, since God has been gracious to me. Besides, I have enough." Because Jacob kept pressing him, Esau accepted the gifts.
Translation for Translators	But Jacob said, "No, please, if you feel good toward me, accept these gifts from me. You have greeted me very kindly. Seeing your smiling face assures me <i>that you have forgiven me</i> . It is like seeing the face of God! Please accept these gifts that I have brought to you, because God has acted kindly toward me, and I still have plenty of animals!" Jacob kept on urging him to accept the animals, and finally he accepted them.

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

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob was to say: Have I found favor in your eye, even is you to have taken the gift from my hand. For I have seen your face, it appears as the face of he of mighty ones; even was you to accept them. Be taking the compliment I am to have brought to you, for he of mighty ones is to have shown favor to me in all things, even to me persists all things. He was to press him, and he was to receive them.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But Jacob said, " Not so ; if now I have found favour in your eyes, take a present from my hand, for certainly I have seen your face as if I had seen the face of God, and am delighted. Now do take the thanks which I have brought to you, for God has favoured me, and because there is plenty for me as well." So he pressed him until he took them.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Jacob answered: oh no, but if I have found grace in your sight, receive my present of my hand: for I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God: wherefore receive me to grace and take my blessing that I have brought you, for

God has given it me. And I have enough of all things. And so he compelled him to take it.

Jubilee Bible 2000 And Jacob said, No, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present from my hand, that for this I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God; and do me the pleasure. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee because God has dealt graciously with me, and all that is here is mine. And he urged him, and he took *it*.

H. C. Leupold Jacob said: Please, no. If only I might find favor in thy sight and thou wouldest accept my gift at my hands! For on that account have I beheld thy face, as one sees the face of God; and thou hast graciously received me. Accept, I pray, my gift of welcome which I have offered thee, for God hath dealt graciously with me, and also because I have everything. So he urged him, and he accepted.

NIV, ©2011 “No, please!” said Jacob. “If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably. Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need.” And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

Tree of Life Version Yet Jacob said, “No, please! If I have found favor in your eyes, then you will take my offering from my hand. For this is the reason I’ve seen your face—it is like seeing the face of God—and you’ve accepted me! Please, take my blessing that was brought to you, because God has been gracious to me, and because I have everything.” So he kept urging him until he accepted.

Urim-Thummim Version But Jacob answered, now providing that I have found favor in your eyes please receive these gifts from my hands since I have seen your face, as if I had seen the face of Elohim, and you were pleased with me. Take my blessing that has come to you since Elohim has dealt favorably with me, and because I have everything. So he urged him and he received it.

Wikipedia Bible Project And Jacob said, "Please don't if I have found grace in your eyes, and take my offering from my hands: I wish it, because your face has appeared to me as if it were the face of god. And please take my blessing which is deserved to you, because god had mercy on me, and because I have all," and he pressed upon him, and he took.

### **Catholic Bibles:**

Christian Community (1988) Jacob said, “But, no, please! Accept the gift I offer, for I came to you as to God, and you received me kindly. So accept the gift I have brought you, for God has dealt generously with me and I have plenty.” And so much did Jacob insist that Esau accepted the gift.

The Heritage Bible And Jacob said, No, please, if now there is grace toward me in your eyes, take my present from my hands, because therefore I have seen your face like seeing the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Take, please, my blessing which has been brought to you, because God has stooped down in grace to me, and because I have all. And he urged him, and he took it.

New American Bible (2011) “No, I beg you!” said Jacob. “If you will do me the favor, accept this gift from me, since to see your face is for me like seeing the face of God—and you have received me so kindly. Accept the gift I have brought you. For God has been generous toward me, and I have an abundance.” Since he urged him strongly, Esau accepted.

New Jerusalem Bible Jacob protested, 'No, if I have won your favour, please accept the gift I offer, for in fact I have come into your presence as into the presence of God, since you have received me kindly. So accept the gift I have brought for you, since God has been generous to me and I have all I need.' And he urged him, and Esau accepted.

New RSV Jacob said, 'No, please; if I find favour with you, then accept my present from my hand; for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God—since you have

received me with such favour. Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have everything I want.' So he urged him, and he took it.

Revised English Bible But Jacob replied, "No, please! If I have won your favour, then accept, I pray, this gift from me; for, as you see, I come into your presence as into that of a god, and yet you receive me favourably. Accept this gift which I bring you; for God has been gracious to me, and I have all I want." Thus urged, Esau accepted it.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Ya'akov said, "No, please! If now I have won your favor, then accept my gift. Just seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me. So please accept the gift I have brought you, for God has dealt kindly with me and I have enough." Thus he urged him, until he accepted it.

exeGesese companion Bible And Yaaqov says, No, I beseech you, if, I beseech, I find charism in your eyes, then take my offering from my hand: because I see your face as seeing the face of Elohim; and you are pleased.

Take, I beseech you, the blessing I bring you; because Elohim grants me charism and because I have all.

- and he urges him and he takes.

Kaplan Translation 'Please! No!' said Jacob. 'If I have gained favor with you, please accept this gift from me. After all [See note on Genesis 18:5.], seeing your face is like seeing the face of the Divine [See Genesis 32:31 (Bereshith Rabbah 77).], you have received me so favorably. Please accept my welcoming gift [Literally, 'blessing.' But in Hebrew, 'welcome' is 'blessed is he who comes' (cf. Rashi).] as it has been brought to you. God has been kind to me, and I have all [I need].' [Jacob thus] urged him, and [Esau finally] took it.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Ya'akov said, No, now, if I have found chen (grace) in thy sight, then receive my minchah at my yad inasmuch as I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the p'nei Elohim (the face of G-d) vatirtzeini (and thou wast pleased to accept me, thou wast appeased by me).

Accept, now, my brocha that is brought to thee; because Elohim hath dealt graciously with me, and because yesh li khol (there is to me all, my needs are met). And he urged him, and he accepted.

The Scriptures 1998 And Ya'aqob said, "No, please, if I have now found favour in your eyes, then receive my present from my hand, because I have seen your face like seeing the face of Elohim, and you were pleased with me. "Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because Elohim has favoured me, and because I have all I need." And he urged him, and he took it.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible Jacob replied, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then accept my gift [as a blessing] from my hand, for I see your face as if I had seen the face of God, and you have received me favorably. Please accept my blessing (gift) which has been brought to you, for God has dealt graciously with me and I have everything [that I could possibly want]." So Jacob kept urging him and Esau accepted it.

The Expanded Bible Jacob said, "No! Please! If I have ·pleased you [·found grace/favor in your eyes], then ·accept the gift I give you [·take my gift/tribute from my hand]. ·I am very happy to see your face again. It [·Seeing your face] is like seeing the face of God, because

you have accepted me. So I beg you to accept the gift [present; <sup>L</sup>blessing] I give you. God has been very good [gracious; favorable] to me, and I have more than [all that] I need.” And because Jacob begged [he urged him], Esau accepted [took] the gift.

Kretzmann’s Commentary

And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Although colored by Oriental courtesy, the words of Jacob were altogether sincere. He had found favor in the sight of Esau, in the friendly face of his brother he saw again the evidence of God’s friendly watching over his life’s path, all of which filled him with an intense joy. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. God’s favor and goodness had blessed Jacob so richly that he had all he needed and to spare. And he urged him, and he took it. Thus the new bond of friendliness and brotherliness was strengthened.

NET Bible®

“No, please take them,” Jacob said [*Heb* “and Jacob said, ‘No, please.’” The words “take them” have been supplied in the translation for clarity, and the order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse rearranged for stylistic reasons.]. “If I have found favor in your sight, accept my gift from my hand. Now that I have seen your face and you have accepted me, it is as if I have seen the face of God [*Heb* “for therefore I have seen your face like seeing the face of God and you have accepted me.”]. Please take my present [*Heb* “blessing.” It is as if Jacob is trying to repay what he stole from his brother twenty years earlier.] that was brought to you, for God has been generous [Or “gracious,” but in the specific sense of prosperity.] to me and I have all I need [*Heb* “all.”]. When Jacob urged him, he took it [*Heb* “and he urged him and he took.” The referent of the first pronoun in the sequence (“he”) has been specified as “Jacob” in the translation for clarity.].

The Voice

**Jacob:** No, please. If I have found favor with you *after all these years*, please accept the gifts I offer. Seeing your face *again* is like seeing the face of God, so graciously *and warmly* have you welcomed me. Please accept the blessing I bring. God has graciously provided for me *and my family*. I have everything I could want. Jacob kept insisting that Esau accept the gift. Finally he did.

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

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.

...and Ya'aqov [<sup>He restrains</sup>] said, please no, please, if I found beauty in your eyes then you will take my donation from my hand since I saw your face it is like seeing the face of Elohiym [<sup>Powers</sup>] and you accepted me, please take my present which was brought to you given that Elohiym [<sup>Powers</sup>] showed me beauty and given that there is belonging to me all and he pressed hard with him and he took,...

Context Group Version

And Jacob said, No, I beg of you, if now I have found favor in your sight, then receive my tribute from my hand; since I have seen your face, as one sees the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Take, I beg of you, my gift that is brought to you; because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

*Emphasized Bible*

Then said Jacob, Nay, I pray thee, if, I pray thee, have found favour in thine eyes, then thou wilt take my present at my hand,—For on this account, hath my seeing thy face been like seeing the face of God in that thou wast well-pleased with me. Take, I pray thee my blessing which hath been brought in to thee, because God hath shewed me favour and because I have everything. So he was urgent with him and he took it.

English Standard Version

Jacob said, “No, please, if I have found favour in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because

God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” Thus he urged him, and he took it.

**NASB** But Esau said, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.” Jacob said, “No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably. Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty.” Thus he urged him and he took *it*.

**New European Version** Jacob said, Please no, if I have now found grace in your sight, then receive my present at my hand, because I have seen your face, as one sees the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please take away my blessing that I brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have all things. He urged him, and he took it.

**New King James Version** And Jacob said, “No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” So he urged him, and he took *it*.

**Young’s Updated LT** And Jacob says, “Nay, I pray you, if, I pray you, I have found grace in your eyes, then you have received my present from my hand, because that I have seen your face, as the seeing of the face of God, and you are pleased with me. Receive, I pray you, my blessing, which is brought to you, because God has favored me, and because I have all things;” and he presses on him, and he receives [it].

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob urges his brother strongly to receive the gift, as God has blessed Jacob; and Esau finally does.

10-11

Genesis 33:10a			
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
’amar (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 (יעקב) [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
’al (אל) [pronounced <i>a]</i>	<i>no, not; nothing; none; neither, nor; do not, let not [with a verb]; let there not be [with an understood verb];</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong’s #408 BDB #39
nâ’ (נא) [pronounced <i>naw</i> ]	<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

## Genesis 33:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
<p>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>.</p>			

**Translation:** Jacob then said, "No, please;..."

Jacob appeals to Esau to reconsider. He wants to give Esau a gift. Jacob probably has felt some guilt over his actions 20 years ago. Even though he had been encouraged by his mother, he was at least 40 years old—clearly able to make his own decisions.

To some degree, this is a polite dance back and forth between the two brothers. I don't know that we should read anything more into this exchange than that.

I do not doubt Esau's words. Essentially, he is saying, "There is no need for a gift. I have been blessed with great abundance." But, once the gift has been offered, Jacob *cannot* say, "Oh, you don't want it? Then I will withdraw it."

## Genesis 33:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
<p>The particle ʾîm (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).</p>			
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced <i>naw</i> ]	<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
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>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
chên (חֵן) [pronounced <i>khayn</i> ]	<i>grace, favor, blessing; acceptance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2580 BDB #336
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<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
ʿêynayim (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

## Genesis 33:10b

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
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
The NET Bible: <i>The form is the perfect tense with a vav (ו) consecutive, expressing a contingent future nuance in the "then" section of the conditional sentence.</i> <sup>146</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 with the 1st person singular suffix	Strong's #4503 BDB #585
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** ...if, please, I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take [this] present from me [lit., my hand].

Discovering grace in Esau's sight means that he would accept a present from Jacob. However, ultimately, this means that Esau has accepted Jacob back into the land without rancor.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge lists Scriptures related to finding grace in the sight of another: Genesis 19:19 47:29 50:4 Exodus 33:12–13 Ruth 2:10 1Samuel 20:3 Jer. 31:2.<sup>147</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Esau] refused to accept [the presents of cattle]...until Jacob's urgent persuasion eventually induced him to do so.*<sup>148</sup>

Genesis 33:10 Jacob then said, "Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God.

### Genesis 33:10b: Jacob urges Esau to receive his present (a discussion)

James Freeman: *A refusal to receive a present is, throughout the East, is interpreted as an evidence of enmity.*<sup>149</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *[Jacob's] insistence on giving presents to Esau may have been an attempt to return to him the blessing that should have been his, to undo his sins of earlier years.*<sup>150</sup>

<sup>146</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 4, 2016.

<sup>147</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:10.

<sup>148</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:8–9.

<sup>149</sup> *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 41 (slightly edited).

<sup>150</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-33.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

## Genesis 33:10b: Jacob urges Esau to receive his present (a discussion)

Clarke has an interesting theory (I don't know if there is evidence to back it up): *Jacob could not be certain that he had found favor with Esau, unless the present had been received; for in accepting it Esau necessarily became his friend, according to the custom of those times, and in that country. In the eastern countries, if your present be received by your superior, you may rely on his friendship; if it be not received, you have every thing to fear.*<sup>151</sup>

Although Jacob certainly cannot withdraw his present at this time, I believe that Esau's acceptance of it is superfluous. I believe that Gill has a better understanding of Jacob's urging.

Dr. John Gill: *if now I have found grace in your sight, then receive my present at my hand; signifying, that the acceptance of his present would be a token to him, and give him full satisfaction that he bore a good will to him, and did not retain anger and resentment against him.*<sup>152</sup>

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob pleads urgently. His offer was sincere. Esau's acceptance would be the surest token of his having been reconciled to his brother.*<sup>153</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob continues to urge Esau to accept his gift. He knows that if the gift is accepted graciously he will be that much safer. In the light of the customs of the time even Esau would not accept a gift and then indulge in hostility.*<sup>154</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *To accept a present from an inferior was a customary pledge of friendship; but returning it implied disaffection. It was on this ground that Jacob was so urgent with Esau to receive his present.*<sup>155</sup>

Could this be similar at all to the tradition of giving wedding gifts?

Or, is the gift simply to manipulate Esau (which did not work; Esau's heart was already softened); but Jacob cannot just leave the gift out there and say, "Oh, well, I guess I will just keep the animals then." So Jacob must insist and Esau must receive it.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

### Genesis 33:10c

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
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

<sup>151</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:10.

<sup>152</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:10.

<sup>153</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>154</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:10–11.

<sup>155</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:10.

## Genesis 33:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Together, 'al kên (לעַן כִּי) 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> .			
râ'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>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
pânîym (פְּנִיּוֹת) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	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.			
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כִּי) [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
râ'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>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
pânîym (פְּנִיּוֹת) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
'Ēlōhîym (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:** For this reason, I have seen your face [and it is] like seeing the face of Elohim.

Meeting up with one another once again, was joyous to Jacob. Seeing Esau was like seeing the face of God. This simply means that he is happy to see Esau; and happy to see him without rancor. This means that Jacob is giving deference and respect to Esau.

One might even say, after wrestling with the Angel of God the night before, that this is an easier face to face with Esau.

Genesis 33:10 Jacob then said, "Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God.

### Genesis 33:10c “I see your face as the face of God” (various commentators)

Benson (speaking for Jacob): *your meeting me in this peaceable manner is very comfortable and refreshing to me, and an evident token of God's favour to me.*<sup>156</sup>

The NET Bible: *This is an allusion to the preceding episode (32:22-31) in which Jacob saw the face of God and realized his prayer was answered.*<sup>157</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *"I see your face as one sees the face of God," means "I see in your face, as expressive of your whole attitude toward me, the friendliness of God. I see this friendliness demonstrated in His making you friendly toward me" (Genesis 33:10; cf. 1Samuel 29:9; 2Samuel 14:17). Jacob had seen God's gracious face and had been spared at Peniel, and he now saw Esau's gracious face and was spared.*<sup>158</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[Esau's face is] as the face of God himself, he observing the love and favour of God to him, in working upon the heart of Esau, and causing him to carry it so lovingly to him.*<sup>159</sup>

Matthew Henry: *I have seen your face, as though I had seen the face of God, that is, "I have seen you reconciled to me, and at peace with me, as I desire to see God reconciled."*<sup>160</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob might say this without cringing, since he "must have discerned the work of God in the unexpected change in his brother's disposition towards him, and in his brother's friendliness a reflection of this divine."*<sup>161</sup>

Kidner: *[Jacob's] language shows that he saw the two encounters with his Lord and his brother, as two levels of a single event:...[compare] with Genesis 32:30.*<sup>162</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *[Jacob] had seen God face to face and God had blessed him. Now he sees in this friendly meeting a part of that blessing.*

Pett continues: *In context this can only have in mind his struggle at Penuel. Esau, who does not know what he is referring to, probably see is as a rather extreme compliment. He is like God to Jacob. But inwardly Jacob is full of praise to God and reflects it in these words. He remembers that significant meeting and sees it reflected here in his friendly reception. He had seen the face of God, and had been reassured of his safety, so now he can look on the face of Esau with equanimity.*<sup>163</sup>

Stephen Armstrong: *First, Jacob says he sees the face of God in Esau's welcome. Only the night before, Jacob had seen God's face in the form of the Angel of the Lord • And that encounter had delivered to Jacob the realization that he had been fighting against God, instead of letting God fight for Jacob. Now Jacob sees the Lord's face, so to speak, in the way Esau welcomed Jacob.*<sup>164</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob's statement to Esau, "I see your face as one sees the face of God" is not flattery meant as if Jacob had been overjoyed to see Esau as one would see the face of God since that would be obnoxious and insincere. Rather, the statement means that Jacob saw in Esau's acceptance of him a reflection of God's grace because he knew that it was God Himself who had changed Esau's heart so that he could be reconciled to his brother Esau.*<sup>165</sup>

<sup>156</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:10 (slightly edited).

<sup>157</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 4, 2016.

<sup>158</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

<sup>159</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:10.

<sup>160</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15 (slightly edited).

<sup>161</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:10.

<sup>162</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

<sup>163</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:10–11.

<sup>164</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>165</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 9, 2019.

The idea here is, Jacob is glad to see Esau’s face—he is glad that Esau looks at him in a friendly way, so it is as if he is seeing the face of God. Jacob had no doubt been stressed over this eventual meeting with Esau, and until the actual day of the meeting, believed that he and his wives and children were in danger of being killed by Esau.

Seeing Esau is reassuring and his countenance makes Jacob happy, as if seeing the face of God.

In Esau’s face, Jacob sees reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines**

**Genesis 33:10d**

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
râtsâh (רָצַח) [pronounced raw-TSAWH]	<i>to accept; to be delighted [with a person or thing], to be pleased with [something]; to receive [graciously], to delight [in someone, something]; to enjoy; to make acceptable; to satisfy, to pay off</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong’s #7521 BDB #953

This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture.

The NET Bible: *The verbal form is the preterite with a vav (ו) consecutive, indicating result here.*<sup>166</sup>

**Translation:** Furthermore, you have accepted me [despite my actions in the past].

Jacob is quite happy that Esau has accepted him. That is, Esau has received Jacob back into the land with friendship and delight.

*Whedon: Jacob might most truly say this, and believe in his heart that God himself, the God of Penuel, who had blessed him the last night, had changed and softened the disposition of Esau towards him.*<sup>167</sup>

*Lange: The present...is...a voluntary atonement—an indirect confession that Jacob needed forgiveness.*<sup>168</sup>

Esau used to be an enemy of Jacob’s. Now listen to God’s promise: Psalm 41:10–11 **But you, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them! By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.** (ESV; capitalized)

<sup>166</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 4, 2016.

<sup>167</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 33:10.

<sup>168</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange’s Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 32:3–33:16 (Exegetical and Critical) (slightly edited).

**Genesis 33:10** (a graphic); from [He Reads Truth](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

God has clearly accepted Jacob, as God have given several promises directly to Jacob (these promises simply continue God's original promises made to Abraham). I believe that this is what Jacob learned when wrestling with God the night before—that God had accepted him. This logically leads to the conclusion that Esau would accept him. Israel could not have survived, if Esau continued to see him as an enemy.

God has treated Jacob mercifully; and Esau has done the same.

### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 33:10 Jacob then said, "Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have accepted me."



There is a remarkable difference between Jacob and Esau at this first meeting after 20 years. Jacob is obsessively submissive and respectful, taking every opportunity to call Esau *lord* and to refer to himself as *your servant*. He may possibly still harbor a bit of fear of Esau. He is hesitant and it does not appear that Jacob just speaks what is on his heart. None of his words appear to be spontaneous, based upon this moment in time. All of what Jacob says seems very rehearsed and carefully said. It is as if Jacob wants to establish himself to Esau as not a threat, no longer a cheat, submissive and subservient, and very pleased that their meeting does not include Esau killing him.

Esau seems far more relaxed, excited to see Jacob, interested in his life, without any rancor or apprehensiveness. He sees the droves, Jacob and Jacob's family, and inquires about all of it. He wants to know all about his brother's life and is anxious to spend more time with him.

Genesis 33:10 Jacob then said, "No, please; if, please, I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take [this] present from me [lit., *my hand*]. For this reason, I have seen your face [and it is] like seeing the face of Elohim. Furthermore, you have accepted me [despite my actions in the past]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Genesis 33:1–10 Jacob Meets Esau** (a summary on a slide); from [Slide Serve](#) (Slide 15); accessed March 9, 2019.



- Next, **Jacob sees Esau** coming with **400 men**.
- **Jacob sends** the **servants** and their **children**, **Leah** and her **children**, then **Rachel** and **Joseph**. **Joseph** is the **only son named**, due to **importance**.
- Jacob goes ahead, **bowing 7 times**. This ancient tradition indicates **submission** to his elder brother, even though God revealed the older would serve the younger.
- Esau **runs**, **embraces** Jacob, falls on his neck, **kisses** him, and they **weep**.
- **Jesus** may have used this **familiar image** in the **parable** of the **Lost Son**.
- By **God’s grace**, Esau holds **nothing against Jacob**.
- **God delivered** Jacob, **answering** his earlier **prayer**.
- **Esau** asks about the **family**. **Jacob** says the **children** are **given by God**.
- **Jacob’s family**, one after the other, comes and **bows before Esau**.
- **Esau asks** about the **flocks** and **herds**. **Jacob** says it is **to find favor**.
- **Esau** says he **has enough**. **Jacob insists** that Esau accept it.
- **v. 10 ...For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me.**
- Jacob thought, “If I **appease his face**, when he **sees my face**, he will **lift my face**.”
- **Regardless** of what we’ve **done**, we **all need acceptance** in the **face of God**.
- **God shows his acceptance** of us through the **cross of Jesus Christ**.

Genesis 33:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law- KAHKH]	take, seize, take away, take in marriage; send for, fetch, bring, receive	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong’s #3947 BDB #542
nâ’ (נָא) [pronounced naw]	now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong’s #4994 BDB #609
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84

## Genesis 33:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
b <sup>o</sup> râkâh (הַכֶּהָ) [pronounced brow-KAW]	<i>blessing, benediction, invocation of good; extremely fortunate and happy; a gift, a present; peace, prosperity</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1293 BDB #139
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to be brought, brought in; to be introduced, be put</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Hophal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
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 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** [Therefore] take my blessing, please, which was brought to you.

Jacob continues to urge Esau to take a gift from him, which he calls a *blessing*. He says that he brought this present specifically for Esau.

This present is made up of the animals and the servants which Jacob put before Esau, who would have come to Esau before he came upon the camp of Jacob (Genesis 32:3–5).

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob then said, “Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have accepted me. Therefore, take the blessing which I brought here for you. God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well.” Jacob continued to urge Esau until he took the present.

### Genesis 33:11a: Jacob's present expresses his blessing to Esau (commentators)

Stephen Armstrong sees the end result of this gift situation as Jacob's new attitude shining through: *So Esau takes the gift at the insistence of Jacob. Here we see the new Jacob shining through. Where before he wanted to give a gift to solve his own problem, now he wants to give a gift in honor of the Lord's work on his behalf. Same gift, but very different purpose and a different heart in the giver.*<sup>169</sup>

The Cambridge Bible points out: “*gift*” is the material side of the “*blessing*”; and the word “*blessing*” is thus used for a gift, in Joshua 15:19 Judges 1:15 1Samuel 25:27 1Samuel 30:26 2Kings 5:15.<sup>170</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *The present he had sent him, now carrying home to his house, which was a part of what God had blessed Jacob with; and which he from a beneficent generous spirit gave his brother, wishing the blessing of God to go along with it; it was an insinuation, and so he would have it taken, that he wished him all happiness and prosperity.*<sup>171</sup>

<sup>169</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>170</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:11.

<sup>171</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:11.

**Genesis 33:11a: Jacob’s present expresses his blessing to Esau (commentators)**

Keil and Delitzsch: *Blessing: i.e., the present, expressive of his desire to bless, as in 1Samuel 25:27; 1Samuel 30:26. תָּאַבַּהּ: for תְּאַבְּרָה, as in Deut. 31:29; Isaiah 7:14.*<sup>172</sup>

Matthew Poole: *Take, I pray you, my blessing; this gift, which as I received from God’s blessing, so I heartily give it to you with my blessing and prayer, that God would abundantly bless it to you. Gifts are oft called blessings, as Joshua 15:19 1Samuel 25:27 30:26.*<sup>173</sup>

The Modern Language Bible: *Jacob definitely refers to “the blessing” he had unfairly taken from his brother and which he now returns.*<sup>174</sup>

NIV Study Bible: *The Hebrew for “present” is the same as that used for “blessing” in Genesis 27:35. The author of Genesis was conscious of the irony that Jacob now acknowledged that the blessing he had struggled for was from God. In his last attempt to express reconciliation with Esau, Jacob in a sense gave back the “glessing” he had stolen from his brother, doing so from the blessings the Lord had given him.*<sup>175</sup>

Giving a gift or a blessing: Genesis 32:13–20 Joshua 15:19 Judges 1:15 1Samuel 25:27, 1Samuel 30:26 2Kings 5:15 2Corinthians 9:5–6.<sup>176</sup>

The Berkeley Bible has the most interesting take on this. “I took your blessing from you 20 years ago,” is the gist of what Jacob is saying. “Please accept my blessing to you in repayment.”

I see the insistence on taking the gift and the taking of the gift as being simple oriental manners. Jacob cannot withdraw the gift now that it is out there. He cannot explain to his brother, “I just wanted you to see an animal parade.” Once Esau has seen the gift, the rest is perfunctory.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines**

**Genesis 33:11b**

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
chânan (חָנַן) [pronounced khaw-NAHN]	<i>to bend, to stoop over, to show grace [favor] [often as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior], to show mercy, to be gracious; to be favorably inclined [toward someone]; to give [someone something] out of grace</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #2603, #2589 BDB #335
’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

<sup>172</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:11.

<sup>173</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:11 (slightly edited).

<sup>174</sup> The Modern Language Bible (*The New Berkeley Version*); Gerrit Verkuyl, Ph.D., Editor-in-chief; revised edition; Hendrickson Publishers, © 1969, p. 33 (footnote).

<sup>175</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; pp. 56–57 (footnote) (slightly edited).

<sup>176</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:11.

## Genesis 33:11b

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
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean <i>and for, and that</i> ; however, together, they can be taken to mean <i>when, that, for, because, how</i> .			
yêsh (יש) [pronounced yaysh]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); there [is, are]; to be present, to be ready, to exist</i>	substantive with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #3426 BDB #441
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 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
rab (רב) [pronounced rah <sup>bv</sup> ]	<i>many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912

**Translation:** Elohim has graced me because there [is] much [given] to me [as well].”

Jacob also claims to be the recipient of grace; and that he is blessed as well. Here, Jacob is not trying to outdo his brother or to say, “But God has given me more grace.” He is simply recognizing all that God has done for him.

There are a few times in the Word of God where Jacob comes out looking grace-oriented, and this is one of them. God took Jacob out of the land, He renamed him, and He gave Jacob a family and children and great wealth. The depth of Jacob’s appreciation might be questioned; but his words here suggest recognition of what God has done.

Throughout this Jacobian narrative, I tend to be quite hard on Jacob; and he is certainly no Abraham. But there are also times when he seems to get it right, and this is one of those times.

Genesis 33:11b **God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well.”**

### Genesis 33:11b: Jacob has been blessed in all things (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob means that in the kindness of Esau he has everything. Perhaps also there is an allusion to the Divine blessing in Genesis 32:29.*<sup>177</sup>

Trapp: *I have all. Esau had much, but Jacob had all, because he had the God of all.*<sup>178</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch (paraphrased): *When Jacob says that he has all, this means he is heir to the divine promise.*<sup>179</sup>

<sup>177</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:11.

<sup>178</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 33:11.

<sup>179</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:11 (paraphrased).

## Genesis 33:11b: Jacob has been blessed in all things (various commentators)

Dr. John Gill (paraphrased): *God has blessed Jacob with so much prosperity, which now includes the graciousness with which Esau received him...and Jacob's blessings go far beyond the material as he is the blessed heir.*<sup>180</sup>

Having all things; having more than enough: Genesis 33:9 Romans 8:31–32 1Corinthians 3:21 2Corinthians 6:10 Philip. 4:11–12, 18 1Timothy 4:8.<sup>181</sup>

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### Genesis 33:11c

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
pâtsar (פָּצַר) [pronounced <i>paw-TSAHR</i> ]	properly, <i>to beat, to make blunt</i> ; but means, <i>to push, to press, to urge</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6484 BDB #823
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<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
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
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<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

**Translation:** So he urged him and he took [the present].

Jacob continued to urge Esau, and Esau relented and accepted the gift.

Although I would take Esau's words at their face value, Jacob cannot half offer a gift and then withdraw it.

Genesis 33:11 [Therefore] take my blessing, please, which was brought to you. Elohim has graced me because there [is] much [given] to me [as well].” So he urged him and he took [the present]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob then said, “No, please; if, please, I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take [this] present from me [lit., my hand]. For this reason, I have seen your face [and it is] like seeing the face of Elohim. Furthermore, you have accepted me [despite my actions in the past]. [Therefore] take my blessing, please, which was brought to you. Elohim has graced me because there [is] much [given] to me [as well].” So he urged him and he took [the present]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob then said, “Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have

<sup>180</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:11 (paraphrased).

<sup>181</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:11.

accepted me. Therefore, take the blessing which I brought here for you. God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well.” Jacob continued to urge Esau until he took the present. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob then said, “Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have accepted me. Therefore, take the blessing which I brought here for you. God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well.” Jacob continued to urge Esau until he took the present.

### Genesis 33:11c: Jacob’s insistence that Esau take his gift (several commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Until Esau had accepted the gift, Jacob’s suspicious nature could not feel secure.*<sup>182</sup>

Matthew Henry: *Jacob affectionately urges him to accept it, and prevails (Genesis 33:10–11). Jacob sent it, through fear (Genesis 32:20), but, the fear being over, he now importunes his acceptance of it for love, to show that he desired his brother’s friendship.*<sup>183</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown express what several others have said: *In the East the acceptance by a superior is a proof of friendship, and by an enemy, of reconciliation. It was on both accounts Jacob was so anxious that his brother should receive the cattle; and in Esau’s acceptance he had the strongest proofs of a good feeling being established that Eastern notions admit of.*<sup>184</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that Esau accepted Jacob’s gift of five droves of animals and did not reciprocate indicates that Esau has accepted Jacob’s gift as settlement for Jacob stealing the blessing of the birthright twenty years before.*

Wenstrom continues: *Notice that Esau only took the gift after Jacob had insisted indicating that Esau had forgiven Jacob long ago and did not need the gift to pacify him. From God’s perspective offering the gifts to Esau was the right thing for Jacob to do since our Lord taught His disciples that if horizontal relationships with people are not right because of sin, then they are not right in their vertical relationship with God.*

Wenstrom concludes: *For instance, if we don’t forgive our fellow believers, then God won’t forgive us in the experiential sense and thus we won’t be restored to fellowship (Mt. 6:14-15; Mt. 18:21-35). So, if we have sinned and injured someone whether his or her property or reputation, we must confess it to the injured party and offer restitution, which in some cases, restitution could simply involve an apology.*<sup>185</sup>

Whether or not this gift was necessary is debatable. Recall the Jacob’s gift was his solution to his problems with Esau; his gift was Jacob’s attempt to manipulate Esau. Remember that Jacob devised this gift *before* he wrestled with the Lord. It was not an idea that popped into his head as a result of divine intervention.

This does not negate Wenstrom’s greater point that, we ought to be at peace with all men (wherever possible).

Whedon: *This acceptance of his large and princely gift would enable the humbled Jacob to feel that he had now made suitable reparation for any wrong he had previously done his brother.*<sup>186</sup>

Urging or compelling another: 2Kings 2:17 5:16, 23 Luke 14:23.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>182</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:11.

<sup>183</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15.

<sup>184</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:11.

<sup>185</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>186</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 33:11.

<sup>187</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:11.

L. M. Grant: *Though we read of Jacob giving this large gift to Esau, we never read of his keeping his promise to give one tenth of his possessions to God.*<sup>188</sup>

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**Genesis 33:11** Please take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." And he [Jacob] urged him, and he [Esau] accepted.

It is probably the custom there to refuse such a gift outright; and both men have been greatly blessed in their lives. Similarly, it would have been an insult for Esau to ultimately refuse Jacob's gift.

This is the only logical thing that Esau could do. Even if Jacob's gift was all that he had, it would be an insult not to take it. The back and forth between them has to be measured; neither man can seem as saying, "Well, God has given me much more than you" or "God has graced me out more than you." This sort of thinking ought to be far from our own imaginations.

Perhaps Jacob is operating under a bit of emotion, but, at the same time, he is now giving these animals to Esau as a gift and not as a bribe. The simple definition of grace is *undeserved favor*. In our dispensation, it is everything which God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross. The greeting from Esau which Jacob is receiving is undeserved.

In his earlier days, Jacob himself was a manipulating schemer who cared about no one but himself. What it took was 20 years with a man who was even more self-centered, even more manipulating and duplicitous, to help to give Jacob a clue as to what he was like. Then it took God's promises and a serious injury from Jesus Christ to begin to orient Jacob to life and to God's grace.

Jacob's journey is not going to be continually advancing toward the high ground; he will stumble many times. However, he will apparently impart enough spiritual information to Joseph to last a lifetime (and there is a good chance that Rachel is the deciding factor here, as Joseph is the only son raised by her).



<sup>188</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

We have not seen Jacob or Esau behave in this way towards one another before. Time and maturity have improved both men.

**Genesis 33:11** (Bible journaling by Renee Wharton); from [Pinterest](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob then said, "Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have accepted me. Therefore, take the blessing which I brought here for you. God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well." Jacob continued to urge Esau until he took the present.

Jacob strongly encourages Esau to take this present from him. It is clearly a relief to Jacob to look upon Esau's face with respect and brotherly love.

Ballinger's translation: And he said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?"

And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."

But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own."

Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight. Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty."

Thus he urged him and he took it.

### Esau Accepts Jacob's Gift (vv. 8-11) (Jack Ballinger)

1. Everything Jacob has done to ameliorate his brother was wasted effort even from a purely humanistic standpoint.
2. After Jacob answers Esau's query regarding the children, Esau, who is in a very good mood, queries Jacob about "all this company which I have met" (v.8).
3. Esau had been told by Jacob's servants the meaning of the gift and so he knew it was such.
4. Yet he does not know the meaning of the gift.
5. For Esau the past is dead and bears on significance to the present.
6. Jacob responds by telling him that the meaning of the gift is "to find favor in the sight of my lord."
7. Time and favorable circumstances of life have totally submerged any lingering angst that Esau might have harbored over the years.
8. Esau is bewildered by all the overt show of subservience so demonstrably exercised by Jacob.
9. Esau retorts in v. 9 that Jacob keep his gift as he "has plenty" (v. 9).
10. Jacob will not take "no" for an answer (v. 10), the exchange of words becomes more intense.
11. Jacob asks his brother to take the gift as evidence that he has indeed "found favor in [his] sight."
12. Jacob goes on to add that seeing his brother as he is like "seeing the face of God" and the appearance is a favorable one.
13. Jacob in a round-about-fashion is conveying the message that he is thrilled that he has been forgiven of wrongdoing by his brother.
14. Again, Esau is not thinking in these terms whatsoever.
15. He insists that Esau accept his gift as token/evidence of the goodwill evidenced in Esau's receiving of him.
16. For Jacob seeing Esau under these totally unexpected conditions was for him like seeing the face of God and surviving (v.10).
17. The exchange between the brothers on the subject of the gift ends with v. 11.
18. And finally Jacob employs the heretofore avoided term "blessing" (berachah) as the synonym for "gift" (minchah).
19. For Jacob, Esau must receive this gift/blessing otherwise he could not be sure of Esau's forgiveness.
20. For Jacob the generous gift was a replacement blessing for the one stolen years before.
21. He begs his brother to accept the gift because it originates from God's grace and because he has plenty.

### Esau Accepts Jacob's Gift (vv. 8-11) (Jack Ballinger)

22. By Esau's reluctant acceptance of the gift we have yet another example of what the Lord said to Jacob the evening before, namely that Jacob has prevailed with God and men.
23. Jacob the underdog prevails over his brother, that is, he gets his way.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen33.htm> accessed April 9, 2019.

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Ron Snider's translation: And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" And he said, "The children whom god has graciously given your servant." Then the maids came near with their children and they bowed down. And Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down. And he said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own." And Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I have seen your face after seeing the face of god, and you have received me favorably. Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have everything." Thus he urged him and he took it.

### Summary of Genesis 33:5–11 (Ron Snider)

1. After the emotional reunion of these two brothers, who had spent so long apparently at odds the interchange of vs 5-11 occurs.
2. Esau had long since forgotten the stolen blessing and the birth-right, since these things truly meant very little to him.
3. Jacob thought that these things were as important to Esau as they were to him, but this is not the case.
4. The spiritual blessings of the plan of God are not important to the Esau type, they want the blessings without the commitment to God.
5. For a man like Jacob, these things were the most important matters in life.
6. Although Jacob ran away from his problems when he left home, God forces him to deal with this last remaining issue upon his return.
7. The CWL is not only vertical as we deal with God, it is horizontal and impacts our relationships with others.
8. The Word of God may be summarized by the command to love God and love your neighbor as yourself.
9. This is the last hurdle Jacob must clear upon his return to Canaan, and he does so.
10. Esau asks about all the women and children who accompanied Jacob.
11. Jacob introduces them and attributes them to the grace of God during his time with Laban.
12. After the customary greeting, Esau inquires about the gift which Jacob had sent ahead of this present group.
13. Jacob freely acknowledges that his purpose was to try and obtain Esau's favor.
14. Esau is already favorably inclined toward Jacob and is more than willing to let bygones be bygones.
15. He states that he has more than enough, and does not need Jacob's gift.
16. Jacob insists that he take the present, not because he is attempting to buy Esau's favor but, because he is acting now out of a correct motive for giving.
17. He does not say, as most translators assume, that seeing the face of Esau is like seeing the face of God; instead he says that he saw the face of Esau after he saw the face of God.
18. Jacob says that seeing Esau after he saw God is the reason he now desires to give the gift.
19. As a matter of fact, he changes to the word blessing in vs 11 as the new name for his gift.
20. So this present is no longer an attempt to curry the favor of Esau, but a present freely given by one who himself has been blessed by God.
21. One could hardly think of a greater blessing than seeing the face of God!!!!
22. Yet Jacob now desires to give a blessing since he has received a blessing, and a blessing of great

## Summary of Genesis 33:5–11 (Ron Snider)

- magnitude.
23. VS 11a states in clear terms that the primary reason for the gift was because God had blessed him spiritually.
  24. vs 11b states that there is nothing Jacob lacks on any level, spiritually or physically.
  25. While Esau may say that he has much, Jacob may say that he has all.
  26. After much speaking and urging by Jacob, Esau takes his present.
  27. The giving and receiving of such a gift is meant to demonstrate that all is well and harmonious on both
  28. What is recorded here in vs 1-11 graphically portrays the following principles of doctrine.
    - 1) Jacob coming to Esau demonstrates the UB coming to God.
    - 2) The attempt to buy favor illustrates people attempting to work for their salvation.
    - 3) The change in Jacob's reasoning is indicative of the change which occurs in the thinking of one who comes under the blessing of God.
    - 4) Jacob has been blessed, therefore he becomes a blessing. IPet. 3:8-9
    - 5) Jacob's servile approach was initially wrong, but he is truly humbled by God's grace. IPet. 3:8
    - 6) When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies be at peace with him. Proverbs 16:9
  29. Jacob is no longer the self-sufficient deceiver who left 20 years ago, he now relies on God and His grace.
  30. He is no longer seeking a blessing, he has become a blessing and desires to bless others.
  31. He is at peace with God, himself, and others around him.
  32. This type of life does not come overnight, but through much struggle with the STA and application of doctrine over the years.
  33. While his spiritual walk will be much simpler and straighter, he will carry in his body the DD for wrestling with the Lord.
  34. He now exemplifies the truth of Prov. 3:5-12.

From [Markaios Bible Church](#) (link will open up in Word or WP); accessed April 13, 2019.

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I trust that you will forgive me when I begin to make some conjectures based upon some assumptions which I make. Nearly all commentators will come to a variety of conclusions over the next 6 verses. Some will state their conclusions with a question mark (or they will offer several conclusions); and others will just state their conclusions emphatically. I will make certain that you understand where I am making some assumptions and just exactly what assumptions I am making.

Just so you understand, here is what is going to happen: Esau will say, "Let's break up camp, follow me." But Jacob will protest saying, "We cannot move as quickly as you move." Esau says, "I will leave some of my men to protect you." Jacob says, "No need. But, I am coming to see you in Seir." However, Esau will go south and Jacob apparently just goes west and does not follow Esau. All of these things are clear (although, it is possible that Jacob first went south into Edom and then came back up to where he is right now—there is no textual support for this view, apart from Jacob making it sound as if he was going to follow Esau).

So, we will carefully examine the text and try not to make any unnecessary assumptions (or at least, not without my telling you, *this is conjecture on my part*).

**And so he said, "Let us pull up stakes and let us depart. And so let me go in front of you." Genesis 33:12 Esau [lit., he] then said, "Let's break camp and let us depart. I will go in front of you."**

**Esau later said, "Let's break camp and depart; I will go before you."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he said, "Let us pull up stakes and let us depart. And so let me go in front of you."
Targum (Onkelos)	And he said, Let us journey and go, and I will go along with thee.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said, Let us journey and proceed, and I will go along with thee, <u>till thou come to the house of thy habitation.</u>
Revised Douay-Rheims	And said: Let us go on together, and I will accompany you in your journey.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	<u>Esau</u> said, "Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before you."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then <u>Esau</u> said to him, Let us depart, and go, and I will go before you.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, Let us depart, and proceed right onward.

Significant differences: Esau's name is not found in the first phrase; but it is not a problem when the Syriac text uses his name for clarity.

There are 3 verbs in the MT. The Latin appears to turn one of those into a noun and put it at the end of the sentence. The Greek only has 2 verbs in what Esau says. It appears the Esau would go before (in front of) Jacob; and both targums have him advancing *along with Jacob*.

I should point out that there are greater differences in this verse between the ancient translations (based upon their English translation), and yet, the only real problem in understanding what is being said is, Esau *going ahead of* Jacob as over-against him *going along side of* Jacob. However, as we have found, the targums are not great sources of text accuracy (they seem very much to be a running commentary as much as anything). The apparent differences in the Latin, Syriac and Greek really do very little to change our perception of what is being said. This is why narrative differences are rarely substantial.

If I were confined, for whatever reason, to only the Latin or Greek texts, my examination and exegesis of the OT Scriptures would be virtually unchanged.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And he said, Let us go on our journey together, and I will go in front.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Esau said, "Now you can continue your journey. I will go with you."
God's Word™	Then Esau said, "Let's get ready to go, and I'll go with you."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Esau said, "Let's get ready and leave. I will go ahead of you."
International Children's B.	Then Esau said, "Let us get going. I will travel with you."
The Message	Then Esau said, "Let's start out on our way; I'll take the lead."
NIRV	Then Esau said, "Let's be on our way. I'll go with you."
New Simplified Bible	Esau said: »Let us go on our journey together. I will go in front.«

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

Casual English Bible	Then Esau said, "Let's get going. I'll come with you."
Contemporary English V.	"Let's get ready to travel," Esau said. "I'll go along with you."
The Living Bible	"Well, let's be going," Esau said. "My men and I will stay with you and lead the way."
New Berkeley Version	Thus he urged him until he accepted it and said, "Let us break camp and travel on together; I will accompany you." A portion of v. 11 is included for context.
New Life Version	Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way. I will go with you."
New Living Translation	"Well," Esau said, "let's be going. I will lead the way."

Unlocked Dynamic Bible Then Esau said, "Let us continue traveling together, and I will lead you on the road."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Then he said: 'Now, let's head back.'  
 Beck's American Translation "Let us be on our way," he said, "and I will keep pace with you."  
 Berean Study Bible Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way, and I will go ahead of you."  
 International Standard V Then Esau suggested, "Let's set out and travel together, but let me go in front of you."  
 Revised Knox Bible But Jacob said, No, I entreat you; do me the favour to accept this present of mine; to gain audience with you is like gaining audience with God himself. Assure me of your favour by receiving the offering I have brought you, God's gift to me, who has given me all I have. So at last Esau consented, overcome by his brother's persuasions; then he said, Let us travel on together, so that I can be the companion of your journey. Vv. 10–11 are included for context.  
 Translation for Translators Then Esau said, "Let's continue traveling together, and I will show the road to you."

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

Awful Scroll Bible He was to say: We were to pull up and go, even were we to proceed.  
 Conservapedia And he said, "Let us journey, you and I, and I will go in front of you."  
 Ferar-Fenton Bible Then he said, " I will rise up and travel and we will go along together."  
 God's Truth (Tyndale) And he said: let us take our journey and go, and I will go in your company.  
 H. C. Leupold And he said: Let us depart and be on our way, and I shall go along parallel with thee.  
 NIV, ©2011 Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way; I'll accompany you."  
 Unlocked Literal Bible Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way. I will go before you."  
 Urim-Thummim Version Then he said, let us pull up our caravans, and depart now and move on.  
 Wikipedia Bible Project And he said, we'll drive, and we'll walk, and I'll walk, along side.

### Catholic Bibles:

Christian Community (1988) Esau then said, "Let us be on our way. I will lead you."  
 The Heritage Bible And he said, Let us pull up, and let us walk, and I will walk before you.  
 New American Bible (2011) Then Esau said, "Let us break camp and be on our way; I will travel in front of you."  
 New Jerusalem Bible Esau said, 'Let us break camp and move off; I shall go beside you.'  
 Revised English Bible Esau said, "Let us set out, and I shall go at your pace."

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible 'Esav said, "Let's break camp and get going. I'll go first."  
 exeGeses companion Bible And he says, Let us pull stakes and go; and I go ahead of you.  
 JPS (Tanakh—1985) And [Esau] said, "Let us start on our journey, and I will proceed at your pace."  
 Kaplan Translation 'Let's get going and move on,' said [Esau]. 'I will travel alongside you.'  
 Orthodox Jewish Bible And he said, Nise'ah (let us take our journey), and let us go, I will go next to thee.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible* Then Esau said, "Let us get started on our journey and I will go in front of you [to lead the way]."  
 The Expanded Bible Then Esau said, "Let us be going. I will travel with you."  
 Kretzmann's Commentary And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. Here Esau offered to accompany Jacob's caravan in the role of protector. This offer was

a proof of the genuineness of his reconciliation; he was anxious to have the relation between himself and Jacob restored to the intimacy of their youth and early manhood.

NET Bible®

Then Esau [*Heb* “and he”; the referent (Esau) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, “Let’s be on our way [*Heb* “let us travel and let us go.”]! I will go in front of you.”

The Voice

**Esau:** Now let’s be on our way, and I will walk on ahead of you.

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

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.

...and he said, we will journey and we will walk and I will walk to be face to face with you,...

Concordant Literal Version  
*Emphasized Bible*  
English Standard Version  
New European Version

And saying is he, "Journey will we and go, and I will go in front of you. Then he said, Let us break up and go, and let me go on before thee. Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you."  
**Jacob and Esau Part Company**

World English Bible  
Young’s Updated LT

Esau said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before you. Esau said, “Let’s take our journey, and let’s go, and I will go before you.” And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before you.

**The gist of this passage:** Esau urges them to go to Seir, and offers to lead the way.

Genesis 33:12a			
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
nâçac (נצח) [pronounced naw-SAHÇ]	to pull up [stakes], to pull out, to break camp and move out, to set out, to journey, to march, to depart; to bend a bow	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect; with the cohortative hê	Strong’s #5265 BDB #652
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> .			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê; pausal form	Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
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> .			

### Genesis 33:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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The NET Bible: *The two cohortatives are used in combination with the sense, "let's travel along, get going, be on our way."*<sup>189</sup>

**Translation:** Esau [lit., he] then said, "Let's break camp and let us depart."

Usually, the verb here indicates that they are camped and they will break camp. Esau says, "Come, let's go forth together. Let's return to my property in Seir." I believe what we read in vv. 14 & 16 suggests that Esau clearly meant for Jacob to come with him to Seir; he was not offering to safely guide Jacob to Canaan.

### Genesis 33:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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w<sup>e</sup> (or v<sup>e</sup>) (ו, or ו)  
[pronounced *weh*]

*and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as*

simple wâw conjunction

No Strong's #  
BDB #251

hâlak<sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced  
*haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup>*]

*to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance*

1<sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect; with the cohortative hê

Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

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 *let, may, might, ought, should*.

lâmed (ל) [pronounced *l<sup>e</sup>*]

*to, for, towards, in regards to*

preposition

No Strong's #  
BDB #510

neged (נגד) [pronounced  
*NEH-ged*]

*what is conspicuous* when it is a substantive and, as a preposition, *in front of, in the sight of, opposite to, before* (in the sense of being *in front of*)

preposition with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix

Strong's #5048  
BDB #617

Together, the lâmed preposition and neged mean *in front of, before [someone], in the sight of, in the presence of; standing opposite, standing in front of*.

**Translation:** I will go in front of you."

Esau knew where they were; he had a small army with him. Therefore, he would take point.

Esau's intention was to see the Jacob was safely guided to Seir. He assumed that Jacob was going to follow him there; and Jacob does not disabuse him of this notion.

Genesis 33:12 Esau [lit., he] then said, "Let's break camp and let us depart. I will go in front of you." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:12 Esau later said, "Let's break camp and depart; I will go before you." (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 33:12 Esau later said, "Let's break camp and depart; I will go before you."

<sup>189</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 4, 2016.

## Genesis 33:12b: Esau's sincere offer (various commentators)

Benson: *[Esau] offers himself to be Jacob's guide and companion, in token of a sincere reconciliation. We do not find that Jacob and Esau were ever before so loving with one another as they were now.*

Benson continues: *God had made Esau, not only not an enemy, but a friend. He is become fond of Jacob's company, and invites him to go along with him to mount Seir.*<sup>190</sup>

I offer this second quotation provisionally, bearing in mind that God did not reach into Esau's soul and change him from red to green.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Esau proposed to accompany Jacob and his family through the country, both as a mark of friendship and as an escort to guard them.*<sup>191</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Esau is well meaning and offers his protection. He is unaware of his brother's fears, although no doubt amused at his seeming subservience. But then, he thinks, that is Jacob. But his intentions are all good. They will go on together. He may well, however, have been secretly hoping that Jacob would not accept his offer. The laws of kinship demanded the offer. It was not necessarily intended to be accepted.*<sup>192</sup>

Pett's first sentence seems to be a reasonable assumption; everything after that is conjecture.

John Wesley: *Esau offers himself to be his guide and companion, in token of sincere reconciliation. We never find that Jacob and Esau were so loving with one another as they were now. God made Esau not only not an enemy, but a friend. Esau is become fond of Jacob's company, courts him to mount Seir: let us never despair of any, nor distrust God, in whose hands all hearts are.*<sup>193</sup>

Most of what Wesley says is reasonable. Again, I am concerned when someone suggests that God just reached into Esau's soul and changed it all up.

Esau certainly wants Jacob to join him in Seir.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

**Esau's offer of unintended nefariousness:** Esau offers to lead the way. Esau would be going south, along the east side of the Dead Sea, to his home in Edom (Seir).

Esau is being naturally solicitous and suggests that Jacob come with him to Seir. This should cause us to ask, *does Esau understand and appreciate God's promises to their father and grandfather?* God came to Abraham and told him to travel west to the land of Canaan. God later reaffirmed to Isaac His covenant with Abraham. This has been, to some degree, the basis of strife between Jacob and Esau.

One might interpret Esau's request as a nefarious one, even though I do not believe that this is what Esau meant it to be. Esau lives in Seir, he is genuinely happy to meet up with his estranged brother, and he wants them to reside together in Seir. What is nefarious here is not Esau's attitude or personal desire for more time to be spent together, but the subtle misdirection being offered to Jacob. God wants Jacob in Canaan; Esau wants Jacob to live with him in Seir.

Based upon what Esau has said, I don't see him as being purposely undermining here. I don't think he looks at Jacob and figures, *how can I keep him from his destiny and inheritance?* I believe that Esau is simply being

<sup>190</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:12.

<sup>191</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

<sup>192</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

<sup>193</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

hospitable. He has established himself in Seir and he would gladly make a place for Jacob and his family there. Now, could there be more going on, such as, Esau wants to show off what he has carved out for himself. That is not necessarily an evil thing. This would show Jacob that Esau does not want anything which has been promised to him.

It is possible that what Esau is offering Jacob is a place to stay for however long, giving really very little thought to the promises of the land of Canaan to Jacob's line.

Even if Esau's invitation is purely out of generosity (or mostly); God told Jacob to return to the land of Canaan. Therefore, that is where Jacob must go. What would make the most sense is for Jacob to say something along these lines. However, He does not.

**Canaan and Edom** (a map); from [Black History in the Bible](#); accessed March 31, 2019.

Jacob and Esau meet north of the Dead Sea, south of the Jabbok River and east of the Jordan River (these latter two rivers are not easy to see on this map). God has given the land of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and God has given Edom and Seir to Esau. Regardless of this reestablished relationship between the brothers, Esau and Jacob, it is God's will for Jacob to continue just a few more miles west into Canaan. God did not tell Jacob, "Look, you are going to meet your brother Esau on the way, and you



need to spend some time with him in Seir to reconnect." Jacob's journey had not been changed up, and to Jacob's credit (at least partial credit), he will continue on into Canaan.

An understanding the basic geography is helpful, as there is information in this chapter which is left out. If you do not read the text carefully, you would think that Esau will go first, and that Isaac would then follow him. However, that is not the case. Esau will travel south, along to the Dead Sea, but Jacob will then go west, stopping for a time east of the Jordan River; and sometime thereafter, crossing over the Jordan River.

Later on, Esau will apparently come up and live with Jacob (or near Jacob) in the Land of Promise—probably when their father dies. However, he will eventually return back home to Edom. There is no clear explanation of these things in the history which we have. Why did Isaac not follow Esau? We are not told. I am assuming that Jacob is doing what God told him to do (not always the thing that Jacob does). More likely, because of his hip injury, Jacob will stop almost right there and begin to make it his permanent home.

We are not told anything about Jacob's thinking. Did he ever intend to go to Seir? I don't believe that he did. However, we do *not* read, "Esau took his men and returned home to Edom, but Jacob chose not to follow him, but to travel closer to the Jordan." However, this is exactly what happened.

When did Esau decide to come up and live near Jacob? We are not told. It appears to me that this occurs after Isaac's death.

Have you ever started talking to someone, but suddenly you are lost in the conversation, because they have not filled you in on the details or the foundation for the conversation? They seem to be involved in one of life's battles, but you have no idea why, because they do not give you enough back story for you to understand. They're upset, they're animated, but you really have no idea why. That will be the case with Jacob and Esau.

It is interesting that Esau seems to have a great deal of interest in Jacob and his family; but the converse is not recorded here. Furthermore, as mentioned, we are not told very much about Esau, when or why he moved about; or why Jacob did not follow him.

At some point in time, Jacob learned all of Esau's family, and this is recorded in Genesis 36. We do not know if Jacob learned this information at this point, or later when they lived adjacent to one another (more than likely, the latter). It is not out of the realm of possibility that Esau himself contributed Genesis 36 to the Word of God.

**Why Jacob heads west, but does not tell Esau what he is doing:** What appears to be the case, although this is not clearly laid out for us, is that Jacob and Esau apparently separated here, but that they saw one another again when Isaac died (Genesis 35:28–29). After burying their father, these men apparently chose to live near one another. However, their wealth was so great that Esau decided to return to Edom (Genesis 36:6–8).

It never occurred to Esau that Jacob would want to live anywhere else away from him. However, Esau lives outside of the Land of Promise; and Jacob has just returned to the land.

What Jacob is asking for is for Esau to be on his way, travel at his normal pace, and Jacob will eventually join him—that is the impression which Jacob seems to give to Esau. Jacob cannot move near as quickly as Esau and his 400 men, since Jacob has children and animals. However, the real problem is, Jacob has just returned to the land promised to his line by God. How can Jacob then not follow through, and complete this journey?

What Jacob should have done is explained that he wanted to remain upon the Land of Promise, the land promised to his father and grandfather. However, that may have been a problem for Jacob to point this out, as he is the heir to the land and not Esau (despite the fact that Esau is living and ruling in Seir now).

My understanding of this passage is that, Jacob does not intend to follow Esau down to Seir; but he is also unwilling to tell Esau exactly why. "God has give to me and to my progeny the land of promise, which is Canaan, and therefore, that is where I must take my family." That is the explanation. Why doesn't Jacob simply state this? Again, my opinion is, this is a sore spot between Jacob and Esau (at least, it was a sore spot). Jacob's enjoyment of Canaan might unearth (in Jacob's mind) all of the animosity which used to exist between himself and his twin brother Esau. If Jacob said these words to Esau, would he respond by saying, "You stole my birthright from me! You stole our father's blessing from me! You have not changed at all! Now you intend to return to this land that you got by deception and conniving!" Everything in this paragraph is conjecture on my part; but I believe that this was a part of Jacob's reticence to tell Esau that he was not going to follow Esau down into Seir, but forge on into Canaan, his rightful inheritance.

Another aspect of Jacob's reticence to go to Seir is, he was injured the night before. Perhaps he is doing everything possible to appear normal, but it is very possible that he is hurting.

So there is no misunderstanding, most of what I am saying in this section is conjecture—it is reasonable, logical conjecture, but conjecture nonetheless.

It makes sense that Esau is telling Jacob that he would lead him to his own place in Seir. That seems to be the clear statement of Genesis 33:14 (where Jacob tells Esau that he will come down to him in Seir).

The Pulpit Commentary thinks differently: *Whether Esau intended to accompany Jacob on his way [into Canaan] (Keil, Kalisch, et alii) or invited Jacob to go with him to Mount Seir (Ainsworth, Clericus) is uncertain.*<sup>194</sup>

I don't see any of this as being uncertain. In the next few verses, Esau will continue to offer Jacob his manpower and protection and Jacob will refuse. And, at the end, Jacob makes it sound as if he will follow Esau, but he won't. Esau goes south to Seir (Genesis 33:16) and Jacob goes west towards Canaan (Genesis 33:17). Furthermore, Jacob himself understood that Esau's offer was to escort him to Esau's place in Seir (Genesis 33:14). These things are hard facts.

Genesis 33:12 **Esau later said, "Let's break camp and depart; I will go before you."**

I believe that Esau is sincere here; that he wanted Jacob to join him in Seir. Jacob will be careful not to express an opinion.

This passage has caused many a commentator to become confused. Jacob right here says, "I am coming down to you in Seir" but then, nowhere to we read, *and Jacob followed Esau down into Seir*. My explanation here is simple: Jacob either lied or changed his mind once Esau was out of sight. However, all I have to support my view is, Jacob is not said to follow Esau anywhere, but he goes west instead.

**And so he says unto him, "My lord knows that the children [are] delicate and the flock and the herd are nursing upon me and they have over-driven them a day one, and so have died all the flock. Passes on please, my adonai, to faces of his servant and I [even] I will go on to gently to pace of the work who [are] to my faces and to pace of the children as far as which I will come unto my adonai Seir-ward."**

Genesis  
33:13–14

**Jacob answered him [lit., and he said], "My lord knows that the children [are young and] delicate and the flocks and herds with me are nursing; and I have over-driven them [from] day one, and all the flock [might] die. Please [let] my adonai pass over before his servant and I will go forward slowly according to the pace of the cattle [lit., work] who are before me and according to the pace of my children until I come to my adonai in Seir."**

**Then Jacob said to him, "My lord can see that my children are young and delicate and that the flocks and herds are nursing, all of which concerns me. I have possibly over-driven them from the start; and if I keep it up, all the flock could die. Let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will move along at a more leisurely pace, according to the cattle that you see before me and according to the pace of my own children. I will move at a slower rate until I come to my lord in Seir."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

**And so he says unto him, "My lord knows that the children [are] delicate and the flock and the herd are nursing upon me and they have over-driven them a day one,**

<sup>194</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

	and so have died all the flock. Passes on please, my adonai, to faces of his servant and I [even] I will go on to gently to pace of the work who [are] to my faces and to pace of the children as far as which I will come unto my adonai Seir-ward."
Targum (Onkelos)	And he said, My lord knoweth that the little ones are tender, and the sheep and kine giving milk are with me; and if they overdrive them one day, all the flock may die. Let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will lead on quietly, according to the foot of the little ones, according to the foot of the work that is before me, and according to the foot of the sucklings, until I come to my lord at Seir [Sam. Vers. "Gabra."].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said to him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and kine giving milk are with me; and if I overdrive them one day, all the flock may die. Let me beseech my lord to pass over <u>and journey</u> before thy servant, and I will lead oil quietly alone, according to the foot of the work which is before me, and according to the foot of the <u>instruction of the children</u> ; until the time that I come to my lord at Gabla. [JERUSALEM. That the children are tender.]
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob said: My lord, you know that I <u>have with me</u> tender children, and sheep, and kine with young: which if I should cause to be overdriven, in one day all the flocks will die. May it please my lord to go before his servant: and I will follow softly after him, as I shall see my children to be able, until I come to my lord in Seir.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub said to him, "My lord knows that the children are tender, and that the flocks and herds with me have their young, and if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will lead on gently, according to the pace of the livestock that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord to Seir."
Peshitta (Syriac)	But Jacob said. My lord knows that the children are too young, and that the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if I should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord pass before his servant, and I will travel slowly, according to the pace of the cattle which are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord to Seir.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said to him, My lord knows, that the children are very tender, and the flocks and the herds with me are with young; if then I shall drive them hard one day, all the cattle will die. Let my lord go on before his servant, <u>and I shall have strength on the road according to the ease of the journey before me</u> , and according to the strength of the children, until I come to my lord to Seir.

Significant differences: One targum lacks *to him*. The Latin has *have with me* where the Hebrew has *are*.

The Latin, Greek and Syriac do not speak of the young animals nursing; but they all mention that Jacob is traveling with young animals (so nursing is implied). One targums has additional text.

The Latin leaves out *pace of my work*. The Greek lacks that, but has the additional sentence: *and I shall have strength on the road according to the ease of the journey before me*. The Syriac has *according to the pace of my cattle*, which makes more sense (although *work* could be metonym for *livestock*). The work before Jacob is logically keeping his livestock healthy and growing.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	But Jacob said, My lord may see that the children are only small, and there are young ones in my flocks and herds: one day's over-driving will be the destruction of all the flock. Do you, my lord, go on before your servant; I will come on slowly, at the rate at which the cattle and the children are able to go, till I come to my lord at Seir.
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Easy English	But Jacob said, 'My lord, the children are young. And many of the animals have young ones. If we go too far in a day, then the animals will die. So my lord should go in front of me. I will move along slowly with the animals and children. I will come to you my lord, in Seir.'
Easy-to-Read Version	But Jacob said to him, "You know that my children are weak. And I must be careful with my flocks and their young animals. If I force them to walk too far in one day, all the animals will die. So you go on ahead. I will follow you slowly. I will go slowly enough for the cattle and other animals to be safe and so that my children will not get too tired. I will meet you in Seir."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob answered, "You know that the children are weak, and I must think of the sheep and livestock with their young. If they are driven hard for even one day, the whole herd will die. Please go on ahead of me, and I will follow slowly, going as fast as I can with the livestock and the children until I catch up with you in Edom."
International Children's B.	But Jacob said to him, "My master, you know that the children are weak. And I must be careful with my flocks and their young ones. If I force them to go too far in one day, all the animals will die. So, my master, you go on ahead of me, your servant. I will follow you slowly. I will let the animals and the children set the speed at which we travel. I will meet you, my master, in Edom."
<i>The Message</i>	But Jacob said, "My master can see that the children are frail. And the flocks and herds are nursing, making for slow going. If I push them too hard, even for a day, I'd lose them all. So, master, you go on ahead of your servant, while I take it easy at the pace of my flocks and children. I'll catch up with you in Seir."
New Simplified Bible	Jacob responded: »My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds that are nursing are a care to me. If they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. »Please let my lord pass on before his servant. I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.«

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

Casual English Bible	<p>Jacob answered, "Big brother, you can see that your servant's children are small and that I've got sheep and cows nursing their young. If we push them too hard for even one day, the young animals will die.</p> <p>"Big brother, why don't you go on ahead. I'm at your service, but if it's okay with you I'll travel at a slower pace—a pace to accommodate the livestock and the children. I'll meet you in Seir."<sup>1</sup></p>
Common English Bible	<p><sup>1</sup>A region also called Edom, in what is now the country of Jordan.</p> <p>But Jacob said to him, "My master knows that the children aren't strong and that I am responsible for the nursing flocks and cattle. If I push them hard for even one day, all of the flocks will die. My master, go on ahead of your servant, but I've got to take it easy, going only as fast as the animals in front of me and the children are able to go, until I meet you in Seir."</p>
Contemporary English V.	But Jacob answered, "Master, you know traveling is hard on children, and I have to look after the sheep and goats that are nursing their young. If my animals travel too much in one day, they will all die. Why don't you go on ahead and let me travel along slowly with the children, the herds, and the flocks. We can meet again in the country of Edom."
New Berkeley Version	But he replied, "My master is aware that the children are frail, while the flocks and the herds with me are giving suck; should they overdrive them for a single day the whole flock would die. Please let my master go in advance of his servant and we will move on slowly, at my leisure, adjusting ourselves to the pace that suits the endurance of the livestock in front of me and of the children, until I reach my master at Seir." Jacob might some day see him again, as when he and Esau buried their father; but Jacob had no intention to enjoy Esau's hospitality at Seir.

New Century Version	But Jacob said to him, "My master, you know that the children are weak. And I must be careful with my flocks and their young ones. If I force them to go too far in one day, all the animals will die. So, my master, you go on ahead of me, your servant. I will follow you slowly and let the animals and the children set the speed at which we travel. I will meet you, my master, in Edom."
New Life Version	But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak. And there are young ones in my flocks that need milk. If they are made to go a long way in one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord go in front of his servant. And I will be slow in coming to my lord at Seir. I will go as fast as the cattle in front of me and as the children are able."
New Living Translation	But Jacob replied, "You can see, my lord, that some of the children are very young, and the flocks and herds have their young, too. If they are driven too hard, even for one day, all the animals could die. Please, my lord, go ahead of your servant. We will follow slowly, at a pace that is comfortable for the livestock and the children. I will meet you at Seir."
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Jacob said, "You know, sir, that the children are weak, and that I must take care of the female sheep and cows that are sucking their mother's milk. If I force them to walk fast for a long distance in just one day, the animals will all die. You go ahead of me. I will lead the animals slowly, but I will walk as fast as the children and animals can walk. I will catch up with you in Seir."

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But [Jacob] said: 'My lord; You know that the children are frail, and the flocks and herds that I've brought also have [many] young ones. So if I drive them hard today, these cattle will die. Therefore, my lord; go on ahead of your servant... I'll take it easy along the way, so [I'll have] enough strength [to make the long journey] that's still ahead of me, and so that the children will have enough strength. Then I will [meet up with] my lord at Seir.'
Beck's American Translation	"My lord knows," he told him, "how frail the children are and how I have to take care of sheep, goats, and cows that are giving suck. If they're driven too hard for just one day, all the flocks will die. My lord, please go on ahead of your servant, and I will guide them as gently and as slowly as the cattle and children need to move till I come to my lord in Seir."
Berean Study Bible	But Jacob replied, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and I must care for sheep and cattle that are nursing their young. If they are driven hard for even a day, all the animals will die. Please let my lord go ahead of his servant. I will continue on slowly, at a comfortable pace for the livestock and children, until I come to my lord at Seir."
International Standard V	"Sir, you know [Lit. <i>My lord knows</i> ] that the children are frail," Jacob suggested, "and the ewes and cows with me are still nursing their young. If they're driven even for a day, the entire flock will die. So allow yourself to [Lit. <i>So let my lord</i> ] go ahead of your servant while I travel more slowly, letting the herds set their own pace [Lit. <i>feet</i> ] with the children until I arrive to see my lord in Seir."
Revised Knox Bible	But Jacob answered, My lord, bethink you that I have young children with me; that I have ewes here in lamb, and cows in calf; so that I may lose a whole herd if I overdrive them. Pass on, my lord, in advance of your servant; I will follow slowly, at whatever pace suits these children of mine, and meet you again, my lord, in Seir.
Translation for Translators	Jacob <i>had no intention to go with Esau</i> , but he said, "You know, sir, that the children are weak, and that I must take care of the female sheep and cows that are sucking their mother's milk/nursing their young . If I force them to walk fast for a long distance in just one day, the animals will all die. 14 You go ahead of me. I will lead the animals slowly, but I will walk as fast as the children and animals can walk. I will catch up with you in Seir, <i>in the land where the descendants of Edom live.</i> "

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

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to say: My lord is to be knowing, that the children are to be tender, and the small cattle and the large cattle with me, are to be suckling; to have them driven hard for one day, the small cattle are to have died. My lord was to pass over, from being turned before his servant, and I was to guide them, with rests and with a gentle pace, I am to employ being turned before them, and with the pace of the children, was I to come to my lord, in Seir.
Conservapedia	And Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with their young are with me. If my men were to trot them out, the whole flock will die. Please, let my lord pass over ahead of his servant, and I will lead my camp with care for a safe pace for the cattle and the children, until I can come to my lord at Seir."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But he answered him, "My Lord knows that the children are many, and the sheep and the cattle with me are breeding, so if we drive them a single day, then all the sheep will die. But let my Lord now go before me, and I will be travelling at my ease, according to the pace of the guide before me, and the pace of the children, until that I come to my Lord, at Seir."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he said unto him: my lord knows that I have tender children, ewes and kine with young, under mine hand, which if men should overdrive but even one day, the whole flock would die. Let my lord therefore go before his servant and I will drive fair and softly, according as the cattle that go before me and the children, be able to endure: until I come to my lord unto Seir.
Jubilee Bible 2000	And he said unto him, My lord knows that the children are tender, and the sheep and cows with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them, in one day all the sheep will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass before his slave; and I will lead on softly, according as the property that goes before me and the children are able to endure until I come unto my lord unto Seir.
H. C. Leupold	But he said: My lord knoweth that the children are of tender age, and that flocks and herds that are giving suck are upon my hands. If they be overdriven but one day, they will die—all the flock. Let my lord, I pray, pass on ahead of thy servant, and I shall drive along at my leisure at a gait suited to the cattle before me and at a gait suited to the children, until I come to my lord to Seir.
Tree of Life Version	He continued, "My lord knows that the children are tender, and that the flocks and the cattle in my care are nursing. So if they were pushed hard just one day, all the flocks would die. Please, let my lord pass on ahead of your servant, and I'll move on further gradually, at a pace suited to the livestock that are before me and at a pace suited to the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."
Unlocked Literal Bible	Jacob said to him, "My master knows that the children are young, and that the sheep and the cattle are nursing their young. If they are driven hard even one day, all the animals will die. Please let my master go on ahead of his servant. I will travel more slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are before me, and at the pace of the children, until I come to my master in Seir."
Urim-Thummim Version	And he replied to him, my master recognizes that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with the nursing are with me, so if our men should drive them too hard then all these herds would die. Let my master now travel on before his servant and I will lead on at a slower pace as the legs of our business dictate. Then the children and ourselves will walk by foot until we come to my master in Seir.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And said to him, "my lord known that the children are delicate, and the sheep and the cattle are a responsibility for me; and drive them hard one day, and all the sheep die. And my lord please pass in front of his servant; and I will follow along slowly, at the pace of my work in front of me, and at the pace of the children, until I shall come to my master at Se'ir."

**Catholic Bibles:**

The Heritage Bible	And he said to him, My lord knows by seeing that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if they press them severely one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord, please, cross over before the face of his servant, and I will flow on softly with a sparkle, according to the pace of the property which is before my face and the feet of the children until I come to my lord, to Seir.
New American Bible (2002)	But Jacob replied: "As my lord can see, the children are frail. Besides, I am encumbered with the flocks and herds, which now have sucklings; if overdriven for a single day, the whole flock will die. Let my lord, then, go on ahead of me, while I proceed more slowly at the pace of the livestock before me and at the pace of my children, until I join my lord in Seir."
New Jerusalem Bible	But Jacob replied, 'As my lord knows, the children are weak, and the sheep and cows which have calved make it hard for me. If they are driven too hard, even for one day, the whole drove will die. May it please my lord to go on ahead of his servant. For my part, I shall move at a slower pace, to suit the flock I am driving and the children, until I join my lord in Seir.'
Revised English Bible	But Jacob answered him, "You must know, my lord, that the children are small; the flocks and herds are suckling their young and I am concerned for them, and if they are overdriven for a single day, my beasts will all die. I beg you, my lord, to go on ahead, and I shall move by easy stages at the pace of the livestock I am driving and the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov said to him, "My lord knows that the children are small, and the sheep and cattle suckling their young concern me, because if they overdrive them even one day, all the flocks will die. Instead, please, let my lord go on ahead of his servant. I will travel more slowly, at the pace of the cattle ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Se'ir."
exeGesés companion Bible	And he says to him, My adoni knows that the children are tender and the flocks and oxen with sucklings are with me: and if men beat them one day, all the flock die. Let my adoni, I beseech you, pass over at the face of his servant: and I guide gently, according to the foot of the work at my face and according to the foot of the children, until I come to my adoni to Seir.
Hebrew Roots Bible	And he said to him, My master knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and the herds with me are suckling. And if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my master go before the face of his servant, and I will move on by stages at my ease, according to the feet of the livestock which are before me, and according to the pace of the boys, until I come into my master to Seir.
Israeli Authorized Version	And he said unto him, My YY knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my YY, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my YY unto Seir.
Kaplan Translation	'My lord,' replied Jacob, 'you know that the children are weak, and I have responsibility for the nursing sheep and cattle. If they are driven hard for even one day, all the sheep will die. Please go ahead of me, my lord. I will lead my group

slowly, following the pace of the work [(Ibn Ezra). Others, 'caravan' or 'drove' (cf. Rashi; Radak), or 'possessions' (Saadia).] that I have ahead of me, and the pace of the children. I will eventually come to [you], my lord, in Seir.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And he said unto him, Adoni knoweth that the yeladim are tender and the nursing tzon and bakar are upon me; and if men should overdrive them yom echad, all the tzon will die.

Let now adoni, pass over before his eved; and I will lead on slowly, according to the pace of the drove that goeth before me and the pace the yeladim are able to endure, until I come unto adoni at Seir.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

But Jacob replied, "You know, my lord, that the children are frail and need gentle care, and the nursing flocks and herds [with young] are of concern to me; for if the men should drive them hard for a single day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord go on ahead of his servant, and I will move on slowly, governed by the pace of the livestock that are in front of me and according to the endurance of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir [in Edom]."

The Expanded Bible

But Jacob said to him, "My ·master [<sup>L</sup>lord], you know that the children are ·weak [soft; frail]. And I must be careful with my flocks ·and their young ones [<sup>L</sup>and herds that are nursing]. If I ·force them to go too far [push them too fast] in one day, ·all the animals [the entire flock] will die. So, my ·master [lord], you ·go [pass] on ahead of me, your servant. I will follow you slowly and let the animals and the children set the speed at which we travel. I will meet you, my ·master [lord], in ·Edom [<sup>L</sup>Seir; 14:6]."

Kretzmann's Commentary

And he said unto him, my lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant; and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir, which he hoped to visit some day. The objections of Jacob to his brother's plan were well founded and backed up by his experience in handling cattle for many years. His intention to travel only as fast as the feet of the cattle were able to progress was based upon the fact that a single day's overdriving, with the attendant total exhaustion, would result in an entire loss.

NET Bible®

But Jacob [*Heb* "he"; the referent (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said to him, "My lord knows that the children are young [*Heb* "weak."], and that I have to look after the sheep and cattle that are nursing their young [*Heb* "and the sheep and the cattle nursing [are] upon me."]. If they are driven too hard for even a single day, all the animals will die. Let my lord go on ahead of his servant. I will travel more slowly, at the pace of the herds and the children [*Heb* "and I, I will move along according to my leisure at the foot of the property which is before me and at the foot of the children."], until I come to my lord at Seir."

The Voice

**Jacob:** My master knows that the children are very small and the nursing flocks and herds are under my care. If they are driven too hard for even one day, I'm afraid I'll lose all the flocks. Please, my master, go on ahead of me, and I will keep on at a slower pace—the pace of the animals up ahead and the children—until I come to you in Seir.

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and he said to him, my lord is knowing that the boys are tender and the flocks and the cattle giving milk are upon me and we will knock them one day and all the flocks will die, please, my lord will cross over to the face of his servant and I will lead

Concordant Literal Version	<p>myself for my gentleness, for the foot of the occupation which is to my face and to the foot of the boys, until I come to my lord, unto Se'iy<sup>[Hairy]</sup>,...</p> <p>And saying is he to him, "My lord knows that the children are tender, and the flock and the herd with unweaned are dependent on me, and, if I trot them one day, then die will all the small cattle. Pray, pass will my lord before his servant, and I will conduct them carefully, according to the pace of the work which is before me, and to the pace of the children, till I come to my lord to Seir.</p>
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	<p>And he said unto him, My lord, is taking note, that, the children are tender,—and the flocks and the herds are giving suck with me,—and, should I overdrive them a single day, then would all the flocks die. Let my lord, I pray thee pass over before his servant, and let, me, lead on in my own easy way, at the pace of the cattle that are before me, and at the pace of the children, until that I come in unto my lord, towards Seir.</p>
NASB	<p>Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you." But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."</p>
New King James Version	<p>But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir."</p>
Third Millennial Bible	<p>And he said unto him, "My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant; and I will lead on gently, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children are able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir."</p>
Young's Updated LT	<p>And he says unto him, "My lord knows that the children <i>are</i> tender, and the suckling flock and the herd <i>are</i> with me; when they have beaten them one day, then has all the flock died. Let my lord, I pray you, pass over before his servant, and I—I lead on gently, according to the foot of the work which is before me, and to the foot of the children, until that I come unto my lord, to Seir."</p>

**The gist of this passage:** Jacob expresses concern that Esau's pace of return will be too hard on his children and animals, and asks to travel at his own pace behind him. Jacob speaks of coming to Esau in Seir.

13-14

Genesis 33:13a			
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
'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

Genesis 33:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'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
'ādōnîy (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
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
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
y <sup>l</sup> âdîym (יְלָאֲדִיִּם) [pronounced y <sup>l</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
rak <sup>e</sup> (רַךְ) [pronounced rahkh]	<i>tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7390 BDB #940

**Translation:** Jacob answered him [lit., and he said], “My lord knows that the children [are young and] delicate...

*My lord* is a reference to Esau, not to God. Jacob is not telling Esau, “God has my protection and pace all under control.” Jacob is telling Esau that he can look at Jacob’s family and recognize that they cannot move at Esau’s pace.

Esau has only seen these children for a short while, but it is clear that many of them are young and delicate. The oldest child is 13 or 14; they might be as young as infants (Gill<sup>195</sup> inexplicably puts the youngest at age 6).

What Jacob is saying here is a legitimate excuse, no matter what Jacob’s intentions are. Recall the Laban was able to catch up to Jacob and his family because Laban could move much faster than Jacob could (and Jacob had a 3-day head start).

Genesis 33:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>195</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:13.

Genesis 33:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
tsôḥ (צֹהַן) [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
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
ʿûwl (לוֹעַ) [pronounced ʿoo]	<i>to nurse, to suck, to suckle; to feed, to nourish; are with young</i>	feminine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #5763 BDB #732
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<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 with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

**Translation:** ...and the flocks and herds with me are nursing;...

This was the time of the year when the flocks and herds had recent young, and that many of the young were still nursing.

I am a little confused as to how to translate the preposition *upon me*. I would interpret this to simply mean that it is Jacob's responsibility to keep his animals alive.

Genesis 33:13c			
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
dâphaq (דָּפַק) [pronounced daw-FAHK]	<i>to beat, to knock; to drive severely, to overdrive</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural with the Qal perfect 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1849 BDB #200
Many manuscripts read this as a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix.			
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today or this day (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
ʿechâd (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	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Genesis 33:13c			
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
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
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
tsô'n (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

**Translation:** ...and I have over-driven them [from] day one, and all the flock [might] die.

It is unclear on the reading here. I have gone with the secondary reading. What appears to be the case is, Jacob said that he has driven them quite hard to get to this point. He is concerned if he over-pushes the children and his animals, that many of the young might die. Children do not have the same drive and stamina that adults have.

All of this depends upon the pacing; and, quite obviously, his children and animals could suffer harm at moving along too quickly.

Jacob expresses concern that Esau may travel more quickly than Jacob is able, given that he is traveling with young children and young in his flocks and herds.

Genesis 33:13 *Jacob answered him [lit., and he said], "My lord knows that the children [are young and] delicate and the flocks and herds with me are nursing; and I have over-driven them [from] day one, and all the flock [might] die. (Kukis mostly literal translation)*

Genesis 33:13 *Then Jacob said to him, "My lord can see that my children are young and delicate and that the flocks and herds are nursing, all of which concerns me. I have possibly over-driven them from the start; and if I keep it up, all the flock could die."*

### Genesis 33:13: Jacob's refusal to travel with Esau (a discussion)

So that there is no misunderstanding, this is a legitimate set of excuses which Jacob has offered Esau.

The Cambridge Bible: *[Jacob asserts that his children are too] young and unequal to the fatigues of travel.*<sup>196</sup>

Dr. John Gill warns: *if he [Jacob], and the servants under him, should push them on too fast, beyond their strength, even but one day, all in the above circumstances would be in danger of being lost through overmuch fatigue and weariness.*

<sup>196</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:13.*

## Genesis 33:13: Jacob's refusal to travel with Esau (a discussion)

The excuse that Jacob gives is valid enough. Dr. Peter Pett writes: *[Jacob] points out how slow the journey is going to be. (He had been a bit quicker when fleeing from Laban). He will not delay Esau who must surely have something better to do than journey at the pace of shepherds. Let him go on and he will join at some stage him in Seir.*<sup>197</sup>

There is the possibility that Jacob has no intention of following Esau; or that, after Esau leaves, he decides not to follow him. My money is on the former; at no time does Jacob seriously entertain the idea of going to Seir.

H. C. Leupold offers a unique, if not weird, point of view: *Jacob seems to have had another reason for refusing Esau's company and protection, though out of delicacy he does not tell it before his brother: Jacob like Abraham (14:23) was conscious that he owed his entire wealth and success to God's blessing and, therefore, he felt the necessity of maintaining his independence, lest it might seem as though others had contributed to his wealth.*<sup>198</sup>

Perhaps Leupold, as a commentator, noticed something that needed commenting on, but just threw something out there? Many times, your wife will obsess over what she is going to wear to this or that event; and, once in a great while, she might just throw something on. I cannot imagine this going through Jacob's mind.

Dr. Bob Utley comes to some very negative conclusions about Jacob, conclusions which I believe are incorrect: *One wonders if...Jacob...[was making] an excuse for not traveling with him back to Seir immediately. His children were not "weak" and the flocks had already traveled a long way. Is Jacob still a manipulative liar?*<sup>199</sup>

Whereas, I believe that Jacob had every intention of going forward to Canaan, I believe that his excuses about the children and animals were legitimate. Remember that Laban was able to catch up to Jacob because he was moving at a slower pace. Laban caught up with Jacob even though Jacob had a 3 day lead.

Wesley: *Jacob saw cause modestly to refute this offer, wherein he shews a tender concern for his own family and flocks, like a good shepherd and a good father. He must consider the children, and the flocks with young, and not lead the one or drive the other too fast.*<sup>200</sup>

Although I believe that Jacob's concerns are genuine and reasonable, as we proceed with this narrative, it becomes clearer to me that Jacob is not going to go with Esau.

Dr. Peter Pett writes: *We may gather from this that Esau has invited Jacob to join him in Seir where he is at present residing. This would simply entail continuing South along the east side of the Jordan. But Jacob has no intention of going to Seir immediately. He shudders at the thought of what might happen to him there.*<sup>201</sup>

We do not know Jacob's motivation, apart from his willingness to obey God and go to Canaan; or a matter of his being injured from the night before. His fear is mentioned twice in the previous chapter; not at all in this chapter. For that reason, I think we can set Jacob's fear aside.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Esau has four hundred men who serve as Esau's military and were therefore, accustomed to traveling at a swift pace. On the other hand, Jacob could not travel fast but could only go at the pace of the cattle and his children. Therefore, Jacob is hindered by the animals in his flocks and herds that are nursing and the children in his household.*

<sup>197</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:13–14.

<sup>198</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>199</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:12–14.

<sup>200</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

<sup>201</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:13–14.

## Genesis 33:13: Jacob's refusal to travel with Esau (a discussion)

Wenstrom continues: *In fact, they had just completed a very difficult and arduous journey from Paddan Aram to the Mount Gilead region, which was over three hundred miles. So Jacob is smart and knows full well he can't continue to drive his flocks and family at such a pace because they will die of exhaustion.*<sup>202</sup>

We have to be careful about reading too much into Jacob's motivation; and we should not discount that, the night before, the Angel of God injured his leg.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Interestingly enough, Trapp offers an unusual application for this verse: *A pattern of a good pastor, ever to have an eye to the weak ones; and so to regard all in his flock, as he overdrive not any. "Who hath despised the day of small things?" {Zechariah 4:10} Weak ones are to be received, "but not to doubtful disputations." {Romans 14:1} Novices are not to be put upon the austerities of religion. {Matthew 9:15} Christ preached "as they were able to hear." {Mark 4:33} Peter was specially charged to look to the "lambs." {John 21:15} Christ "bears them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young." {Isaiah 40:11}.*<sup>203</sup>

Even though this is a pretty weird application, one must not forget that the Apostles later took many things from the Old Testament and gave them an odd application. A good pastor-teacher must be aware that there are people of all levels in his congregation, and that a sermon should not be a rehashing of the gospel, Sunday after Sunday; nor should a sermon consists of only a complex doctrine that maybe 5% understand.

I have listened to R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s teaching in church, live; and later—30+ years later, heard the same sermons—and there was still important information and application for me. Accurate teaching of the Bible—especially when it is presented verse-by-verse—is like that.

## Genesis 33:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿābar (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 imperfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
nâ (נָא) [pronounced <i>naw</i> ]	<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
ʾădônîy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i> ]	<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
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

<sup>202</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>203</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 33:13.

## Genesis 33:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
pānîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); construct form	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>before them, before their faces, in their presence, in their sight, in front of them.</i>			
'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 with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

**Translation:** Please [let] my adonai pass over before his servant...

Jacob asks that Esau go ahead of him, at his own pace.

You will note Jacob's submissive language—Esau is called *my lord* and Jacob says of himself, *your servant*. This has been Jacob's approach throughout their meeting. He does not even change after Esau warmly greets him.

## Genesis 33:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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
'ânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
nâhal (לָהֵךְ) [pronounced naw-HAHL]	<i>to go on, to lead on</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #5095 BDB #624
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	No Strong's # BDB #510
'aṭ (אֶת) [pronounced ahf]	<i>softly, gently; slowly; flowing</i>	adverb; substantive with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #328 BDB #31
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	No Strong's # BDB #510
regel (לְרַגְלָהּ) [pronounced REH-ge]	<i>foot; metaphorically step, gait, pace; turn</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
m <sup>e</sup> lâ'kâh (מְלָכָהּ) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> law-KAWH]	<i>work, occupation, labor, workmanship, items produced by work; that which is related to work</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4399 BDB #521

## Genesis 33:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lâmed (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 wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
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	No Strong's # BDB #510
regel (רֶגֶל) [pronounced REH-ge]	<i>foot; metaphorically step, gait, pace; turn</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
y <sup>e</sup> lâdîym (יְלָדָי) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -law-DEEM]	<i>children, descendants</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409

**Translation:** ...and I will go forward slowly according to the pace of the cattle [lit., *work*] who are before me and according to the pace of my children...

I have taken some liberties with one of the words here, translating it *slowly, leisurely*, although those are not BDB meanings given to it. However, they are reasonably close.

Jacob does not call his flocks and cattle, *flocks and herds* here, but *the work, the labor; that which is related to work*. This is Jacob's job overseeing these flocks and herds; and recall that he has been greatly blessed by God in this. However, all of this is still accomplished by the *sweat of his brow*. *Work* would be a metonym for *cattle, livestock, flocks*.

Dr. John Gill: [*Jacob call his his cattle*] the "work", because his business lay in the care of them, and these were the chief of his substance.<sup>205</sup>

I believe that, by using this particular noun, Jacob is emphasizing his responsibility towards these animals.

<sup>204</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 33:14.

<sup>205</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:14.

Genesis 33:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿad (עד) [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
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
bôwʾ (בוֹ) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>eh</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
ʾădônîy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i> ]	<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
Sêʾîyr (שַׁעִיר) [pronounced <i>say-GEER</i> ]	<i>hairy, shaggy; transliterated Seir</i>	masculine singular, proper noun with the directional hê	Strong's #8165 BDB #973

**Translation:** ...until I come to my adonai in Seir.”

Jacob is aware of where Esau is living. In Genesis 32:3, he sent messengers ahead to contact Esau.

Jacob assures Esau that he is coming to him in Seir, but that he will travel more slowly.

Jacob's response here is disappointing. He apparently has no intention of following Esau all the way to Seir. No reason is given for his lie; no reason is given for anything apart from what we have before us.

That Jacob needs to be heading for the land of promise rather than for Seir ought to be obvious. That is his destiny. Instead, he tells Esau, “Just let us travel at our own pace and I will come to you in Seir.” Why he could not have leveled with Esau on this matter, I do not know. I could speculate that Jacob thought that this was the safer move, but in this chapter, there is no mention of Jacob having fear or apprehension of Esau. Their warm meeting I think took all that away.

Some of the places where Seir or Edom are mentioned: Genesis 32:3 Deut. 2:1 Judges 5:4 2Chronicles 20:10 Ezekiel 25:8 35:2–3.<sup>206</sup>

It appears, however, that Jacob will not actually go to Seir (due south), but to Succoth (due west). We have seen a map of this back in [v. 12](#) and we will see another in [v. 17](#).

**Is Jacob lying to Esau about coming to Seir?** Jacob tells Esau that he is coming to him in Seir, but does not appear to do that. Does Jacob plan, from the beginning, to go west, rather than to follow Esau south? We can only speculate. However, Jacob seems pretty adamant about what he wants, and he makes it clear that he does

<sup>206</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:14.

not need any of Esau's men protecting him on his way to Seir. However, he refuses in such a way as to not seem unappreciative.

The Cambridge Bible accurately points out: *Jacob here implies that he was intending to visit his brother in Seir. He has no intention of settling there, and at the most he expresses a courteous hope of a temporary sojourn.*<sup>207</sup>

Whedon: *These words naturally give the impression that Jacob promises to move steadily along until he should reach Mt. Seir; but as soon as Esau departs, he proceeds to Shechem, and never went to Seir at all.*<sup>208</sup>

Similarly, The Geneva Bible: *[Jacob] promised that which (as it would seem) he did not plan to do.*<sup>209</sup>

NIV Study Bible: *Jacob, still the deceiver, had no intention of following Esau all the way to Seir.*<sup>210</sup>

Several commentators suggest that Jacob does travel to Seir—either right then or at a later day—but that the Bible does not record it. Although that is clearly a possibility, once Esau goes back south, Jacob's journey into the land of promise does not appear to miss a beat. If this is the case, then Jacob's words here are ultimately misleading. He appears to be saying something which is legitimate: "My cattle and my children cannot move at your pace." But he claims that he is coming to Seir, just at his own pace. I find it hard to read that in any way other than another example of Jacobian manipulation; or, at the very least, lying.

Dr. John Gill writes: *[Jacob] more probably he did go there then, or quickly after; though the Scripture makes no mention of it [or] he might go with some of his servants directly, and send his family, flocks, and herds, under the care of other servants, forward on their journey, and quickly come up to them again;...that he should tell a lie is not likely.*<sup>211</sup>

Adam Clarke writes: *It is very likely that Jacob was perfectly sincere in his expressed purpose of visiting Esau at Seir; but it is as likely that circumstances afterwards occurred that rendered it either improper or impracticable; and we find that Esau afterwards removed to Canaan, and he and Jacob dwelt there together for several years. See Genesis 36:6 (Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob.—ESV).*<sup>212</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *It seems to have been Jacob's intention, passing round the Dead Sea, to visit his brother in Seir, and thus, without crossing the Jordan, go to Beer-sheba to Isaac; but he changed his plan, and whether the intention was carried out then or at a future period has not been recorded.*<sup>213</sup>

<sup>207</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:14.

<sup>208</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 33:14.

<sup>209</sup> Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 33:14.

<sup>210</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 57 (footnote).

<sup>211</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:14 (slightly edited).

<sup>212</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:14.

<sup>213</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:14.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob's reference to visiting Esau in Seir does not mean that Jacob planned to go directly to Seir, but rather it meant that he would visit him by himself in the future without the flocks and family as indicated by his use of the personal pronoun "I" instead of "we," which would of course denote his entire family.*<sup>214</sup>

Even Whedon backpedaled on his initially accurate reading: *Esau was probably not yet settled in Mount Seir, (see note on Genesis 32:3,) but, during this interview, had told Jacob of his acquisitions and of his purpose to remove thither; and Jacob's promise to visit him there was necessarily indefinite as to time. The brothers met again at the burial of their father Isaac. Genesis 35:29.*<sup>215</sup>

Trapp offers 4 possibilities: (1) Jacob just did not mean to say this to Esau; it just came out of his mouth. (2) Jacob lied to Esau (Trapp cites but one man with this point of view). (3) Jacob went to Seir at some time, but the Bible does not record it. (4) Jacob wanted to go, but he was warned by God (or some wise men) not to go.<sup>216</sup>

Clarke's justification here has Jacob and Esau living near one another in Canaan. Canaan is where God instructed Jacob to move to. Esau apparently made the effort to live side-by-side his brother. That does not indicate in any way that Jacob's offer is sincere.

As I emphasized in the previous chapter, when Jacob wrestles with God, he does not turn into a mature believer overnight. Jacob develops enough trust in God to meet his brother head on without any attempt to hide his family (quite a change from Genesis 32). But any commentator who is of the opinion that Jacob's trust in God and spiritual maturity can change overnight, is left with the problem that, Jacob here appears to be shining Esau on. That is, he tells Esau what he wants to hear, but not the truth. This is the true impediment to understanding this passage—the mistaken view that Jacob went from 50 to 100 overnight, spiritually speaking. That underlying assumption is much more difficult to support than to simply accept 2 fairly easy propositions: (1) Esau expected Jacob to follow him almost immediately to Seir; and (2) Jacob made is sound as if he were coming straightway to Seir when he really had no such intention.

Now, one might make the case that Jacob does not give Esau the unvarnished truth because he does not want to reopen any wounds (at least, not while Esau is right there with 400 men). The honest truth is, "Listen, Esau, I am extremely glad that we can meet like this and put the past behind us; and I hope that we can see each other in the future. However, God has told me, 'Go to Canaan,' and that is what I must do." We will not read that quotation anywhere in this chapter. Instead, we read, "Listen, you can just let me and my company move at our own rate on our own and we will come to you in Seir."

Or, the problem could have been Jacob's physical condition, having been injured the night before.

Matthew Poole was all over the map on this topic: *We do not read that Jacob did according to this promise or insinuation go to Seir; either therefore he changed his first intentions for some weighty reasons, or upon warning from God; or he used this only as a pretence, which we should not too easily believe of so good a man, especially after such dangers and deliverances; or rather he did perform this promise, though the Scripture be silent of it, as it is of many other historical passages, and as it is here concerning Jacob's visiting of his father Isaac, which is not mentioned till ten years*

<sup>214</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>215</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 33:14.

<sup>216</sup> John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 33:14 (paraphrased).

after this time; and yet it is utterly incredible that Jacob should be so near to his dear and worthy father for so long a time together, and not once give him a visit.<sup>217</sup>

Another commentator suggested that Jacob did go to see Esau in Seir, and cited as confirmation of this, “You don’t think that Jacob waited until his father’s death in Genesis 35 to see him, do you?”<sup>218</sup> Point in fact, we have no idea if Jacob ever returned to see his father alive. Any spiritual growth whatsoever may have caused Jacob to feel shame about deceiving his own father (yes, I realize that with enough spiritual growth, Jacob could overcome his shame and guilt). My family played a lot of games and I recall cheating my own father at chess—and I still feel a tinge of shame for that—and that was over 40 years ago! Imagine what Jacob may have felt about his own deception?

Genesis 33:14 Please [let] my adonai pass over before his servant and I will go forward slowly according to the pace of the cattle [lit., work] who are before me and according to the pace of my children until I come to my adonai in Seir.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Let’s discuss this in greater detail: Is Jacob lying to Esau or what?

### Jacob tells Esau he is coming to Seir (Genesis 33:14)

1. First off, I do not think that there can be any doubt that Jacob is promising Esau that he is going to follow him down to Seir (v. 14)—and Esau himself goes down to Seir (v. 16), whereas, Jacob goes west (v. 17).
2. Why do so many commentators suggest that Jacob wanted to come to Seir but could not; or did come down to Seir, but it is not recorded?
  - 1) This is because most commentators see Jacob’s wrestling match with God to be completely transformative. He was frightened, but his encounter with God turned him completely around.
  - 2) Once they have taken this position, then Jacob must conform to the behavior of a spiritually mature believer. Therefore, if they take that point of view in Genesis 32, they cannot accept Jacob telling Esau a boldface lie here.
  - 3) If this wrestling match completely transformed Jacob, then You and I, as believers, would have reason to complain, if Jacob’s wrestling match with God was that transformative: *why doesn’t God give every believer a chance to grow by wrestling with Him?*
  - 4) Spiritual growth occurs based upon what occurs in our souls. We hear spiritual information, we believe it and we apply it to our lives, and we enjoy spiritual growth.
  - 5) God gave Jacob a shot in the arm, a bit of adrenalin, if you will, and this gave Jacob the ability to meet Esau without falling apart and without needing to hide his family.
  - 6) However, that was a burst of faith which lasted until v. 14, where Jacob lies to Esau about coming with him down to Seir.
  - 7) If the average commentator removed this from his list of assumptions, then I think he would be more inclined to subscribe to my point of view here.
  - 8) There is nothing recorded in Genesis 32 to support that Jacob went from spiritually mediocre to spiritually mature overnight. Does he exhibit more confidence? Surely; there can be no doubt about that. The night before, he tried to put his family in a safer area; but this day, his family is right behind him, marching along in plain sight.
3. At no time in the Bible do we read about Jacob going down to Seir. Although that is not proof positive that Jacob did not go to Seir, it would be odd to have all of this buildup (vv. 12–16) without a culminating verse.
4. God did give Jacob explicit instructions to return to Canaan; and God did not add in the phrase, “Look, if you want to visit your brother in Seir, do that too.”
5. Even though we would not count Jacob among the most honorable of the saints, God did tell him, “Return to Canaan” and Jacob obeyed.
6. With the various proposals offered, as for instance, Jacob eventually went there or meant to go there at a future time. That is *not* what the gist of this passage is. These things ought to be clear:

<sup>217</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:14.

<sup>218</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:14.

### Jacob tells Esau he is coming to Seir (Genesis 33:14)

- 1) Esau is going to return to Seir right then and there.
- 2) Jacob tells Esau that he is going to follow him to Seir.
- 3) Jacob does not appear to do that.
- 4) There is nothing in this passage that suggests that Jacob is going to, at some unspecified future time, come to see Esau. The passage suggests that Esau expects him to follow right then and there.
7. This leads us to the conundrum, did Jacob lie to Esau? Being unable to accept this likely fact better explains the many convoluted explanations of Jacob apparently not going to Seir, but forging on ahead into Canaan.
8. Remember, in the previous chapter, Jacob was afraid to meet Esau, based upon what Jacob had done in the past, based upon Esau's threats to kill him, and based upon Esau's small army that he traveled with. I think that, even though Jacob trusted God enough to meet Esau head on, with his family right behind him; Jacob was not prepared for Esau's generous offer.
9. Personally, I think that Jacob lied. I don't believe that we know if (1) he lied just because he was not ready to give Esau a full answer or explanation or if (2) Jacob did not want to open up old wounds by saying, "God told me to go to Canaan, and, after all, Canaan is my inheritance."
10. The proposition that Jacob lied, and that he is not dramatically improved, spiritually speaking, is much easier to substantiate in subsequent chapters. The idea that Jacob has reached some grand spiritual plateau is going to be contradicted again and again in our study of him and his sons.

If Jacob's spiritual life went from 50 to 100 overnight, then why is God not out there every single night wrestling other obstinate believers so that they are given the same chance that Jacob had? Would this not, logically speaking, make God unfair?

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 33:13–14 Then Jacob said to him, "My lord can see that my children are young and delicate and that the flocks and herds are nursing, all of which concerns me. I have possibly over-driven them from the start; and if I keep it up, all the flock could die. Let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will move along at a more leisurely pace, according to the cattle that you see before me and according to the pace of my own children. I will move at a slower rate until I come to my lord in Seir."

Genesis 33:13–14 Jacob answered him [lit., *and he said*], "My lord knows that the children [are young and] delicate and the flocks and herds with me are nursing; and I have over-driven them [from] day one, and all the flock [might] die. Please [let] my adonai pass over before his servant and I will go forward slowly according to the pace of the cattle [lit., *work*] who are before me and according to the pace of my children until I come to my adonai in Seir." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:13–14 Then Jacob said to him, "My lord can see that my children are young and delicate and that the flocks and herds are nursing, all of which concerns me. I have possibly over-driven them from the start; and if I keep it up, all the flock could die. Let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will move along at a more leisurely pace, according to the cattle that you see before me and according to the pace of my own children. I will move at a slower rate until I come to my lord in Seir." (Kukis paraphrase)

Jacob explains why he cannot simply follow Esau to Seir—his children and animals could not handle the pace.

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Despite the fact that there is very little text in this next verse, just exactly what they are saying to one another is somewhat abstruse (particularly Jacob's answer); therefore, many of the more imaginative translations took a stab at trying to convey what Jacob said and what he meant.

And so says Esau, “Let me leave please with you from the people who [are] with me.” And so he says, “For why this? I will find grace in [two] eyes of my adonai.”

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Esau said, “Let me please leave with you some of the people who [are] with me.” But he said, “Why [is] this? [Obviously] I have found grace in the eyes of my adonai [but I do not need them].”

Esau said, “Let me then leave with you some of the men who are with me.” But Jacob said, “There is no need; that I have found grace in your sight is good enough.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Esau, “Let me leave please with you from the people who [are] with me.” And so he says, “For why this? I will find grace in [two] eyes of my adonai.”
Targum (Onkelos)	And Esau said, Let me leave with thee of the people who are with me. And he said, Why should this be? Let me find grace in the eyes of my lord.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the <u>soldiers</u> who are with me. But he said, Why this? Let me find favour before thee, my lord. <u>And a miracle was wrought for Jakob, and that day Esau returned on his way to Gabla.</u>
Revised Douay-Rheims	Esau answered: I beseech you, that some of the people at least, who are with me, may stay to accompany you in the way. And he said: <u>There is no necessity: I want nothing else but only to find favour, my lord, in your sight.</u>
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Esau said, "Let me now leave with you some of the folk who are with me." He said, "Why? Let me find favour in the sight of my lord."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Esau said to him, Let me leave with you some of the men that are with me. But Jacob said, What need have I for them? Let me find mercy in the sight of my lord.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Esau said, I will leave with you some of the people who are with me. And he said, Why so? it is enough that I have found favour before you, <i>my lord</i> .
Significant differences:	One targum has <i>soldiers</i> rather than <i>people</i> (which is a legitimate interpretation). There is additional text in one targum. The Latin appears to do more interpretation than translation with what Jacob says.

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Esau said, Then keep some of my men with you. And he said, What need is there for that, if my lord is pleased with me?
Easy English	Esau said ‘Then let me leave some of my men with you.’ But Jacob replied ‘You do not have to do that. All I want is for you to be happy with me.’ Jacob was not going to go to Seir.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Esau said, “Then I will leave some of my men to help you.” But Jacob said, “That is very kind of you, but there is no need to do that.”
God’s Word™	Esau said, “Then let me leave some of my men with you.” “Why do that?” Jacob asked. “I only want to win your favor, sir.”
International Children’s B.	So Esau said, “Then let me leave some of my men with you.” “No, thank you,” said Jacob. “I only want to please you, my master.”
The Message	Esau said, “Let me at least lend you some of my men.” “There’s no need,” said Jacob. “Your generous welcome is all I need or want.”
NIRV	Esau said, “Then let me leave some of my men with you.” “Why do that?” Jacob asked. “I just hope I’ve pleased you.”

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

Casual English Bible	"In that case," Esau said, "let me leave some men to show you the way." Jacob said, "Why do that? It's enough that you've welcomed me home. I can find my way back."
Common English Bible	Esau said, "Let me leave some of my people with you." But Jacob said, "Why should you do this since my master has already been so kind to me?"
Contemporary English V.	Esau replied, "Let me leave some of my men with you." "You don't have to do that," Jacob answered. "I am happy, simply knowing that you are friendly to me."
The Living Bible	"Well," Esau said, "at least let me leave you some of my men to assist you and be your guides." "No," Jacob insisted, "we'll get along just fine. Please do as I suggest."
New Berkeley Version	Esau suggested, "I should like to assign some of my men to help you"; but he replied, "What is the need of it; it is enough that I enjoy your favor."
New Century Version	So Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my people with you."
New Living Translation	"No, thank you," said Jacob. "I only want to please you, my master." "All right," Esau said, "but at least let me assign some of my men to guide and protect you." Jacob responded, "That's not necessary. It's enough that you've received me warmly, my lord!"
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	Esau said, "Then allow me to leave with you some of the men who came with me, to protect you." But Jacob replied, "Why do that? The only thing that I want is for you to feel good toward me."

#### **Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	And Esau said: 'Then let me leave some of the people with you that I brought with me.'
International Standard V	And [Jacob] asked: 'Why? It's enough that I've found your favor, my lord!' Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." "Why do that?" Jacob asked. "I've already found favor in your sight, sir."
Revised Knox Bible	Pray then, said Esau, take some of my followers to escort you on your journey. No need for that, answered Jacob; enough for me, my lord, that I should have your good will.
Translation for Translators	Esau said, "Then allow me to leave with you some of the men who came with me, to protect you." But Jacob replied, "◀Why do that?/There is no need to do that!▶ [RHQ] The only thing that I want is for you to feel good toward me."

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

Awful Scroll Bible	Esau was to say: I was to place with you of the people with me. He was to say: Why, I was to come upon favor in the eye of my lord.
Conservapedia	Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." And Jacob said, "There's no need of that, for I have found grace in my lord's eyes."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But Esau said, "I will then assign to you some of the people who are with me." And he replied, "Why have I found this favour in the eyes of my Lord ?"
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Esau said: let me yet leave some of my folk with you. And he said: what need is it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.
HCSB	Esau said, "Let me leave some of my people with you." But he replied, "Why do that? Please indulge me, my lord."
H. C. Leupold	And Esau said: Then let me leave with thee as guard some of the men I have with me. And he said: Why then? Only let me find favor in my master's sight.
Tree of Life Version	Then Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What's this? Let me find favor in my lord's eyes."

Unlocked Literal Bible	Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of my men who are with me." But Jacob said, "Why do that? My master has already been kind enough to me."
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Esau replied, let me leave some people for an escort. But Jacob replied, what need for doing that? Just let me find favor in the eyes of my master.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And said Esau--- "let me show you please, from the people with me"; and he said "what is this for? I have found favor with my lord."

### Catholic Bibles:

Christian Community (1988)	Esau said, "At least let me leave with you some of my men." Jacob replied, "Why? All I want is to keep your friendship."
The Heritage Bible	And Esau said, Let me place with you some of the people that are with me. And he said, Why? Let there be grace in the eyes of my lord toward me.
New American Bible (2002)	Esau replied, "Let me at least put at your disposal some of the men who are with me." But Jacob said, "For what reason? Please indulge me in this, my lord."
New American Bible (2011)	Esau replied, "Let me at least put at your disposal some of the people who are with me." But Jacob said, "Why is this that I am treated so kindly, my lord?"
New Jerusalem Bible	Esau then said, 'At least let me leave you some of the people who are with me.' 'What for?' Jacob asked. 'Please indulge me, my lord!'
New RSV	So Esau said, 'Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.' But he said, 'Why should my lord be so kind to me?'
Revised English Bible	Esau said, "Let me detail some of my men to escort you," but he replied, "There is no reason why my lord should be so kind."

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	'Esav replied, "Then let me leave with you some of the people I have with me." But Ya'akov said, "There's no need for my lord to be so kind to me."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Esav says, Let me, I beseech, leave with you some of the people who are with me. And he says, Why this? for I find charism in the eyes of my adoni.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Then Esau said, "Let me assign to you some of the men who are with me." But he said, "Oh no, my lord is too kind to me!"
Kaplan Translation	'Let me put some of my people at your disposal,' said Esau. 'What for?' replied Jacob. 'Just let me remain on friendly terms with you.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Esav said, Let me now leave with thee some of HaAm that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? Let me find chen in the sight of adoni.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	So Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my people with you." "No, thank you," said Jacob. "I only want to please you, my master [Why should I find such grace/favor in the eyes of my master/lord?]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee, set at thy disposal, some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord. So Jacob courteously, but firmly, refused even a small company of protecting Bedouins. There was no need of it, and therefore Jacob did not want to bother Esau nor put himself under heavy obligations to him. Jacob knew, for one thing, that the host of the Lord's angels was with him. But he also did not want to become too intimate with the people of Esau, who undoubtedly did not all share their leader's sentiments. Christians will try to live peaceably with all men, but they will always avoid an intimate union with such as are distinct from them in spiritual matters.

NET Bible®

So Esau said, "Let me leave some of my men with you."<sup>29</sup> "Why do that?" Jacob replied [*Heb* "and he said, 'Why this?'" 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]. "My lord has already been kind enough to me [*Heb* "I am finding favor in the eyes of my lord."]."

The Voice

**Esau:** Let me leave some of my people to accompany you.  
**Jacob:** Why go to all that trouble? *You have done enough already.* Just let me find favor with my master.

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> said, please, I will make set with you from the people which are with me, and he said, why is this, I will find beauty in the eyes of my lord,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Esau, "Pray, I will put with you some of the people who are with me. And saying is he, "Why this? Enough is it that I am finding grace in the eyes of my lord.
English Standard Version	So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."
Green's Literal Translation	And Esau said, Please let me place with you <i>some</i> of the people who <i>are</i> with me. And he said, Why, then? Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord.
Third Millennium Bible	And Esau said, "Let me now leave with thee some of the folk who are with me." And he said, "What need is there? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord."
Webster's Bible Translation	And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the people that are with me: And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord.
Young's Updated LT	And Esau says, "Let me, I pray you, place with you some of the people who <i>are</i> with me;" and he said, "Why <i>is</i> this? I find grace in the eyes of my lord."

**The gist of this passage:** Esau suggests that he leave some people with Jacob to guide him, and Jacob refuses.

Genesis 33:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (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 imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'Êsâv (עֵשָׂו) [pronounced éy-SAWV]	handled, made, rough handling; hairy; transliterated Esau	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6215 BDB #796
yâtsag (יָצַג) [pronounced yaw-TSAHG]	to make to stand, to set, to station, to place, to leave, to establish, to let stay	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil imperfect with a cohortative hê	Strong's #3322 BDB #426
The hê at the end is called a volutative 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>			

Genesis 33:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâ' (נא) [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
'îm (עִם) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'am (עִם) [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 uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'êth (עִתְּךָ) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

The NET Bible: *The cohortative verbal form here indicates a polite offer of help.*<sup>219</sup>

**Translation:** Esau said, “Let me please leave with you some of the people who [are] with me.”

Since they are temporarily going their separate ways, Esau suggests that he send an escort with them. This is very reasonable, as Jacob would be traveling down roads that he might have never gone down before. Furthermore, he has not been in this area for 20 years, so things may have changed. Esau is making a very gracious and protective offer.

Genesis 33:15 Esau said, “Let me then leave with you some of the men who are with me.” But Jacob said, “There is no need; that I have found grace in your sight is good enough.”

### Genesis 33:15a: Esau offers to leave men with Jacob (various commentators)

The Cambridge Bible: *Esau... assumes that Jacob will be glad to receive the protection of his armed men. Jacob declines, not wishing to incur the risk of friction arising from a collision between two large companies; and will not accept a kindness which might compromise his independence.*<sup>220</sup>

<sup>219</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

<sup>220</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

**Genesis 33:15a: Esau offers to leave men with Jacob (various commentators)**

Dr. John Gill: *[Esau makes this offer to] show Jacob the way, and guard him on the road, and so that he would appear more honourable when he entered into Seir.*<sup>221</sup>

There will be more commentary on this further along in this verse.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

**Genesis 33:15b**

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
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 (מה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
<p>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>.</p>			
zeh (זה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

I suspect that all 3 particles above combine to mean something together. Gesenius suggests *why then*; various translators suggest *why [should]; why [is] this; why*. See *zeh* listings as well.

E. W. Bullinger: *Hebrew What for? or Why so? Figure of speech Erotesis and Ellipsis [which means]...Why [have] anything?*<sup>222</sup>

**Translation:** But he said, "Why [is] this?"

By asking the question, *why do this*, Jacob is indicating that he does not see a need for an escort. So Jacob does not refuse the escort outright, but this question indicates that he does not need any of Esau's men helping him out.

If anything, this may seem less than gracious; and it may mean that Jacob knows right at this time that he is not going down to Seir (he may have known this longer; but bear in mind, Jacob had no idea as to the reception that he was going to receive from Esau).

<sup>221</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:15 (edited).

<sup>222</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:15.

Genesis 33:15c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mâtsâ' (מצא) [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>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
chên (חן) [pronounced <i>khayn</i> ]	<i>grace, favor, blessing; acceptance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2580 BDB #336
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<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
'êynayim (עיני) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun; construct form	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
'ădônîy (אדני) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i> ]	<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

**Translation:** [Obviously] I have found grace in the eyes of my adonai [but I do not need them].”

What has concerned Jacob the most is the situation they are in at this point—where Jacob has found grace in the sight of Esau. Meaning, Esau no longer wants to kill him (Esau may have outgrown that years ago).

There are three translations which may give the sense of this verse:

Contemporary English V.	Esau replied, "Let me leave some of my men with you." "You don't have to do that," Jacob answered. "I am happy, simply knowing that you are friendly to me."
God's Word™	Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my men with you." "Why do that?" Jacob asked. "I only want to win your favor, sir."
The Message	Esau said, "Let me at least lend you some of my men." "There's no need," said Jacob. "Your generous welcome is all I need or want."

Some suggest that this reads *Let me find grace in the sight of my lord*. However, there is no reason to translate it in that way. Literally, the second part of this verse reads, *I have found grace in the sight of my lord*.

Finding favor/grace in the eyes of another: Genesis 34:11 47:25 Ruth 2:13 1Samuel 25:8 2Samuel 16:4

Esau is offering Jacob some protection; some muscle, so that he is not plundered along the way. Jacob recognizes that Esau is being gracious. However, the whole idea of Esau leaving men behind with Jacob is to guide Jacob to Seir, so that he and his family might proceed at a slower pace. I don't know whether Jacob's adamant refusal means (1) he is not going to follow Esau to Seir or (2) Jacob is unsure what he might do, but he wants to leave his options open. I lean more towards the former explanation.

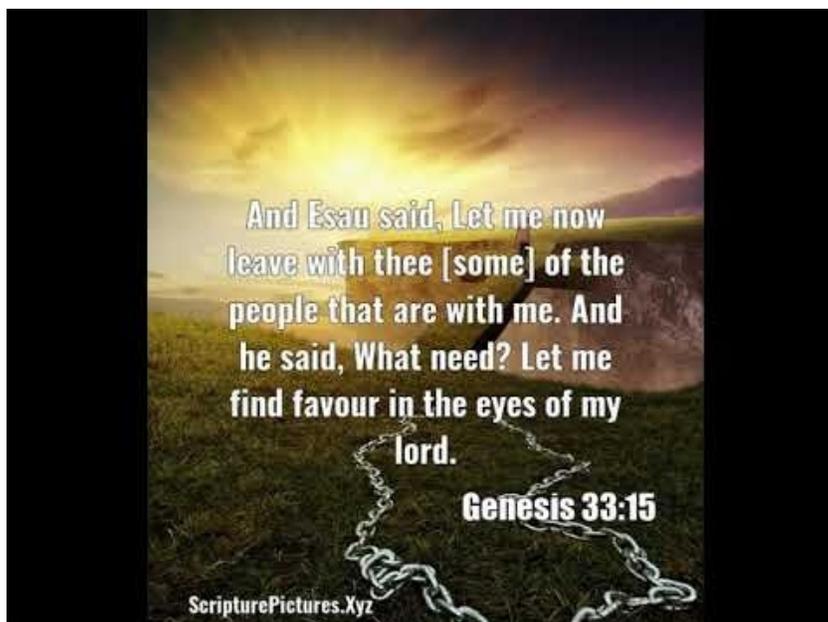
It is my impression, based upon this and the previous chapter, that Jacob was very concerned—even fearful—of his meeting with Esau. Jacob left Laban for two basic reasons: (1) he and Laban were unhappy in their business relationship and (2) God had told him to return to the land of promise (which is not where Esau lives). I don't think that Jacob's long-term plans went beyond his meeting with Esau. I don't believe that he saw himself living with

Esau in Seir as a future option at any point prior to this moment. Nevertheless, I don't believe that Jacob sees going south to Seir as a viable option, even now. God sent him west into the land of promise.

Although I believe that Jacob should have clearly told his brother, (1) "I am going west as God told me to do;" or (2) "I am surprised and pleased by your offer, but I need some time to think on it."

Genesis 33:15 Esau said, "Let me please leave with you some of the people who [are] with me." But he said, "Why [is] this? [Obviously] I have found grace in the eyes of my adonai [but I do not need them]." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:15 Esau said, "Let me then leave with you some of the men who are with me." But Jacob said, "There is no need; that I have found grace in your sight is good enough." (Kukis paraphrase)



**Genesis 33:15** (a graphic); from [YouTube](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

Esau makes a sincere offer to leave men with Jacob to help guide him down to Seir and to protect him and his family along the way. Jacob is declining this offer. Essentially, Jacob is saying, "There is no need for that."

Jacob's response suggests to me that Jacob already had his mind made up on not going with Esau to Seir. The remainder of this passage will confirm Jacob's mindset.

Genesis 33:15 Esau said, "Let me then leave with you some of the men who are with me." But Jacob said, "There is no need; that I have found grace in your sight is good enough."

### Genesis 33:15: Jacob declines an escort by Esau's men (commentators/discussion)

Stephen Armstrong believes that Esau understands that Jacob says he is not coming to Seir with him: *We have to read between the lines a little to know what's truly happening, but it would have been clear to Esau. Esau understands that Jacob isn't coming to Seir. Jacob's excuse is the thinnest of reasons not to follow. And when Esau offers to at least leave some men to guide Jacob, it was a test of Jacob's sincerity. Jacob's refusal told Esau clearly that Jacob had no interest in going to Seir • By declining in this polite way, Jacob avoided offending Esau. And so Jacob moves westward while Esau returns south to Edom.*<sup>223</sup>

Personally, I don't see it that way. I believe that Jacob knew he was not going south; I don't believe that Esau realized that until he returned home and did not see Jacob following him.

Benson: *Esau having offered some of his men to be his guard and convoy, Jacob humbly refuses his offer. He is under the divine protection, and needs no other.*<sup>224</sup>

Benson takes the approach that Jacob is operating as a spiritual giant—he is not! Let me give you two reasons why: (1) Jacob nowhere states, "I appreciate your graciousness, brother, but God protects me now." (2) Jacob will make it seem as if he is on his way to visit Esau in Seir, but he will go due west instead. He does not even tell Esau, "Look, maybe we can meet up at another time, but God has told me to go west."

<sup>223</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>224</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:15.

## Genesis 33:15: Jacob declines an escort by Esau's men (commentators/discussion)

Dr. Thomas Constable: *[Jacob] gave a legitimate explanation of why it would be better for him to travel separately: the condition of his animals. Jacob may have been counting on God's protection and therefore felt no need of Esau's men.*

Constable gives reason #2: *Alternatively Jacob may have mistrusted Esau having been deceived himself and having been deceptive.*

Constable gives reason #3: *Still another view is that Jacob was returning to the Promised Land on God's orders, and that did not include going to Seir.*<sup>225</sup>

Henry M. Morris: *Some credit Jacob with a deceptive falsehood here, alleging that he never had any intention of going to Seir. It is more likely that Esau had invited Jacob to visit him in Seir, and that this is Jacob's promise to do so, a promise that he might very well have kept. "They could, and no doubt did, continue to see each other."*<sup>226</sup>

The fact that Jacob refused all personnel and then apparently made no effort to go to Seir suggests to me that he was never going to Seir.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Esau then offered Jacob a portion of his men to accompany him for protection but Jacob declines this offer as well. Jacob declined this offer from Esau because Jacob was confident in the Lord's promise to protect him and be with him as witnessed by the Lord's protection of him while dealing with both Laban and Esau. Therefore, he saw no need for this military presence to protect him since he had faith and was totally and completely confident that the Lord was with him and would protect him from any and every possible adversary.*<sup>227</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *Jacob saw not the necessity of it; he knew the direct way very probably; he thought himself in no danger, since he was at peace with Esau.*<sup>228</sup>

Again, Jacob does not see himself in danger going south to Esau's because he is not going south.

Matthew Henry offers this option: *Jacob is under the divine protection, and needs it not for safety.*<sup>229</sup>

In my opinion, I don't think that this is why Jacob refused protection (my explanation is above).

Keil and Delitzsch approach this from a different angle: *Jacob politely declined not only his own company, but also the escort, which Esau afterwards offered him, of a portion of his attendants; the latter as being unnecessary, the former as likely to be injurious to his flocks. This did not spring from any feeling of distrust; and the ground assigned was no mere pretext. He needed no military guard, "for he knew that he was defended by the hosts of God;" and the reason given was a very good one:...A caravan, with delicate children and cattle that required care, could not possibly keep pace with Esau and his horsemen, without taking harm. And Jacob could not expect his brother to accommodate himself to the rate at which he was travelling.*<sup>230</sup>

Does Jacob fully understand that he is protected by God and so, no military guard is necessary? I don't know that is the case. I think Jacob has already decided not to follow Esau; or, at the very least, that he wants his options to remain open. His options are not open if there is an armed guard from Esau with him, with orders to bring them all to Seir.

<sup>225</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

<sup>226</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-33.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>227</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>228</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:15.

<sup>229</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:5–15.

<sup>230</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:12–15.

### Genesis 33:15: Jacob declines an escort by Esau's men (commentators/discussion)

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob certainly does not want to have Esau's men there ensuring that they go to Seir. Nor is he certain what secret instructions they might be given. He is still all suspicion. He judges others by his own complicated make up. But the fact that he is able to make a case ('what is the need') demonstrates that he has a reasonably satisfactory band of men himself.*<sup>231</sup>

I do not think that Jacob has any serious suspicions about Esau at this point. I think that Jacob recognized his greeting was warm and sincere. After all, Esau, with 400 men, had he still been filled with hatred, does not need to lure Jacob anywhere to harm him—he could have done it right there.

There is no indication that Jacob has a satisfactory band of men. When Jacob found that Esau was traveling with 400 men, the first thing that Jacob felt was fear (Genesis 32:6–7).

Whedon: *Jacob politely declines a body of Esau's men stationed as a guard around him. Such an arrangement would have only been likely to lead to difficulties which it were altogether better to avoid.*<sup>232</sup>

I have no clue as to what unnamed difficulties Jacob would be facing.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob declined Esau's offer to travel with him to Seir but did not mention it to Esau...[This was because] the Lord commanded him to return to the land of Canaan (See Genesis 31:3) and even promised him possession of it (See Genesis 28:13).*<sup>233</sup>

Jacob's motivation is, again, difficult to ascertain. Does he still have some fear of Esau or does he worry that by saying, "God wants me in the land of Canaan, because He has given that to me," will open old wounds? Based upon Jacob's history, I believe that we should never underestimate his motivation of self-protection.

I believe that, almost from the moment that Esau offered to escort Jacob to Seir, Jacob had rejected that offer in his own mind, as God had told him to go to Canaan. Jacob's choice not to tell Esau was not necessarily something that Jacob thought about for a long period of time; but he did decide, right or wrong, not to tell Esau his true plans.

When attempting to interpret people's motivations in Scripture, where there is not an overabundance of evidence, we are best not to take our own conclusions and then draw conclusions from them. God the Holy Spirit reveals enough information to us here to suggest that Jacob knows he is not going to Seir. Whereas, I don't think it is wrong to speculate as to his own reasoning here, a teacher should be careful not take his speculations and make a spiritual application from them.

Wenstrom sees Jacob's approach as simply being tactful: *The fact that Jacob doesn't mention to Esau that the Lord had promised him the land of Canaan and commanded him to return to it does "not" mean that Jacob has lost sight of what the Lord said to him but rather he is being tactful. "Tact" is a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense and is the skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.*<sup>234</sup>

Whereas, Wenstrom may have a point here, one could ask, *was Jacob being similarly tactful when he fled from Laban in secret?* In any case, Esau would figure out what happened.

Before Esau figured out that Jacob was not coming, how much trouble did he go to in order to prepare a place for his brother Jacob? I would suggest there was some. Furthermore, was Esau embarrassed to some degree that his own brother did not follow him down to Seir? Perhaps he did lose face over that.

Therefore, I lean towards favoring Jacob's honesty in this situation rather than his default to duplicity.

<sup>231</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:15.

<sup>232</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 33:15.

<sup>233</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>234</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

## Genesis 33:15: Jacob declines an escort by Esau's men (commentators/discussion)

Once a commentator has put forth the view that Jacob's spiritual life turned around overnight as a result of his wrestling with the Angel of God, then that leads to having to explain, what is going on here? Jacob promises to come to Seir—and it appears that Jacob means, right away—but there is no indication at all that he does.

There is one more thing to consider, and I don't think that we should ignore this: Jacob was injured from the night before. He may be going to great lengths to disguise this from Esau (we don't know; it is not discussed in Genesis 33). But it is equally possible that Jacob himself cannot make the trip down to Seir. The fact that Jacob does not appear to do much traveling at this point (see v. 17), also suggests that Jacob feels distinctively limited when it comes to further travels.

In any case, there is no reason for Jacob to be henceforth suspicious of his brother Esau, that he might still bear ill will.

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Perhaps you are confused by this situation, and these different points of view; so let me guide you to some personal application:

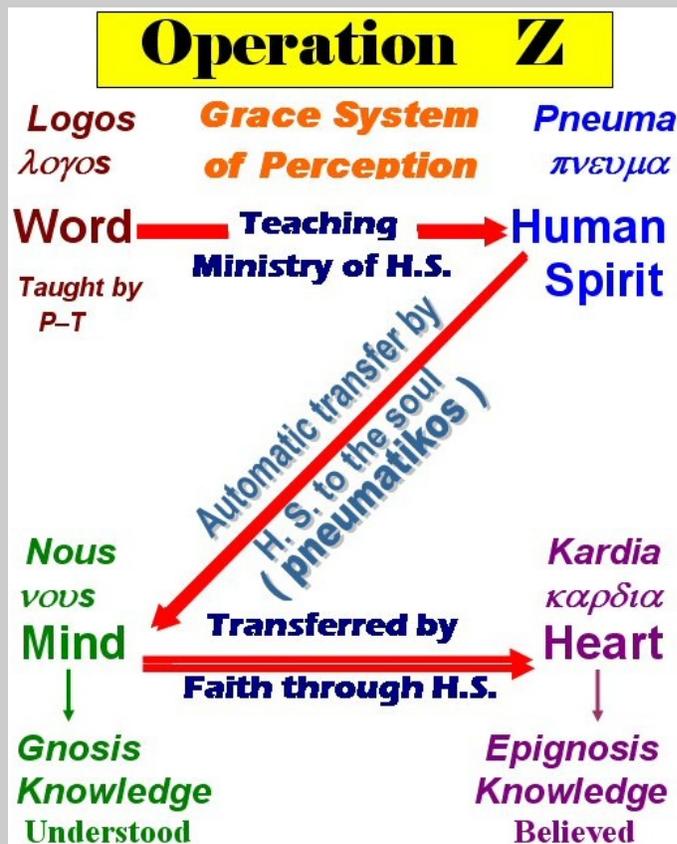
### How do we apply these discussions to our own lives?

1. When it comes to spiritual growth, there is no overnight solution; there is no one-shot decision (like rededicating your life to Christ during an emotional moment).
2. If there was something that God could do to just completely turn Jacob's life around overnight, then why isn't He doing this for me?
3. Furthermore, if there was some particular step that one takes to turn his spiritual life around overnight, then why don't we have that step clearly delineated in Scripture? Why doesn't Paul write, *now here is what you must do: go to the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church on the corner and, when they give the invitation at the end to believe in Jesus or to rededicate your life to Him, then you go forward, brother!* That verse is not there.
4. There are some verses which tell us how to conduct ourselves as believers:
  - 1) 1John 1:9 **If we acknowledge our sins, God is both faithful and just to forgive us these sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
    - (1) In context, this verse is addressed to believers.
    - (2) Also, the context is fellowship, being in or out of fellowship (with God).
    - (3) God is faithful, which means that we can depend upon Him forgiving our sins every time. This is theologically sound because Jesus has died for every sin that we have ever committed.
    - (4) God is also just to forgive us our sins, as Jesus paid for those sins.
    - (5) On top of all this, God will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So, I may have missed naming a sin for some reason—no problem—I am cleansed of that sin as well.
  - 2) 2Peter 3:18a **Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
    - (1) This is a command. The present active imperative means, we are commanded to do this; and that Peter tells us to keep on doing it (present linear aktionsart).
    - (2) The 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural means that this command is for all believers (contextually, Peter is writing to believers).
    - (3) This is accomplished by God's grace system of growth—every believer is capable of spiritual growth.
    - (4) How is this growth accomplished? Through knowledge of Bible doctrine; and the believer must hear and then *believe* the doctrine.

**How do we apply these discussions to our own lives?**

3) Heb. 4:1–2 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear so that none of you should show evidence of falling short. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

- (1) The writer of Hebrews spoke often of the Exodus generation. They receive the doctrine; they received the promises, but these things did them no good, because they did not mix what they heard from Moses with faith.
- (2) Faith is essential to our growth and progress in the spiritual life.
- (3) Faith in and of itself is nothing. Every person has faith. Our faith must have the correct object. Prior to salvation, the key object was Jesus Christ. After salvation, our faith is to be placed in Bible doctrine.
- (4) In the passage above, the problem with the Exodus generation is, they heard the words of Moses (Bible doctrine) but they did not profit from them because they did not take them in with faith.



- 5. R. B. Thieme, Jr. condensed these steps into Operation Z. **Operation Z** (a graphic); from [Country Bible Church](#); accessed April 22, 2019.
- 6. So, the Christian life is not something which is accomplished overnight. It is a day-in, day-out progression, marked with the naming of our sins, the intake of Bible doctrine, and the exercise of faith in the Bible doctrine that we hear.

Key to our understanding of Genesis 32–33 is, there was no overnight transformation of Jacob.

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R. B. Thieme, Jr. dubbed the steps above as *operation Z*.

**Links to Operation Z**

- There is an excellent Chart at [Country Bible Church](#).
- The Doctrine of Operation Z by [Jim Oliver](#).
- Operation Z by [Joe Griffin](#).
- Operation Z from [Angel Fire](#).

This might be overkill; the doctrine is essentially covered above.

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Hamilton: *This is only the second-and it is the last-conversation between Esau and Jacob mentioned in Genesis. On the first occasion (Genesis 25:29-34) Esau failed to perceive Jacob's capacity for exploitation. On the second occasion he fails to perceive Jacob's hesitancy and lack of excitement about going to Seir. In both cases, Jacob succeeds in deceiving Esau.*<sup>235</sup>

They may have many more conversations; but those will not be recorded in the Word of God.

Genesis 33:15 Esau said, "Let me then leave with you some of the men who are with me." But Jacob said, "There is no need; that I have found grace in your sight is good enough."

It is at this point where it appears that Jacob really has no intention of traveling down to Seir with Esau.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### Jacob and Esau Go Their Separate Ways

Jacob and Esau, almost from birth, were destined to go their separate ways. This does not mean that they needed to be at odds with one another. Much of that was Jacob's doing. They will enjoy some times together where they enjoy a warm, brotherly relationship. However, when all is said and done, Esau and his family will live in a region separate from Jacob and his sons. Throughout Jacob's life, God will carefully maintain a separation between him and other peoples.

Some translations separate vv. 16–17 into two verses.

**And so returns the day the this Esau to his way Seir-ward. And Jacob [broke camp and] journeyed to Succoth. And so he builds for himself a house and for his cattle he made booths. Upon so he called a name of the place Succoth.**

Genesis  
33:16–17

**So Esau returned that day by his road to Seir; while Jacob journeyed to Succoth [instead]. He built a house [there] for himself and he made booths for his cattle; therefore, he called the name of [that] place Succoth.**

**Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he named that place Succoth.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so returns the day the this Esau to his way Seir-ward. And Jacob [broke camp and] journeyed to Succoth. And so he builds for himself a house and for his cattle he made booths. Upon so he called a name of the place Succoth.

Targum (Onkelos)

And Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jakob journeyed to Succoth, and builded him an house, and made tabernacles for his cattle; therefore he called the name of the place Succoth ["Tabernacles."].

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And a miracle was wrought for Jakob, and that day Esau returned on his way to Gabla.

<sup>235</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

And Jakob journeyed to Succoth, and sojourned there the twelve months of the year; and he builded in it a Midrash [“ A school.”], and for his flocks he made booths; therefore he called the name of the place Succoth.

Revised Douay-Rheims

So Esau returned, that day, the way that he came, to Seir. And Jacob came to Socoth: where having built a house, and pitched tents, he called the name of the place Socoth, that is, Tents.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. Ya'aqub travelled to Succoth, built himself a house, and made shelters for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

Peshitta (Syriac)

So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house, and made sheepfolds for his cattle; therefore he called the name of the place Succoth.

Septuagint (Greek)

And Esau returned on that day on his journey to Seir. And Jacob departs to his tents; and he made for himself there habitations, and for his cattle he made booths; therefore he called the name of that place, Booths.

Significant differences:

There is additional text in one of the targums. Although the Greek has *his tents* rather than *Succoth*; that is one of the meanings of *Succoth*. One targum has Jacob building a *school* rather than a *house*. The Latin leaves out that he built booths *for his livestock*. The Latin adds the phrase *that is, Tents* at the end of v. 17.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

So Esau, turning back that day, went on his way to Seir. 17 And Jacob went on to Succoth, where he made a house for himself and put up tents for his cattle: for this reason the place was named Succoth.

Easy English

So Esau began his journey back to Seir. But Jacob went to Succoth. He built a hut for himself. And he made places for his animals to sleep. That is why they called the place Succoth. Succoth means huts. Jacob probably stayed there for some time.

Easy-to-Read Version

So that day Esau started on his trip back to Seir. But Jacob went to Succoth. There he built a house for himself and small barns for his cattle. That is why the place was named Succoth.

International Children's B.

So that day Esau started back to Edom. But Jacob went to Succoth. There he built a house for himself. And he made shelters for his animals. That is why the place was named Succoth [This name means "shelters"].

NIRV

So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. But Jacob went to Sukkoth. There he built a place for himself. He also made shelters for his livestock. That's why the place is named Sukkoth.

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

Casual English Bible

Esau headed home to Seir. Jacob did not follow. Instead, he decided to go to a place that became known as Succoth.<sup>2</sup> He settled there for a time. He built a house and shelters for his livestock. That's why the place was called Succoth.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>33:17 An ancient city east of the Jordan River, now possibly buried under a high mound known as Tell Deir Alla.

<sup>3</sup>33:17 It means "shelters" in Hebrew.

Common English Bible

That day Esau returned on the road to Seir, but Jacob traveled to Succoth. He built a house for himself but made temporary shelters for his animals; therefore, he named the place Succoth.

The Living Bible

So Esau started back to Seir that same day. Meanwhile Jacob and his household went as far as Succoth. There he built himself a camp, with pens for his flocks and herds. (That is why the place is called Succoth, meaning "huts.")

New Berkeley Version	So Esau started back that day on his way to Seir, while Jacob moved to Succoth, where he built a dwelling for himself and put up booths for his herds; hence the name Succoth for the place.
New Century Version	So that day Esau started back to Edom. But Jacob went to Succoth, where he built a house for himself and shelters for his animals. That is why the place was named Succoth.
New Life Version	So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. But Jacob traveled to Succoth. He built his house there, and put up small buildings for his animals. So the name of the place is Succoth.
New Living Translation	So Esau turned around and started back to Seir that same day. Jacob, on the other hand, traveled on to Succoth. There he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was named Succoth (which means "shelters").
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	So on that day Esau left to return to Seir. But instead of going to Seir, Jacob and his family went to a place called Succoth. There he built a house for himself and his family, and built shelters for his livestock. That is the reason they named the place Succoth, which means "shelters."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So Esau returned to Seir that day, and Jacob returned to the tents that he had set up to live in... and he also built pens for his cattle. So he named that place, SucCoth (The Pens).
Beck's American Translation	That day Esau left to go back to Seir. Jacob moved to Succoth, where he built a home for himself and shelters for his stock. This is why the place is called Succoth ["Shelters"].
Berean Study Bible	So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir, <sup>17</sup> but Jacob went on to Succoth, <sup>a</sup> where he built a house for himself and shelters for his livestock; that is why the place was called Succoth. <sup>a</sup> <i>Succoth</i> means <i>booths</i> or <i>shelters</i>
International Standard V	So Esau set out that very day back on his way to Seir, but Jacob set out for Succoth, built a house there, and constructed some cattle shelters. He named the place Succoth [The Heb. name <i>Succoth</i> means <i>shelters</i> ].
New Advent (Knox)Bible	So that day, Esau went back to Seir the way he had come; Jacob went as far as Socoth, and there built himself a house, with sheds for his cattle; that is why he called the place Socoth, which means Sheds.
Translation for Translators	So on that day Esau left to return to Seir. But <i>instead of going to Seir</i> , Jacob and his family went to a place <i>called</i> Succoth. There he built a house for himself and his family, and built shelters for his livestock. That is the reason they named the place Succoth, <i>which means</i> "shelters."

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

Awful Scroll Bible	Esau was to turn back that day, on his way to Seir. Jacob was to pull up, to Succoth. He was to build a house, and is to have made booths for his livestock. The name of the place is to been called Succoth.
Conservapedia	So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. Jacob traveled to Succoth, and built a house for himself, and set up booths for his cattle. This is why the place is called Succoth. Which in Hebrew means "booths." The Feast of Booths, or Sukkot, is observed to this day by the Jews on and around the full moon in the middle of the month originally called Ethanim, and today called Tishrei.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	So Esau returned that day on his journey to Seir, but Jacob pitched his tent, and built himself a house, and cattle yards, making an encampment ; therefore he called the name of the place Skuth. "The Tents," when translated from the Hebrew.— F. F.

God's Truth (Tyndale)	So Esau went his way again the same day unto Seir. And Jacob took his journey toward Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: whereof the name of the place is called Succoth.
HCSB	That day Esau started on his way back to Seir, but Jacob went on to Succoth. He built a house for himself and stalls for his livestock; that is why the place was called Succoth.
H. C. Leupold	So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. Jacob started out for Succoth and built himself a house, and for the cattle he made booths (succoth); therefore the name of the place was called Succoth.
NIV, ©2011	So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. Jacob, however, went to Sukkoth, where he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Sukkoth.
Urim-Thummim Version	So Esau turned back that day on his return to Seir. And Jacob departed for Succoth and established his house and made shelters for his cattle. That is why the name of the place is called Succoth (that is, "Shelters").
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Esau returned on that day to his travel, toward Seir. And Jacob travelled to Succoth and he build a house: and for his herds he made huts (succoth), and this is why the place is named Succoth.

### Catholic Bibles:

The Heritage Bible	And Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob pulled up to Succoth, and built him a house, and made booths for his livestock; therefore he called the name of the place Succoth [ <i>Booths</i> ].
New American Bible (2011)	So on that day Esau went on his way back to Seir, and Jacob broke camp for Succoth. There Jacob built a home for himself and made booths for his livestock. That is why the place was named Succoth. <b>Succoth:</b> an important town near the confluence of the Jabbok and the Jordan (Jos 13:27; Jgs 8:5–16; 1 Kgs 7:46). <b>Booths:</b> in Hebrew, sukkot, of the same sound as the name of the town.
New Jerusalem Bible	So that day Esau turned back towards Seir, but Jacob made his way to Succoth, where he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock; that is why the place was given the name of Succoth.
New RSV	So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17But Jacob journeyed to Succoth [ <i>That is Booths</i> ], and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle; therefore the place is called Succoth.
Revised English Bible	That day Esau turned back towards Seir, while Jacob set out for Succoth; there he built himself a house and made shelters for his cattle. Therefore he named that place Succoth.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	So 'Esav left that day to return to Se'ir. Ya'akov went on to Sukkot, where he built himself a house and put up shelters for his cattle. This is why the place is called Sukkot [ <i>shelters</i> ].
exeGesés companion Bible	So Esav returns that day on his way to Seir: and Yaaqov pulls stakes to Sukkoth/Brush Arbors and builds a house for himself and works sukkoth/brush arbors for his chattel: so he calls the name of the place Sukkoth/Brush Arbors.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	So Esau started back that day on his way to Seir. 17But Jacob journeyed on to Succoth, and built a house for himself and made stalls for his cattle; that is why the place was called Succoth.

Kaplan Translation	On that day, Esau returned along the way to Seir. Jacob went to Sukkoth. There, he built himself a house, and made shelters for his livestock. He therefore named the place Sukkoth (Shelters). [Sukkoth is] A locality on the East Bank of the Jordan, cf. Joshua 13:27, Judges 8:4,5. It is associated with Shechem; Psalms 60:8, 108:8. It is thought to be Tel Deir Alla on the Jabbok River, 2.5 miles east of the Jordan.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	So Esav returned that day on his derech unto Seir. And Ya'akov journeyed to Sukkot, and built him a bais, and made sukkot for his mikneh; therefore the shem of the makom is called Sukkot.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So Esau turned back [toward the south] that day on his way to Seir. But Jacob journeyed [north] to Succoth, and built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock; so the name of the place is Succoth (huts, shelters).
The Expanded Bible	So that day Esau started back to ·Edom [Seir; 14:6]. But Jacob went to Succoth, where he built a house for himself and ·shelters [booths] for his animals. That is why the place was named Succoth [sounds like "shelter" in Hebrew].
Kretzmann's Commentary	<b>Verses 16-20</b> Jacob Returns to Canaan So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir, in the valley of Zin, south of the Dead Sea, the country which he had selected for his home. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle; therefore the name of the place is called Succoth (booths). Jacob, from the neighborhood of Peniel, turned toward the Jordan, where he built a more permanent encampment, by erecting a house for himself and sheds, or booths, for his cattle. This place probably remained one of his stations for his rapidly growing herds and flocks. Cf Joshua 13:27; Judges 8:4-5.
NET Bible®	So that same day Esau made his way back [ <i>Heb</i> "returned on his way."] to Seir. But Jacob traveled to Succoth where he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was called [ <i>Heb</i> "why he called."] Succoth.
The Voice	Esau agreed and set out that day to go back to Seir. But Jacob journeyed <i>instead</i> to Succoth, and he built himself a house there and put up some shelters for his cattle. That's why this place is called Succoth, <i>which means "shelters."</i>

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Esav <sup>[Doing]</sup> turned back in that day to his road unto Se'iyir <sup>[Hairy]</sup> , and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> had journeyed unto Sukot <sup>[Booths]</sup> and built for himself a house and for his livestock he made booths therefore, he called out the title of the place Sukot <sup>[Booths]</sup> ,...
Concordant Literal Version	And returning is Esau on that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeys to Succoth. And building is he for himself a house there. And for his cattle he makes booths. Therefore he calls the name of the place Succoth.
Modern English Version	So Esau returned that day making his way back to Seir. But Jacob journeyed to Sukkoth and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Sukkoth.
Young's Updated LT	And turn back on that day does Esau on his way to Seir; and Jacob has journeyed to Succoth, and builds to himself a house, and for his cattle has made booths, therefore has he called the name of the place Succoth.

**The gist of this passage:** Esau returns to Seir while Jacob goes further into the Land of Promise. He builds a house for himself in Succoth.

Genesis 33:16			
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
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo <sup>b</sup> v]	<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 singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<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
hûw' (הוּו') [pronounced hoo]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
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	No Strong's # BDB #510
derek <sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH- <i>rek</i> <sup>e</sup> ]	<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
Sê'yr (שֵׁעִיר) [pronounced say- <i>GEER</i> ]	<i>hairy, shaggy; transliterated Seir</i>	masculine singular, proper noun with the directional hê	Strong's #8165 BDB #973

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*.

**Translation:** So Esau returned that day by his road to Seir;...

The road traveled along by Esau is likely the King's Highway which went north-south parallel to the Dead Sea.

Esau has established himself in Seir, so that is where he will return to. All indications were, he expected Jacob to follow him. However, we do not know what goes on in a person's mind; and he may have understood Jacob's refusal to have accompanying men to suggest maybe he was not on board to come down to Seir, despite what he said. However, I lean toward what Leupold says instead:

H. C. Leupold: *Without a doubt, Esau recognized that his ultimate domain had to be Seir.*<sup>236</sup>

<sup>236</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019 (slightly edited).

Esau original trip north, with 400 men, was not an easy or a quick trip (although they probably used the established King's Highway, which was a popular trading route). It was not a highway as we understand a highway to be.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Seir...is a mountainous region located primarily east of the Gulf of Aqaba, but west as well and was originally settled by the Horites, also known as the Hurrians, a non-Semitic people dispersed throughout the ancient Near East.*

*Eventually, the descendants of Esau, the Edomites took over the land and so therefore, Seir was also synonymously called Edom (Genesis 32:3; 33:14, 16; Joshua 24:4; cf. Genesis 36:1, 39).<sup>237</sup>*

It is also clear by the interaction between the two men that Esau was anxious to see Jacob again, and he seemed to be genuinely interested in Jacob and his family.

What we would expect is, Esau will return to his home in Seir, and for Jacob to follow him and stay there for awhile. However, Jacob does not follow him.

Dr. John Gill: *So Esau...took his leave of Jacob the same day he met him, and proceeded on in his journey towards Seir; whether he arrived there the same day is not certain, probably it was more than a day's journey.<sup>238</sup>*

I believe that Esau did go to some trouble to prepare a place for Jacob, and then, when it became clear that his brother was not coming, that he lost some face over that fact. Whether or not this uncovered old wounds, I would say likely not. Bear in mind, I am speculating in this paragraph.

I believe that William E. Wenstrom, Jr. strikes the right balance here: *Esau realized that Jacob was properly entitled to the birthright and the blessing and that God had chosen Jacob to be in the line of Christ and inherit the blessings, promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant.*

*Esau was able to accept that Jacob was entitled to the birthright and the blessing because in Genesis 33:9 when Jacob urged Esau to take the gifts, Esau replies, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own."*

*Furthermore, Genesis 36 reveals that God had prospered Esau with possessions and posterity and had made him into a great nation, the nation of Edom, which would have given him fulfillment and prevented him from becoming jealous of Jacob's great prosperity.<sup>239</sup>*

There are many indications that Esau was probably a better person than Jacob, but God sees the end from the beginning. Jacob, at the end of his life, will show great spiritual growth. Furthermore, there are great things which would come from the Hebrew people, as a result of God's interaction with them. And, most importantly, the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would lead to the Messiah. That overrides everything else.

H. C. Leupold has a view of Esau which I take issue with: *As to the question of Esau's spiritual status we can hardly agree with Luther, who with great charity assumes that Esau was by this time a man who had come to the faith and was ultimately saved. Of course, the personal salvation of Esau need not be ruled out. But one thing surely stands in the way of regarding Esau as a man who has come to the true faith. Had his faith accepted what the Lord had ordained, he would have held to Jacob as the possessor of the divine promise. His failure to do this seems to indicate that the true spiritual values were not grasped nor understood by him. This prevents his being classed as a man of faith, though in the end the spiritual truth communicated by Isaac may have turned his heart to the Lord.<sup>240</sup>*

<sup>237</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>238</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:16 (slightly edited).

<sup>239</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019 (slightly edited).

<sup>240</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

On the other hand, I have little doubt that Esau had believed in the Revealed God; and therefore, was saved. We have to be careful when evaluating God's approbation of Jacob and His disapprobation of Esau. From all that we have studied, it should be clear that God does not like Jacob better because he is a much nicer person than Esau. That does not square with the text. The men both have their strengths and weaknesses, and that is made clear in the Word of God. It is a mistake to view Esau as some reprobate and Jacob as some saint (I use that in the secular sense of *saint*). I would take this one step further and say that God's expressed feelings towards these men (which feelings is an anthropathism) is not based upon them being saved or not. God does not look at Jacob and see Jacob alone; nor does He look at Esau and view him as isolated from all else. Each man has a genealogical line, and God knows these lines. Not only are the Hebrew people God's people, but the line of Judah would lead to the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Where does Esau's line lead to? In many cases, hatred towards God's people and, therefore, towards God. What could be a worse scourge on this world than Islam?

God's blessing of Jacob never meant that God did not bless Esau. Furthermore, when we read God's words, "[Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated](#)" we have to be careful not to think this means that God blessed Jacob, the individual; and that God withheld blessing from Esau, the individual. **Genesis 36** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) will certainly disabuse us of that notion. When considering those words of God, remember that Messiah came through Jacob, and for that reason, God loved Jacob. At the same time, a great deal of evil has come through the Arab peoples, Islam being definitive of such evil. Therefore, "[Esau, I have hated.](#)"

And, just so we do not misunderstand anything at this point, Jesus Christ died for all mankind—so this includes all of those descended from Jacob and all of those descended from Esau. When interacting with any person, we should never lose sight of the fact that Jesus Christ died for that person's sins, just as He died for ours. A person may have a dozen characteristics which we find repellent. That should not make any difference in our presentation of the gospel. Our prayers for someone to hear the gospel should be unrelated to anything in their lives. They may be devout Muslims, or they may be dedicated to the LGBTQ movement. Such a person is someone for whom Christ died. When on the cross, Jesus did not reconsider Charlie Brown, thinking, "This guy is really a creepy sort of guy; no need to die for his sins." Jesus died for the sins of all mankind, so we have to look past things that we may not like when it comes to sharing the good news or intercessory prayer.

Ballinger's translation: [Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you. But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. "Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir. Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me. But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."](#)

Translation continues: [So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.](#)

### The Brothers Part Company (vv. 12-16) (Jack Ballinger)

1. In response to accepting Jacob's gift Esau offers things to Jacob.
2. He begins by offering Jacob safe escort to the land of Seir (cf. v. 14).
3. Jacob declines the offer on the pretense that keeping up with Esau's band of warriors would jeopardize the children and animals that are nursing (v. 13).
4. This excuse is rather lame considering the fact Jacob has already pressed his entourage in his flight from Laban and it doesn't make sense in that Esau would have been more than willing to accommodate the slower moving Jacob and company.
5. It has been suggested that the real motive for Jacob's refusal is that he still mistrusts his brother and that some new conflict between the brothers might place Jacob in a dangerous situation.
6. The real motive behind Jacob's rather lame excuse is a spiritual issue, namely that God has told him to return to the land of Canaan and not the territory of Seir (cf. 31:3, 13, 32; 32:10).
7. According to v. 14 Jacob understood correctly Esau's offer in v. 12 as an offer not just of a temporary escort but of a permanent residence in Esau's homeland (comparing verses 12 and 14).
8. Based on the oracle of Rebekah and the blessings conferred on Jacob and Esau by their father Isaac

## The Brothers Part Company (vv. 12-16) (Jack Ballinger)

- meant that the relations between Israel and Edom were touch-and-go at the best of circumstances.
9. In v. 14 Jacob continues his insistence that he be allowed to travel at his own pace which was polite but disingenuous.
  10. Jacob has no intentions whatsoever of arriving at Esau's place even though he leaves Esau with the impression that he will "come to [his] lord at Seir."
  11. To override Jacob's concerns Esau offers Jacob some of his men to assist the slower moving Jacob (v. 15a).
  12. Even Esau's offer of a bodyguard is politely refused (v. 15b).
  13. Jacob wants to be free of his brother and that for spiritual considerations (i.e., doing the directive will of God).
  14. What matters for Jacob in regards to their reunion is that he find favor in Esau's sight.
  15. Esau simply leaves Jacob and returns to the ancestral home of the Edomites which is Seir (v. 16).
  16. Again, Jacob contends with man and prevails.
  17. He gets his way, which happily is God's way.
  18. He maintains the doctrine of separation which is inherent in the teaching of the oracle and the blessing of Isaac.
  19. They part company on a positive note and are reunited one more time briefly at the burial of Isaac.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen33.htm> accessed April 9, 2019.

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Ron Snider's translation: Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you." But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And they will overdrive them and all the sheep will die. You will please pass on, my lord, before your servant; and as for me, let me proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children until I will come to my lord at Seir." And Esau said, "please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

## Summary of Genesis 33:12-16 (Ron Snider)

1. Having resolved the discussion about the gift which Jacob wanted to give Esau, Esau suggests that they move out.
2. He is willing to join his band of four hundred men to Jacob's entourage and would serve as an armed escort.
3. Jacob does not take him up on his offer, suggesting that the children and the herds would not be able to maintain the pace of Esau and his men.
4. He says that the flocks are dangerously tired and that further hard driving would likely kill some of them.
5. His children would have ranged in ages from 6-13, having 11 boys and an unspecified number of daughters.
6. Jacob states that Esau should go on and he will follow behind, moving at a pace which is comfortable for the family and the flocks.
7. He will eventually join Esau in the region of Seir.
8. Esau offers to leave a smaller band of armed men with Jacob for protection, another offer Jacob refuses.
9. Esau departs and returns to his chosen region south of the Dead Sea.
10. The question arises as to why Jacob does what he does here.
11. From all we can ascertain in Scripture the reunion of the twins was completely amiable.
12. It appears that Jacob somehow still mistrusts Esau, for whatever reasons, and desires to stay away from him.
13. He uses the excuses about the children and the flocks to extricate himself from any further contact

## Summary of Genesis 33:12–16 (Ron Snider)

- with Esau.
14. He never moved in the direction of Seir as he said, but instead will recross the Jabbok river and move north.
  15. Jacob did not have any intention of going in the direction of Esau and refuses to level with him.
  16. Although Jacob has made great strides spiritually, the STA is still present and he resorts to his own devices to deliver himself.
  17. In this case, there was truly no danger and Jacob deceives him unnecessarily.
  18. This is why he refused the offer for anyone from Esau's camp to remain with him.
  19. The typical problem with deceit here surfaces and that is that one may use legitimate means to cover their tracks (like the slow pace of the kids and sheep) but eventually when pressed, you will have to resort to lying.
  20. It also points out the fact that believers lie, even mature believers.

From [Markaios Bible Church](#) (link will open up in Word or WP); accessed April 13, 2019.

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**A Review of Genesis 33:1–16:** We are coming near to the end of this chapter. This is what we have studied so far:

Jacob left his Uncle Laban's ranch complex and led his own extensive family west, back to the Land of Promise. At the end of Genesis 32, Jacob, while alone, wrestled with the Lord Jesus Christ, which is representative of what Jacob had been doing all of his life.

Genesis 33:1–3 **And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.**

At this point, Jacob comes face to face with his brother Esau, the man he had cheated on at least two previous occasions, a man who was ready to kill Jacob 20 years ago.

Now, Jacob approaches Esau with great humility. He sent a present first, then he came, bowing before Esau, and his wives and family were behind him.

Genesis 33:4–5 **But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."**

Esau runs to him and embraces him, and they weep together like a couple of old girls, and then Esau asks about Jacob's family.

Genesis 33:6–7 **Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down.**

Jacob has arranged his wives and mistresses into 4 groups—each woman with her children. Each group came before Esau and bowed before him.

Genesis 33:8–9 Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

Esau asks about what was sent over first. Servants led various groupings of animals all meant for Esau as presents. Jacob tells Esau as much, and Esau refuses the present.

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob insists that Esau receive this present, and Esau relents and takes it.

Genesis 33:12 Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you."

Esau offers to lead Jacob and company back to Seir.

Genesis 33:13–14 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the nursing flocks and herds are a care to me. If they are driven hard for one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

Jacob says that Esau's pace would be moving too quickly for him and his family, and he declines this offer. However, he promises that he will follow at a measured pace behind Esau and come to him in Seir, which is south of the Mediterranean Sea.

Genesis 33:15 So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."

Esau offers to leave some servants with Jacob to help guide and protect him, but Jacob refuses. This suggests that Jacob may be having second thoughts about traveling to Seir. However, he does not say anything to Esau about this.

Genesis 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

Esau, and his 400 men, return to Seir. However, Jacob does not appear to follow him.

Many translations reasonably begin v. 17 or v. 18 with a subheading which carries on into Genesis 34 (such as, *Jacob living in Shechem*). Had I been dividing up the chapters, I would have made Genesis 32:1–33:17 as a single chapter; and begun Genesis 34 with Genesis 33:18. When I get to v. 18, I will lay this out so it is easier to see (just talking about this verse, or that passage does not always convey understanding unless the reader actually looks over those passages).

## Genesis 33:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and; even; in particular, namely; when, while; since, seeing, though; so, then, therefore; or; but, but yet; who, which; or; that, in that; with; also, in addition to, at the same time</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
The NET Bible: <i>The disjunctive clause contrasts Jacob's action with Esau's.</i> <sup>241</sup>			
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-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
nâçaç (נָצַח) [pronounced <i>naw-SAHÇ</i> ]	<i>to pull up [stakes], to pull out, to break camp and move out, to set out, to journey, to march, to depart; to bend a bow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5265 BDB #652
Sûkkôwth (שֹׁכֵחַ) [pronounced <i>sook-KOHTH</i> ]	<i>booth, cot, lair; and is transliterated Succoth</i>	proper noun; singular location; with the locational hê	Strong's #5523 BDB #697

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Succoth is from the Hebrew noun meaning a booth or a thicket. It could be a term used for a temporary shelter, it could be to cover animals, warriors.*<sup>242</sup>

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*.

As far as I know, there is no difference between a hê locale and a directive hê; however, they are listed differently by Owens.

**Translation:** ...while Jacob journeyed to Succoth [instead].

There may be a gap in this story. Jacob gave this great gift to his brother; but there is nothing said about him going to Seir to stay with Esau there. That appears to be Jacob's intent, not to go with Esau.

Genesis 33:16–17a **So Esau returned that day by his road to Seir; while Jacob journeyed to Succoth [instead].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:16–17a **Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead.**

<sup>241</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

<sup>242</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

## Genesis 33:17a: Jacob stops at Succoth (various commentators)

Adam Clarke: *Jacob erected there for the resting and convenience of his family, who in all probability continued there for some considerable time.*<sup>243</sup>

John Wesley: *And Jacob journeyed to Succoth - Having in a friendly manner parted with Esau, who was gone to his own country, he comes to a place, where he rested, set up booths for his cattle, and other conveniences for himself and family. The place was afterwards known by the name of Succoth, a city in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan.*<sup>244</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Genesis 33:17 records Jacob settling temporarily in Succoth to rest his flocks and family before reentering the land of Canaan.*<sup>245</sup>

Interestingly enough, I have not found any commentators who suggest that Jacob and company stop right there due to his physical injury from the night before.

Several commentators said similar things to what Gill suggests: *Perhaps after he had been at Seir, and stayed there some little time.*<sup>246</sup>

It fascinates me how many commentators seem to think that Jacob has suddenly become spiritually mature after wrestling with the angel, and therefore, they must account of him saying that he is coming to Seir, even though there is no record of it. On the other hand, none of these commentators seem to take in the fact that, one thing that Jacob clearly received in his wrestling with the Angel of God was a serious leg injury. Of course, that is discussed in great detail at the end of Genesis 32—some commentators suggesting that this is a permanent injury—but then they seem to forget that aspect of this confrontation in Genesis 33 (another very good reason why splitting up the two chapters was a bad idea).

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Jacob does travel to Succoth, however.

Genesis 33:16–17a [Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead.](#)

## Succoth (various commentators)

Benson: *Succoth [was a]...place afterward known by that name, in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan; here he rested for the present, set up booths for his cattle, and built a house.*<sup>247</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *This verse preserves the traditional explanation of the origin of the name Succoth, "booths," "huts"; LXX ακ?vai. The site of Succoth is not yet identified with any certainty. From this passage we may infer, that it lay on the east of the Jordan, and south of the Jabbok. For other references to Succoth, cf. Joshua 13:27; Judges 8:5; Judges 8:8; Psalm 60:6; Psalm 108:7.*<sup>248</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *Jacob and his family settled first at Succoth ("Booths") east of the Jordan River (Genesis 33:17). Evidently he lived there for some time since he built a house and huts for his livestock.*<sup>249</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>244</sup> John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 33:16.

<sup>245</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>246</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>247</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>248</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>249</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

### Succoth (various commentators)

College Press Bible Study: *Succoth is now usually identified with Tell Deir-'Alla, a short distance east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok, i.e., near the point of confluence of the two rivers.*

College Press Bible Study: *The town itself stood, if its position is rightly indicated on the maps, south of the Jabbok, in the angle formed by this stream and the Jordan, and almost equidistant from both. The name Succoth was derived from the peculiar type of hut or booth built for sheltering cattle. These booths, reported by travelers as being still occupied by Bedouins of the Jordan valley.*<sup>250</sup>

Since the College Press Bible Study has, in the same commentary, locations for this city north and south of the Jordan, we may not really find out where exactly this place was.

Dr. John Gill: *Succoth was on the other side of Jordan, so called by anticipation, for it had its name from what follows; as yet there was no city built here, or at least of this name; afterwards there was, it lay in a valley, and belonged to Sihon king of Heshbon, and was given to the tribe of Gad, Joshua 13:27; it is mentioned along with Penuel, and was not far from it, Judges 8:8. It is said to be but two miles distant from it.*<sup>251</sup>

Hawker: *Observe: this is not the Succoth mentioned in Exodus 13:20, but Judges 8:5.*<sup>252</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *According to Joshua 13:27, Succoth was in the valley of the Jordan, and was allotted to the tribe of Gad, as part of the district of the Jordan, "on the other side Jordan eastward;" and this is confirmed by Judges 8:4–5, and by Jerome.*<sup>253</sup>

Lange: *the locality here spoken of is generally regarded as the same with the later well-known city of Succoth, which lies east of the Jordan. It was situated within the limits of the tribe of Gad (Joshua 13:27 Judges 8:5-14 Psalm 60:6).*

Lange continues: *Josephus speaks of it under its Greek name Σκηναί, and Jerome Succoth is at this day a city across the Jordan, in the neighborhood of Scythopolis. Robinson (later "Resear.," pp. 310–312) identifies Succoth with Sâkut, lying west of the Jordan, and southerly from Beisan. The fact that the traditional Succoth lies too far to the north, and that it is not easy to see how Jacob, after crossing the Jabbok, should come hither again, is in favor of this suggestion. Nor is it probable that, having so nearly reached the Jordan, he would have settled in the east-Jordan region (comp. Genesis 32:10). Knobel thinks that the writer wished to show that the patriarch had now fixed his abode in the trans-Jordan region. That Succoth belonged to the tribe of Gad, does not disprove Robinson's conjectures, since there may have been more than one Succoth.*<sup>254</sup>

H. C. Leupold: *Succoth is now usually identified with Tell Deir 'Alla, a short distance east of the Jordan and north of the Jabbok, i. e., near the point of confluence of the two rivers. To reach this place Jacob naturally had to ford the Jabbok again.*<sup>255</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Succoth was later a city in the territory assigned to the Gaddites, east of Jordan, in the Jordan valley not far from a water crossing (Joshua 13:27; Judges 8:4–5) and not far from Penuel (Judges 8:8).*<sup>256</sup>

<sup>250</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>251</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>252</sup> Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>253</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:16–17.

<sup>254</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:17 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>255</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>256</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:17.

## Succoth (various commentators)

The Pulpit Commentary: *Succoth, so called here by anticipation, and afterwards belonging to the tribe of Gad, was situated in the valley of the Jordan, on the east side of the river, and to the south of the Jabbok (Joshua 13:27 Judges 8:4–5), and consequently is not to be identified with Sakut, on the western side of the Jordan, ten miles north of the Jabbok, and opposite the Wady Yabis; but is to be sought for at the ford opposite the Wady-el-Fariah, "down which the little stream from Shechem drains into the Jordan".*<sup>257</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *Succoth: i.e. Booths, Succoth was on the east of Jordan, between the brook Jabbok and that river, about 40 miles from Jerusalem, and consequently near Penuel; where a city was afterwards built, which Joshua assigned to the tribe of Gad. Jerome says, that Succoth was in the district of Scythopolis; and the Jews inform us, that the name of Darala was sometime after applied to it.*<sup>258</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *It is uncertain if there was a village in this area before Jacob camped there. It will later become the name of a city (cf. Judges 8:5).*

Utley further writes: *This is not the same as the Succoth located in the Egyptian delta (cf. Exodus 12:7; Num. 33:5). This is a city on the east side of the Jordan (i.e., The MacMillan Bible Atlas, p. 22).*<sup>259</sup>

There are clearly at least two *Succoth's*, the other one being in Egypt (Exodus 13:20). Are there two *Succoth's* near one another on opposite sides of the Jordan or on opposite sides of the Jabbok? Although that is possible, we do not know it for certain.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge offers these Scriptures: Joshua 13:27 Judges 8:5, 8, 16 1Kings 7:46 Psalm 60:6, not, Exodus 12:37, Exodus 13:20.<sup>260</sup>

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Interestingly enough, there is almost no information about Jacob's life in Succoth, apart from it appearing as if he intended to stay there for the rest of his life. I would suggest that he is outside of the geographic will of God, and this is why it is not discussed.

In fact, let me read something else into the text—Jacob, after Esau had gone, may not have been very pleased with the fact that it was hard for him to move about, because of his leg injury. Did he just stop in Succoth, build a house with the intent of staying there, because, "God, You did this to me!"

One might consider God's purpose at this point—perhaps God gave Jacob this injury to put him in one place to cool his heels for awhile. Neither of these things are ever discussed; they are conjecture.

Genesis 33:12 [And Esau said, Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.](#)

Genesis 33:13–14 [But Jacob said to him, My lord knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on gently according to the pace of the livestock that go before me, and the feet of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.](#)

Genesis 33:15–17a [And Esau said, Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me. But he said, What need is there? Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord. So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth,...](#) (VW)

<sup>257</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:16–17.

<sup>258</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>259</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:15–17.

<sup>260</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:17.

## Genesis 33:12–17a: Jacob says he will follow Esau, but he does not (a discussion)

I believe that this is the point where we realize that Jacob is not the spiritual giant many think that he is.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Jacob is disingenuous here, he just makes up an excuse as to why he is not going to go home with Esau. Rather than saying no, that he needs to stay in the land that God gave him, it is as though he is afraid to bring up the past, it may remind Esau of why he wanted to kill him. So he makes up an excuse for why he can't go back with him.*<sup>261</sup>

L. M. Grant: *Jacob continues to call Esau his "lord," but he had no intention of obeying Esau's will that he should go to Seir, even though he told him he would do so. When Esau wants to leave some of his company with Jacob to accompany him to Seir, Jacob only responds that there was no need for this.*<sup>262</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *It was wiser to separate, while they were still amicable. The natures remain the same; Esau's thoughtless, Jacob's calculating.*<sup>263</sup>

I believe the separation was necessary, because God had given Jacob and Esau different inheritances. However, I don't know that the descriptions of the two men is accurate.

H. C. Leupold: *The statement that so by easy stages Jacob would finally come to the point where he could come to Esau "to Seir" is not pretense. This evidently was Jacob's sincere purpose. Though it may have been delayed, why should we doubt that Jacob did visit his brother, perhaps even repeatedly? The Scriptures cannot report every major and every minor incident.*<sup>264</sup>

I find it fascinating that people have a difficult time accepting that Jacob is insincere at this point. The tenor of what Jacob says suggests to me that, he is on his way to Esau's place in Seir—that is the clear impression that he gives to his older brother. Only, Jacob does not do that.

The NET Bible: *There are several reasons why Jacob chose not to go to Mt. Seir after Esau. First, as he said, his herds and children probably could not keep up with the warriors. Second, he probably did not fully trust his brother. The current friendliness could change, and he could lose everything. And third, God did tell him to return to his land, not Seir. But Jacob is still not able to deal truthfully, probably because of fear of Esau.*<sup>265</sup>

Dr. Thomas Constable: *His reference to visiting Esau in Seir (Genesis 33:14) does not mean that Jacob planned to go directly to Seir, where he did not go immediately. He could have been deceiving his brother again. Perhaps Jacob meant that he would visit his brother in his own land in the future. Scripture does not record whether Jacob ever made such a trip.*<sup>266</sup>

<sup>261</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

<sup>262</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

<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 33:12.

<sup>264</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>265</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

<sup>266</sup> Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 33:1–7.

## Genesis 33:12–17a: Jacob says he will follow Esau, but he does not (a discussion)

The Pulpit Commentary is all over the place on this one: *It is apparent that Jacob at first intended to accept Esau's invitation to visit him at Seir, either immediately (Clericus, Kalisch), or, as is more probable, afterwards (Keil, Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary'), though, if afterwards, the historian has preserved no record of any such journey, while, if presently such was his intention, he must have been providentially led, from some cause not mentioned, to alter his determination (Bush, Inglis, Clarke), unless we either think that he really went to Seir, though it is not here stated (Patrick), or entertain the, in the circumstances, almost incredible hypothesis that Jacob practiced a deception on his generous brother in order to get rid of him, by promising what he never meant to fulfill, viz; to visit him at Mount Seir (Calvin), or leave it doubtful whether it is the old Jacob or the new Israel who speaks (Lange).*<sup>267</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *Jacob does not seem to follow Esau to Mt. Seir, but travels to Succoth, which is not on the way to Seir/Edom. He even builds a house! It is uncertain if the text is telling us that (1) this was purposeful or (2) simply omits Jacob's visit to Seir. I prefer option #2. I want to believe Jacob has truly changed, that he is no longer the trickster, manipulator, liar.*<sup>268</sup>

Although I agree with Utley that Jacob is not as bad as he once was; I think it is a mistake to impute too much spiritual growth to him at this juncture. I believe he will experience spiritual growth in Egypt.

I think that Jacob was afraid to simply level with Esau. Things went so well at their meeting that Jacob simply was unable to say, "I am so glad that we met again and with a better relationship, but God requires me to return to Canaan."

I don't know that Jacob would still be fearful of Esau at this time. The more important issue is, God told Jacob to return to Canaan and that is what he did. If Jacob got this close to the land given to him and his descendants, and then made a sharp right turn and traveled to Seir, he would not be in the right place. He would not be going where God had told him to go.

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Genesis 33:16–17a [Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead.](#)

## Genesis 33:17a: Does Jacob formally decline Esau's answer? (Various opinions.)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *But the proposal was prudently declined. Jacob did not need any worldly state or equipage.*<sup>269</sup>

The problem with that commentary is, Jacob has not clearly declined Esau's offer. He has only declined aspects of what Esau has offered him.

However, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown seem to indicate that they believe that Jacob was intentionally declining: *Jacob having alleged a very reasonable excuse for the tardiness of his movements, the brothers parted in peace.*<sup>270</sup>

<sup>267</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:14.

<sup>268</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:15–17.

<sup>269</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

<sup>270</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.

## Genesis 33:17a: Does Jacob formally decline Esau's answer? (Various opinions.)

This suggests to me that Jacob knew they ought to be separated and he did what was necessary to insure that. I believe that God understood that; but I am not so certain that Jacob understood this.

Keil and Delitzsch believe that Jacob is not formally declining anything; he is just not coming immediately: *[Jacob's] words are not to be understood as meaning that he intended to go direct to Seir; consequently they were not a wilful deception for the purpose of getting rid of Esau.*<sup>271</sup>

If Keil and Delitzsch are correct, then, at some point in the future, Jacob really intended to come and stay with Esau—but we have no idea when.

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Jacob has uprooted his entire family, taking them to a land that none of them knew. At the last minute, moving to Seir would have been a very odd thing indeed for Jacob to have done, despite the heartfelt reunion with his brother. Was this a major decision that Jacob made not to follow his brother; or was it more instinctively made? Or did Jacob's injury prevent him from going much further? We do not know.

As you can see by the map below, Esau came from due South, probably up the King's Highway, and he will return due south. Jacob has traveled in generally southwesterly direction up to the River Jabbok, which he basically follows east toward the Jordan River. From Succoth, he will cross the Jordan to Shechem and then move south. He will be in the land between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean and his brother will be south of the Dead Sea. They will be a comfortable distance from one another.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown suggest that this separation of the men is the best approach: *Notwithstanding the present cordiality, the brothers were so different in spirit, character, and habits - the one so much a man of the world, and the other a man of God, that there was great risk of something occurring to disturb the harmony.*<sup>272</sup>

<sup>271</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:12.

<sup>272</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 33:12.



**Map of Canaan and Paddan-aram.**

Image from <http://www.bijbelseplaatsen.nl/oude+website/plaatsen/Paddan%20Aram.htm>

There is a lot of discussion about this very topic throughout many commentaries.

Genesis 33:16–17a Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead.

### When did Jacob decide to go west into Canaan and not follow Esau?

1. Esau goes to Seir (due south, into Seir/Edom) and Jacob goes to Succoth and then to Shechem (due west, into Canaan).
2. However, at the end of v. 14, Jacob told Esau, "I will come to my lord in Seir."
3. There is not a disconnect here; these are not two sets of texts from different sources smoothed together (and allowing for a contradiction).
4. Although Jacob suggests to Esau that he is coming to see him in Seir, there is no text elsewhere which suggests to us that Jacob actually does that, indicating that Jacob was not being completely truthful. We never read elsewhere, "Jacob wanted to see his brother in Seir, but pressing issues brought him west instead."
5. Although Jacob's travels are carefully and logically mapped out for us, these travels never include a trip to Seir.
6. Therefore, I believe that Jacob either did not plan on going down to see Esau at any time; or, at the very least, he wanted to keep all of his options open.
7. Personally, I think it is the first choice. Remember, Jacob expressed fear of Esau throughout the previous chapter. So, in terms of long-term planning, Jacob had not considered living with his brother in Seir. This never seemed to be a possibility in Jacob's mind, "Maybe Esau and I will hit it off and live together as brothers against down in Seir." was not an option that Jacob ever appeared to entertain.
8. Therefore, Jacob is thinking about one thing in chapter 32—God told him to move to Canaan, he told his family that they are all moving to Canaan, and no contingency plan seems to have been developed just

## When did Jacob decide to go west into Canaan and not follow Esau?

- in case Esau liked him and was friendly.
9. So, I think this offer by Esau caught Jacob by surprise, and he begged off without ever saying, "Look, brother, I am not coming down to Seir to see you." In fact, he tells Esau the exact opposite in v. 14.
  10. But the Jacob says, "I cannot travel with you, as you will move too fast, Esau." And when Esau offers to give Jacob an escort, Jacob declines again.
  11. That suggests to me that, regardless of what Jacob said to Esau, he already planned not to follow him to Seir.

Bear in mind that Jacob did not go from being a frightened immature believer, to a **supergrace** believer overnight. His wrestling match pretty much got him to this point of meeting with Esau without attempting some elaborate scheme of hiding his family. He will go to Canaan, in obedience to God; but he cannot seem to admit that to his brother.

Some of what I have suggested above is conjecture. In any case, there was no ill will between the brothers. They will meet again at their father's funeral (Genesis 35:29) and live near one another after that (I believe the funeral of their father is when Esau decided to come up and stay near Jacob for awhile).

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Genesis 33:16–17a [So Esau returned that day by his road to Seir; while Jacob journeyed to Succoth.](#) It is certainly logical that Jacob would go where God told him to go, which is towards Canaan. Going down to Seir would have put him outside God's geographical will.

About the only thing that we don't know that is important is, was Jacob insincere about following Esau south? I think that he was. Esau offered Jacob an escort, and Jacob refused; and I think that suggests that Jacob, by that point in time, had decided not to go south to Seir, following Esau. Personally, I think that Jacob should have been more honest with his brother but Jacob was, apparently, not to that point yet in his spiritual life. God wrestling with him in the previous chapter gave Jacob enough fortitude to meet Esau directly, and to have his family right there with him. But he was not to the point of saying, "God wants me to return to Canaan." Did Jacob not say this out of some fear? Did he not want to seem superior to Esau? We have no idea at this time. Most of us have been in circumstances where we should have been more honest and direct, but we were not.

Some commentators don't believe that Jacob willfully deceived Esau. Keil and Delitzsch: *These words are not to be understood as meaning that he, Jacob, intended to go direct to Seir; consequently they were not a wilful deception for the purpose of getting rid of Esau. Jacob's destination was Canaan, and in Canaan probably Hebron, where his father Isaac still lived. From thence he may have thought of paying a visit to Esau in Seir.*<sup>273</sup>

In any case, the point is moot. Jacob, in future chapters, will clearly be shown not to be a mature believer; to still have a great many personal weaknesses. My approach to Jacob at this point in his life is consistent with the Jacob we will know in subsequent chapters.

This will not be the end of the relationship between Jacob and Esau. They will be later gathered for the funeral of their father Isaac (Genesis 35:29) and they will live side-by-side one another for a time (I would guess after this funeral), until their possessions become too overwhelming and the men are unable to keep them livestock separate.

<sup>273</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.*

Genesis 33:17b			
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
bânâh (בָּנָה) [pronounced baw-NAWH]	<i>to build, to construct; to erect; to rebuild, to restore</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1129 BDB #124
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
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

**Translation:** He built a house [there] for himself...

Jacob decided to remain in this area and built a house for himself. This sounds more like a house than a tent or a semi-permanent tent. This sounds more permanent than what we know of Abraham or Isaac.

Genesis 33:16–17b Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself...

### Genesis 33:17b: Jacob builds a house in Succoth (a discussion)

J. Vernon McGee is one of the few to take note of Jacob's physical condition, although he does not dwell on that fact: *Jacob is sometimes criticized because he stopped here at Succoth and at Shalem and did not proceed on to Bethel. Actually, we ought not to expect too much of Jacob at this time. He's been crippled, and he is just learning to walk with his spiritual legs.*<sup>274</sup>

Jacob is showing a gradual improvement; but true spiritual growth is not something which takes place overnight.

H. C. Leupold: *The fact that he built "a house" indicates a residence of several years, as does the fact that, according to chapter 34, when Dinah comes to Shechem she is already quite mature.*<sup>275</sup>

Lange: *[Jacob] prepares here for a longer residence, since he builds himself a house instead of tents, and booths for his flocks, i. e., inclosures made of shrubs or stakes wattled together.*<sup>276</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *The motives which induced him to remain there are also unknown to us. But when Knobel adduces the fact, that Jacob came to Canaan for the purpose of visiting Isaac (Genesis 31:18), as a reason why it is improbable that he continued long at Succoth, he forgets that Jacob could visit his father from Succoth just as well as from Shechem, and that, with the number of people and cattle that he had about him, it was impossible that he should join and subordinate himself to Isaac's household, after having attained through his past life and the promises of God a position of patriarchal independence.*<sup>277</sup>

<sup>274</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>275</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxiv.html> accessed April 15, 2019.

<sup>276</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:17 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>277</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:16–17.

## Genesis 33:17b: Jacob builds a house in Succoth (a discussion)

Let me suggest a reason here. Jacob had been injured by the Angel of God in a wrestling match at the end of the previous chapter where Jacob received an injury (which is, interestingly enough, not referenced again). Let me suggest that Jacob realizes that—at least at this time—is not going to be able to travel all over Canaan, given his injury. He believes that he has traveled sufficiently to Canaan and he will establish what he views as a permanent residence here in Succoth. All of this is conjecture, but the end of Genesis 32 was quite explicit about an injury that God put upon Jacob. So, even though that injury is not referenced in this chapter, it does make sense for Jacob to choose to settle into a permanent residence at his earliest convenience.

L. M. Grant: *Rather than going to Bethel (God's house) Jacob built a house for himself. This was only half-way obedience.*<sup>278</sup>

Lange, so far, is the only commentator who takes note of Jacob's injury as a contributing factor: *[Jacob,] exhausted by a twenty-years' servitude and oppression, and a flight of more than seven days, shattered by his spiritual conflicts, and lame bodily, now, first, after he had crossed the Jordan, and upon the spiritual and home land, came to the full sense of his need of repose and quiet, we shall then understand why he here pauses and rests.*<sup>279</sup>

Matthew Poole: *[Jacob built a] house, which doubtless was some slight building, because he intended not to stay there.*<sup>280</sup>

I completely disagree with this. You build a house because you intend to stay there for awhile. We know by the ages of his children that he may have stayed there for 10 years.

Lange: *[Jacob seemingly had] the desire to exchange the wandering nomadic life for a more fixed abode becomes more apparent than in the life of Isaac.*<sup>281</sup>

Although this is possible, I really think the deciding factor here was his injury, sustained the night before. Wenstrom<sup>282</sup> is one of the few commentators who mentions this injury in relation to Jacob's stay in Succoth (although he seems to mention it more as an afterthought).

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that Jacob builds a house and stalls for his livestock at Succoth signifies that Jacob intended to have a prolonged stay at this place before crossing the Jordan into Canaan. This does "not" imply that Jacob was disobeying the Lord's command to return to Canaan since Genesis 33:18 records that Jacob eventually journeyed to Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. Rather, Jacob wanted to stay for a period of time at Succoth in order to recoup what he gave away to Esau and to give his young children and the nursing animals a chance to recover from the long and difficult three hundred mile journey from Paddan Aram.*

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob's entourage had traveled well over three hundred miles since their departure from Paddan Aram and would have been exhausted. Therefore, he temporarily settled in Succoth for the sake of his family and flocks in order to give them all a rest and it helped that the pasture in Succoth was great.*

Wenstrom concludes: *Furthermore, we must remember that Jacob was crippled by the Lord at Peniel when the Lord dislocated his hip in the wrestling match and so I'm sure he was exhausted as well from all the travel and wanted to settle down to rest.*<sup>283</sup>

<sup>278</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019 (slightly edited).

<sup>279</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:17 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>280</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>281</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–19 (suggestive comments).

<sup>282</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>283</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

### Genesis 33:17b: Jacob builds a house in Succoth (a discussion)

There is no reason why Jacob can better recoup his losses in Succoth than in Shechem. However, let me suggest two things: (1) Jacob's injury may have stopped him right there, explaining why he appeared to be making this stay in Succoth permanent. (2) If Jacob was going to purchase any land in Canaan (which he will do), then this would have required time to build up his assets.

I believe that Jacob's injury is what keeps him in Succoth for a considerable amount of time (perhaps 10 years?). I also believe that Jacob looks upon this settlement as being permanent; or very nearly so (hence, all of the building that takes place).

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### Genesis 33:17c

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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîq <sup>e</sup> neh (מִקְנֵה) [pronounced <i>mik-NEH</i> ]	<i>cattle, livestock (specifically sheep, cows and goats); herds, flocks</i>	masculine singular (collective) noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4735 BDB #889
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
çukkâh (סֻכָּה) [pronounced <i>sook-KAWH</i> ]	<i>booth, temporary shelter; cot; lair; this word refers to several types of temporary dwellings, even more temporary and smaller than tents in most cases</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5521 BDB #697

**Translation:** ...and he made booths for his cattle;...

He made a temporary shelters for his cattle; although it is not clear exactly what these shelters consisted of.

Genesis 33:16–17c Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle.

### Genesis 33:17c: Booths or animal shelters (various commentators)

It is suggested that these are small, moveable shelters.

Whitelaw describes these booths as: *rude huts of reeds, sometimes covered with long grass, and sometimes with a piece of tent.*<sup>284</sup>

<sup>284</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

**Genesis 33:17c: Booths or animal shelters (various commentators)**

College Press Bible Study then adds: *The flocks in the East being generally allowed to remain in the open fields by night and day during winter and summer, and seldom put under cover, the erection of booths by Jacob is recorded as an unusual circumstance; and perhaps the almost tropical climate of the Jordan valley may have rendered some shelter necessary.*<sup>285</sup>

Murphy: *[These are] Booths, or folds, composed of upright stakes wattled together, and sheltered with leafy branches.*<sup>286</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *Porter states that he has frequently seen such booths (Succoth, from saccac, to entwine) occupied by the Bedawin of the Jordan valley, and describes them as rude huts of reeds, sometimes covered with long grass, and sometimes with a piece of tent.*<sup>287</sup>

Let me suggest that this animal shelters also suggest that Jacob plans to stay in Succoth for a long period of time.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Dr. John Gill: *[Jacob] built...an house for himself and family, and booths or tents for his servants or shepherds, and for the cattle they had the care of, some for one, and some for the other. This he did with an intention to stay some time here, as it should seem.*<sup>288</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Some commentators contend that Succoth was north of the Jabbok because they identify it with "Sakut," which is on the other side of the Jordan, about ten miles north of the mouth of the Jabbok. Consequently, they argue that Jacob was going backwards and not forwards towards the land of Canaan, thus indicating his disobedience to the Lord's command to return to Canaan. However, they fail to consider Judges 8:4-9, which implies that Succoth was "south" of the Jabbok since this passage records that Succoth was east of the Jordan River but much closer to the Jordan than Penuel, which was north of the Jabbok River.*<sup>289</sup>

I believe it is worth considering that Jacob was avoiding his father. Although we have the reunion of Jacob and Esau in this chapter, we have no such similar reunion between Jacob and his father. Although Jacob could have traveled virtually anywhere in between the Bible narratives, one would expect such a reunion to receive a mention. However, all that we know is, Jacob and Esau reunite for Isaac's funeral; and they apparently live near one another for a time after that.

**Genesis 33:17d**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah]</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

<sup>285</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>286</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>287</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:16–17.

<sup>288</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>289</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

## Genesis 33:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Together, 'al kên (לעַן) 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> .			
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name</i> [when followed by a lamed]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
The NET Bible: <i>One could understand "Jacob" as the subject of the verb, but it is more likely that the subject is indefinite, in which case the verb is better translated as passive.</i> <sup>290</sup>			
shêm (שָׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
mâqôwm (מִוֶּקֶם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<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
Sûkkôwth (שֹׁכֵת) [pronounced sook-KOHTH]	<i>booth, cot, lair; and is transliterated Succoth</i>	proper noun; singular location	Strong's #5523 BDB #697
The NET Bible: <i>The name Succoth means "shelters," an appropriate name in light of the shelters Jacob built there for his livestock.</i> <sup>291</sup>			

**Translation:** ...therefore, he called the name of [that] place Succoth.

As a result, Jacob called that place *Succoth*. The word for *booth* is çukkâh (שֹׁכֵת) [pronounced sook-KAWH]; and Jacob used this word as the basis for the name of where he lived.

This is one of the ways that a man makes his mark on a territory—he does something, that something then becomes the basis for the name of that territory. If the name sticks, then that indicates that he was a very influential person.

This is the first time the Succoth is spoken of in Scripture (v. 17).

Genesis 33:17b-c **He built a house [there] for himself and he made booths for his cattle; therefore, he called the name of [that] place Succoth.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:16–17 **So Esau returned that day by his road to Seir; while Jacob journeyed to Succoth [instead]. He built a house [there] for himself and he made booths for his cattle; therefore, he called the name of [that] place Succoth.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

<sup>290</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

<sup>291</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

Genesis 33:16–17 Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he named that place *Succoth*. (Kukis paraphrase)

I would have to agree with Wenstrom<sup>292</sup> that Jacob realizes that he is not fully following God, as he has not crossed over the Jordan River into Canaan.

**Map of the Meeting of Jacob and Esau;** from [Children's Bible School Lessons](#); accessed June 8, 2015. From the map below, Esau has journeyed up from Seir (Mount Seir is due south of the Dead Sea). Jacob on the map is coming from the north, but he has come from the northeast originally. He comes down as far as Succoth (there is different Succoth in Egypt mentioned in the Exodus) and appears to settle there. However, that will suddenly change.

Jacob had promised to come to his brother in Seir, but he goes west instead. Whatever the reason, it does not appear that Jacob ever followed Esau on his trip back to Mount Seir.

So Jacob moves first to Succoth. You may remember in the previous chapter, there was discussion about whether Jacob came along the south of the Jabbok or if he was on the north side. Whichever is the case, he appears to go north of it to get to Succoth (that is, if this map can be depended upon for the location of Succoth).



### Chapter Outline

#### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

We have several possibilities: (1) Jacob did follow Esau to Edom, but soon thereafter, went north up to Succoth. (2) Jacob lied to Esau, and was planning on going westward all along. (3) Jacob was going to follow Esau, but changed his mind and went due west to Succoth instead (for what reason, we do not know). (4) Jacob was unsure of what he was going to do, made the excuse why he would not go with Esau south; and soon thereafter decided not to follow him.

About the only option that we can easily dismiss is Jacob following Esau to Seir. There appears to be no indication of that. There is every indication that Jacob just went west; than he never followed his brother. Jacob instead moved to Succoth.

About the only thing that we can get out of the text is, Esau kept making suggestions to help Jacob safely make the trip south to Edom, and Jacob kept politely rejecting each offer of help.

**Genesis 33:17** And Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

<sup>292</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

From this verse, it sounds very much as if Jacob is looking to settle his family in Succoth. God has brought him to the Land of Promise, and Jacob appears that he will settle, building a house as well as shelter for his livestock.

Genesis 33:16–17 **Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he named that place Succoth.**

### Genesis 33:17: How long Jacob remains in Succoth (a discussion)

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The Scriptures are silent as to how long Jacob stayed at Succoth before he entered the land of Canaan and settled at Shechem.*<sup>293</sup>

Dr. John Gill: *[T]he Targum of Jonathan says he continued here a whole year, and Jarchi eighteen months, a winter and two summers; but this is all uncertain.*<sup>294</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *How long Jacob remained in Succoth cannot be determined; but we may conclude that he stayed there some years from the circumstance, that by erecting a house and huts he prepared for a lengthened stay.*<sup>295</sup>

I believe that we can reduce this uncertainty.

Everything that we read here suggests that Jacob is setting up a permanent residence, and it is reasonable that this was his thinking as well. We are not given a time frame, but let me suggest that Jacob remains in Succoth at least 3–4 years, but more possibly as long as 10 years. His daughter Dinah, who is probably around 10 (or younger) when the family leaves Haran, is clearly a young adult (at least 16–18 years old) in the next chapter. This would suggest that Jacob and family remained in Succoth around 10 years. There is both a lower limit as to the time they were Succoth (Dinah had to be at least 16 years of age and probably older); but there is an upper limit as well. Dinah is unmarried and not promised in marriage to anyone in the chapter which follows. Therefore, she cannot be over 25 (and, let me suggest, much closer to age 18). We must bear in mind also that Simeon and Levi do some very adult things in Genesis 34, which indications that they must be in their 20's at the youngest.

The upper end can be set both by Dinah and by Joseph. In Genesis 37, Joseph is 17. Since Joseph is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, no more than 16 years can transpire between his meeting Esau and his age being given in Genesis 37.

Lange takes note of this same thing, citing Arno Gaebelein: *The fact that he built a house for himself, and permanent booths for his flock, indicates his continued residence at Succoth for some years; and the age of Dinah at his flight from Laban makes it necessary to suppose either that he dwelt here or at Shechem six or more years before the sad events narrated in the following chapter.*<sup>296</sup>

Dr. John Gill is one of the few who reasoned this out: *Jacob must have stayed at Succoth, and at this place, many years, especially at the latter; since, when he came into those parts, Dinah was a child of little more than six years of age, and Simeon and Levi were very young, not above eleven or twelve years of age; and yet, before he left Shechem, Dinah was marriageable, and Simeon and Levi were grown strong and able bodied men, and did a most strange exploit in slaying all the males in Shechem, as recorded in the next chapter.*<sup>297</sup>

Obviously, it is always okay to use logic and reasoning when determining various things in the Bible.

<sup>293</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>294</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>295</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:16–17.

<sup>296</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:17 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>297</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:20.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge on Succoth: [*Succoth means*] *Booths*. *Succoth was on the east of Jordan, between the brook Jabbok and that river, about 40 miles from Jerusalem, and consequently near Penuel; where a city was afterwards built, which Joshua assigned to the tribe of Gad. Jerome says, that Succoth was in the district of Scythopolis; and the Jews inform us, that the name of Darala was sometime after applied to it.*<sup>298</sup>

As I suggested earlier, Jacob may have stopped right where he was due to the injury given him by the Angel of God in the previous chapter.

Genesis 33:16–17 [Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he named that place Succoth.](#)

Although Jacob chose not to follow his brother Esau to Seir, instead of next going into the land, Jacob stops for a few years east of the Jordan. Perhaps Jacob finds himself in this place, looks around, likes it, and stays for a bit. Maybe it is a good time to grow his flocks and herds. Or, perhaps his injury from the end of Genesis 31 requires that he stop right there.

There is another point of interest, which begins here, but continues into the next few chapters: Jacob does not appear to try to contact his father or his mother. Why? I would suggest that, Jacob is ashamed of what he did. He pretended to be Esau his brother in order to illicitly get a blessing from his father on his deathbed. He is helped along here by his mother, who actually engineers all of this. Maybe he is bothered that he allowed himself to be manipulated by his mother; and how he was willing to dishonestly present himself to his own father. Maybe he just could not face them.

In the alternative, Jacob may not have been able to easily travel about, given his leg injury. We will later find that Jacob is insistent when it comes to keeping one of his sons nearby (first Joseph and then Benjamin). Even though Jacob's leg injury is never referenced again, there are a few times where his lack of movement could be reasonably attributed to that.

Although Jacob's father Isaac believed that he was dying 20 years previous, or near death; he will not die until Genesis 35:28–29. Jacob will go to him at that time (it is not clear whether Jacob went after Isaac had died or right before). My impression is, Jacob avoided his father despite returning to the land. However, there seems to have been contact of some sort, so that Jacob was made aware when his father died.

Genesis 33:16–17 [Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he named that place Succoth.](#)

Esau returns home to Seir and Jacob travels a very short distance to Succoth, where he appears to put down roots.

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<sup>298</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 33:17.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**Jacob in Shechem**

V. 17 sounds as if Jacob is going to settle in Succoth, but then we read this: **Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan...**

This appears to be a new section, written separately from the beginning of this chapter. These final 3 verses would be better placed with Genesis 34. Jacob speaks of moving from Shechem from Paddan-aram, but given the previous few verses, Succoth had to be an intermediate step.

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Genesis 33:18-20 forms the prelude for the events recorded in Genesis 34 where Jacob's sons exact revenge upon Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah.*<sup>299</sup>

Even though v. 18 follows right after v. 17, this does not mean that there was no intervening time in between. As discussed earlier, considering the building of the house, the booths and the age of Dinah, there is a likely interval of 5–10 years time between these verses. This is another reason why these should have been the first 3 verses for Genesis 34.

**A Better Division of the Chapters (re-chaptering Genesis 32–34)**

Passage	Description of the Passage
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.
Genesis 32:22–23	Jacob hastily moves his family in the middle of the night, presumably to provide them with protection.
Genesis 32:24–32	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. Their meeting is warm and Esau suggests that Jacob follow him to Seir. Esau then returns to Seir.
Genesis 33:17	Jacob moves to Succoth. He chooses not to follow or meet up with his brother Esau.
Genesis 33:18–20	Jacob moves to Shechem.
Genesis 34	When living in the Shechem area (a city), Dinah, Jacob's daughter, is raped by Shechem (a person, the son of the city founder). The sons of Jacob plot and execute revenge against the people of Shechem.

<sup>299</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

Genesis 32:1–33:17 should be one chapter. The only thing which differentiates these chapters is, Genesis 32 focuses on Jacob preparing to meet Esau; and Genesis 33:1–16 (or 17) focuses on him meeting Esau. One might separate the chapters based upon that difference.

Genesis 33:18–34:31 should be the next chapter. Genesis 34 takes place in Shechem; so this ought not to be separate from their family initially moving to Shechem.

Dr. Peter Pett places these sections together, entitling it: *Jacob Moves Into the Land of Promise - Revenge for Dinah*. The latter half of this title will make more sense when we get to Genesis 34. Pett then introduces this section: *Some years have passed and now Jacob feels the time has come to return to the land of the covenant. This particular record was made as a permanent record of the covenant between Hamor and Jacob which resulted in the establishment of a permanent altar to God and ownership of the land on which it was built. The episode that follows was seen as permanently connected with this arrangement.*<sup>300</sup>

Nevertheless, I will continue to stay with the traditional chapter divisions.

**The JEPD Theory and the Cambridge Bible:** Some excellent sources sometimes propose some ridiculous theories. The Cambridge Bible, for instance, teaches that there is a change of manuscript at this point, suggesting a change in the actual record-keeper. This is the JEPD theory, that various people, long after these events took place, wrote down this stuff, then it got mixed together (generally speaking, two authors, the Jehovist and the Elohimist are those who are said to have recorded this information). We have no idea how they chose to do this, where they did this, how their work got mixed together (again, another theory is, someone like a priest mixed them together for the final product); and then all of this came out as a distinct manuscript 500 or more years after these events occurred (or, are said to have occurred, as this approach brings into question the actual historicity of the events themselves).

In other words, the Hebrew people had no Genesis Scriptures for hundreds of years after the events of Genesis occurred (despite the obvious knowledge of these events recorded in Exodus); and suddenly, these Scriptures were available (according to this theory, this manuscript would include Genesis through Numbers); and, the people of Israel just blindly accepted this manuscripts as if they had had them all this time.

Now, how exactly do you take a people and convince them that, all along, they have had these Scriptures which they have read and followed and believed in and were the source of all their traditions, and yet, these Scriptures do not actually exist until 700 B.C. or 500 B.C. or whatever? Who exactly brings them to the people and says, “This is what we have believed all of this time and we have had these Scriptures from the very beginning” when they actually haven’t?

This is the thing that the JEPD Theory tries to sell us. Now, there were reasons for this theory: (1) people did not believe that writing existed at all during the time of Genesis (this is false); and (2) that, if one section of Scripture has Yehowah’s name mentioned a lot, and another section has Elohim’s name mentioned a lot, that must mean that two different people wrote those sections. The first assumption ignores the idea that the book of Genesis could have been retained in the minds of the patriarchs and repeated thousands of times to their children.

Now, the Cambridge Bible will mention this theory, from time to time, and then, the next paragraph, begin interpreting the verse as anyone else would interpret it. So, like many commentators, we can ignore some of what they have written, and yet still take note of other things which they have written.

<sup>300</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

And so comes Jacob safely [to] a city of Shechem which [is] in a land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. And so he camps faces of the city. And so he buys a piece of the field (which he had pitched there his tent) from a hand of sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for a hundred silver coins. And so he erects there an altar and so calls to him, Êl-Elohim [of] Israel.

Genesis  
33:18–20

Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. He camped out before [this] city. He purchased a parcel of the field (where he had pitched his tent) from the sons of Hamor ([Hamor] is the father of Shechem) for a hundred silver coins. He built an altar there and called it *Êl-Elohim of Israel*.

Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram. He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent. Hamor is the father of Shechem. He built an altar there and named it *Êl, the God of Israel*.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so comes Jacob safely [to] a city of Shechem which [is] in a land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. And so he camps faces of the city. And so he buys a piece of the field (which he had pitched there his tent) from a hand of sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for a hundred silver coins. And so he erects there an altar and so calls to him, Êl-Elohim [of] Israel.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob came in peace to the city of Shekem, which is in the land of Kanaan, in his coming from Padan Aram, and he abode near the face of the city. And he bought the possession of the field where he had spread his tent, of the hand of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shekem, for a hundred lambs. And he raised there an altar, and <u>offered service upon it before</u> God, the God of Israel.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	Then came Jakob in peace <u>with all that he had</u> to the city of Shekem, in the land of Kanaan, in his Coming from Padan Aram; and he dwelt near the city, and bought the possession of a field where lie spread his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor father of Shekem, for a hundred <u>pearls</u> [Margaleen.]. And he raised there an altar, and <u>there he gave the tithes which he had set apart of all that he had before</u> God, the God of Israel.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And <u>he</u> passed over to Salem, a city of the Sichemites, which is in the land of Chanaan, after he returned from Mesopotamia of Syria: and he dwelt by the town: And he bought that part of the field, in which he pitched his tents, of the children of Hemor, the father of Sicheim for a hundred lambs. And raising an altar there, <u>he invoked upon it</u> the most mighty God of Israel.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan Aram; and encamped before the city. He bought the parcel of ground where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. He erected an altar there, and called it "El God Yisrael". [Heb. El Elohei Yisrael].
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came forth from Padan-aram; and encamped before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field from the children of Hamor, father of Shechem, for a hundred ewes. And he pitched his tent there, and erected an altar, and called it El-Alaha di Israel (God, the God of Israel).
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob came to Salem, a city of Secima, which is in the land of Chanaan, when he departed out of Mesopotamia of Syria, and took up a position in front of the city. And he bought the portion of the field, where he pitched his tent, of Emmor the

father of Sychem, for a hundred lambs. And he set up there an alter, and called on the God of Israel.

Significant differences: The Latin has *he* rather than *Jacob*. There is additional text in one of the targums. *Safely, in peace, Shalem* and *Salem* are all the same word.

*Mesopotamia of Syria* is equivalent to *Paddan-Aram*. The Greek leaves out *the sons of*.

The amount of the sale was 100 silver pieces in the Hebrew. Many of the ancient translations had *for 100 lambs (ewes)*. Many have commented that each coin was worth the value of a lamb. One targum has *pearls* rather than *silver*.

One targum has *offered service upon it before* rather than *called it*. Another targum has *there he gave the tithes which he had set apart of all that he had before* instead. The Latin has *he invoked upon it*.

It may appear that there are a great many differences here, but, in the broad scheme of things, this being narrative, one would be hard-pressed to change some doctrine of the faith based upon any of these differences.

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So Jacob came safely from Paddan-aram to the town of Shechem in the land of Canaan, and put up his tents near the town. And for a hundred bits of money he got from the children of Hamor, the builder of Shechem, the field in which he had put up his tents. And there he put up an altar, naming it El, the God of Israel.
Easy English	After Jacob left Paddan Aram he arrived at the city of Shechem. This is in Canaan. He put up his tent near the city. He bought the piece of ground where he put up his tents. He bought it from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. He paid 400 pieces of silver for the land. Jacob built an altar there. And he called the altar El Elohe Israel.
Easy-to-Read Version	Jacob safely ended his trip from Paddan Aram when he came to the town of Shechem in Canaan. He made his camp in a field near the city. He bought the field where he camped from the family of Hamor, father of Shechem. He paid 100 pieces of silver for it. He built an altar there to honor God. He named the place "El, the God of Israel."
<i>The Message</i>	And that's how it happened that Jacob arrived all in one piece in Shechem in the land of Canaan—all the way from Paddan Aram. He camped near the city. He bought the land where he pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. He paid a hundred silver coins for it. Then he built an altar there and named it El-Elohe-Israel (Mighty Is the God of Israel).
NIRV	After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan. He camped where he could see the city. For 100 pieces of silver he bought a piece of land. He got it from Hamor's sons. Hamor was the father of Shechem. Jacob set up his tent on that piece of land. He also set up an altar there. He named it El Elohe Israel.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob traveled safely from Paddan-aram to the city of Shechem in Canaan. He camped within sight of the city. He bought the piece of land on which he pitched his tents. He bought it from the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for one hundred pieces of silver. He set up an altar there and named it God, the God of Israel.

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

Casual English Bible	<p>Later, Jacob finished his long trip from Paddan-aram.<sup>4</sup> He set up camp just outside the town of Shechem in the middle of Canaan.<sup>5</sup> Jacob bought that plot of land from the family of Hamor, who was prince Shechem's father and the ruler of the town. Jacob paid 100 coins.<sup>6</sup> Jacob built a stone altar. He named it "God is the God of Israel." In Hebrew: El-Elohe-Israel.</p> <p><sup>4</sup>33:18 Northern Syria and southern Turkey.  <sup>5</sup>33:18 Israel and Palestinian territories.  <sup>6</sup>33:19 Called kesitahs in Hebrew.</p>
Common English Bible	<p><b>Dinah and the conflict at Shechem</b> [This heading leads us into the next chapter]</p> <p>Jacob arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan on his trip from Paddan-aram, and he camped in front of the city. He bought the section of the field where he pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred qesitahs. Then he set up an altar there and named it El Elohe Israel.</p>
Contemporary English V.	<p>After leaving northern Syria, Jacob arrived safely at Shechem in Canaan and set up camp outside the city. The land where he camped was owned by the descendants of Hamor, the father of Shechem. So Jacob paid them one hundred pieces of silver for the property, then he set up his tents and built an altar there to honor the God of Israel.</p>
New Berkeley Version	<p>Traveling from Padan Aram, Jacob arrived safely at Shechem-town in the land of Canaan and camped facing the town. He brought the lot [Which he gave Joseph, who was ultimately buried there (Joshua 24:32), on which he had pitched his tent, for about 200 dollars from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father. There he built an altar and called it Eternal life, the God of Israel.</p>
New Century Version	<p>Jacob left Northwest Mesopotamia and arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan. There he camped east of the city. He bought a part of the field where he had camped from the sons of Hamor father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver. He built an altar there and named it after God, the God of Israel.</p>
New Living Translation	<p>Later, having traveled all the way from Paddan-aram, Jacob arrived safely at the town of Shechem, in the land of Canaan. There he set up camp outside the town. Jacob bought the plot of land where he camped from the family of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for 100 pieces of silver. And there he built an altar and named it El-Elohe-Israel.</p>
Unlocked Dynamic Bible	<p>This is how Jacob and his family left Paddan Aram and traveled safely to the land of Canaan. There they set up their tents in a field near the city of Shechem. One of the leaders of the people in that area was named Hamor. Hamor had several sons. Jacob paid the sons of Hamor one hundred pieces of silver for the piece of ground on which they set up their tents. He built a stone altar there and named it El Elohe Israel, which means "God, the God of Israel."</p>

### **Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	<p>Finally, Jacob got to Salem (which was the city of Shechem) in the land of Canaan after traveling there from Mesopotamia of Syria. Then he went to [the city gate] and bought the field where he had pitched his tent from Hamor (the father of Shechem) for a hundred lambs. And there he set up an altar, where he called upon his (Israel's) God.</p>
Beck's American Translation	<p>When he returned from the Plain of Aram, Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in Canaan, and camped east of the town. For 100 shekels of silver he bought from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, a piece of land on which he put up his tents.</p> <p>He built an altar there and called it A-Might-God-is-the-God-of-Israel.</p>
Berean Study Bible	<p><b><u>Jacob Settles in Shechem</u></b></p>

After Jacob had come from Paddan-aram,<sup>b</sup> he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan, and he camped just outside the city. And the plot of ground where he pitched his tent, he purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver.<sup>c</sup> There he set up an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>b</sup> That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

<sup>c</sup> Hebrew a hundred kesitahs; the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known

<sup>d</sup> *El-Elohe-Israel* means *God is the God of Israel or mighty is the God of Israel*

International Standard V

### **Jacob Buys Land in Shechem**

After Jacob had arrived safely from Paddan-aram [Paddan-aram was located in northwest Mesopotamia], he entered the city of Shechem, which was located in the territory of Canaan, and encamped facing that city. Then he bought a parcel of land for 100 pieces of silver from the descendants of Hamor, Shechem's father. He pitched his tent there, set up an altar, and named it El-elohe-Israel [The Heb. name *El-elohe-israel* means *God, the God of Israel*].

New Advent (Knox)Bible

He passed on from there to Salem, a city belonging to Schem [In the Hebrew text, this may also be rendered, 'to the city of Schem in peace'.], thus returning to Chanaan after his journey to Mesopotamia of the Syrians. Here he dwelt near the town; he bought the piece of ground where he encamped from the men of Hemor's clan, that was father to Schem, at the price of a hundred lambs. And here he built an altar, and dedicated it to the almighty God, the God of Israel.

Translation for Translators

Some time later, Jacob and his family left Paddan-Aram in Mesopotamia, and they traveled safely to Canaan land. There they set up their tents in a field near Shechem city. One of the leaders of the people in that area was named Hamor. Hamor had several sons. Jacob paid the sons of Hamor a hundred pieces of silver for the piece of ground on which they set up their tents. He built a stone altar there, and named it El-Elohe Israel, *which means* "God, the God of Israel."

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

Awful Scroll Bible

Jacob was to come to Salem, a city of Shechem, on the solid grounds of Canaan, as to come from Padan-aram. He was to camp turned towards the city. He acquired a portion of the field, at where he is to have spread out his tents, from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred weights of money. He was to station an altar there, and was to call it El-elohe-Isra-el.

Conservapedia

Jacob then came to the peaceable city of Shechem, which sits in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram, and encamped in front of the city. He then acquired a portion of the field where he had pitched his tent, from the hand of the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitot [The kesitah (הַסִּיטָה) was a money piece, cast in the shape of a lamb, of unknown weight and composition]. He set up an altar there and called it El-of-Elohim-Israel [That is, "God of Gods of Israel."].

Ferar-Fenton Bible

Afterwards Jacob went quietly to the village of Shechem, which is in the land of Canan, on his return from Padan Aram, and encamped before the village, and bought that part of the land, where he pitched his tent, from the hand of the son of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred kesitas. He also built an Altar there and called on God, the God of Israel.

God's Truth (Tyndale)

And Jacob came peaceably in to the city of Schem in the land of Canaan, after that he was come from Mesopotamia, and pitched before the city, and bought a parcel of ground where he pitched his tent, of the children of Hemor Sichems father, for an hundred lambs, And he made there an altar, and there called upon the mighty God of Israel.

Jubilee Bible 2000

And Jacob came safe and sound to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram, and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought part of the field where he had spread his tent, from the hand of the sons

	of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred ewes. And there he erected an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel (the Strong God of Israel).
Lange	And Jacob came to Shalem [in peace], a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram [Mesopotamia]; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a [the] parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor [ass; peaceful bearer of public burdens], Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel [strength].
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob arrived safe and sound at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, upon his return from Paddan-Aram, and he encamped in front of the city. And he acquired the portion of the field where he pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitas. There he erected an altar and called it: El-Elohe-Israel (i. e. A Mighty God is the God of Israel).
Tree of Life Version	So Jacob arrived in <i>shalom</i> to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped right in front of the city. He purchased the portion of the field there where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 pieces of money. There he set up an altar, and he called it, El is Israel's God.
Unlocked Literal Bible	When Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. He camped near the city. Then he bought the piece of ground where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. There he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Jacob came to Salem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, after he came from Padanaram, and encamped near the city. And he purchased a portion of a field where he had pitched his tent, from the hands of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 monetary units. And he established an altar and commissioned it Elelohe-Israel (that is Elohim the Elohim of Israel).
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob came in one piece to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, in his arrival from Padan Aram, and he camped before the city. And he bought the part of the field where he planted his tent, from the hands of the sons of Chamor (Hamor), father of Shechem-- for a hundred, of money, and he erected an alter there, and dedicated it to a god, the God of Israel.

### Catholic Bibles:

The Heritage Bible	And Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram, and pitched his tent before the face of the city. And he set up a parcel of a field, where he had spread out his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of silver. And he stationed there an altar, and called it El Elohey Yisrael [Mighty God of Israel.].
New American Bible (2002)	Having thus come from Paddan-aram, Jacob arrived safely at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, and he encamped in sight of the city. The plot of ground on which he had pitched his tent he bought for a hundred pieces of bullion [in Hebrew, kesita, a monetary unit of which the value is now unknown] from the descendants of Hamor [Hamorites, "the men of Hamor"; cf ⇒ Judges 9:28. Hamor was regarded as the eponymous ancestor of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Shechem], the founder of Shechem. He set up a memorial stone there and invoked "El, the God of Israel."
New American Bible (2011)	Jacob arrived safely at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram. He encamped in sight of the city [Gn 12:6; Jn 4:5]. The plot of ground on which he had pitched his tent he bought for a hundred pieces of money [in Hebrew, qesita, a monetary unit of which the value is unknown] from the descendants of Hamor [Hamorites, "the people of Hamor"; cf. Jgs 9:28. Hamor was regarded as the eponymous ancestor of the pre-Israelite inhabitants of

New Jerusalem Bible	Shechem], the father of Shechem [Jos 24:32; Jn 4:5; Acts 7:16]. He set up an altar there and invoked "El, the God of Israel [Jgs 6:24]."
Revised English Bible	Jacob arrived safely at the town of Shechem in Canaanite territory, on his return from Paddan-Aram. He encamped opposite the town and for one hundred pieces of silver he bought from the sons of Hamor father of Shechem the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent. There he erected an altar which he called 'El, God of Israel'.
	So having journeyed from Paddan-aram, Jacob arrived safely at the town of Shechem in Canaan and pitched his tent to the east of it. The piece of land where he had pitched his tent he bought from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred sheep. He erected an altar there and called it El-elohey-israel.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Having traveled from Paddan-Aram, Ya'akov arrived safely at the city of Sh'khem, in Kena'an, and set up camp near the city. From the sons of Hamor Sh'khem's father he bought for one hundred pieces of silver the parcel of land where he had pitched his tent. There he put up an altar, which he called El-Elohei-Yisra'el [God, the God of Isra'el].
exeGesges companion Bible	And as he goes from Paddan Aram Yaaqov comes to Shalem a city of Shechem in the land of Kenaan; and encamps at the face of the city; and he chattels an allotment of a field for a hundred ingots from the hand of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem - where he spreads his tent. And there he stations a sacrifice altar and calls it El Elohe Yisra El.
Israeli Authorized Version	And Yaakov came to Shalem, a city of Shkhem, which is in the land of Kenaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shkhem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it EleloheYisrael.
Kaplan Translation	<i>Arrival in Shechem</i> When Jacob came from Padan Aram and entered the boundaries of Canaan, he arrived safely [(Targum; Rashi; Josephus 1:21:1). Shalem in Hebrew. Others maintain that Shalem (Salem) is the name of a city near Shechem (Sefer HaYashar p. 87; Rashbam; Bachya; Chizzkuni; Abarbanel). Indeed, there is a city known as Salaam some 5 miles east of Shechem (cf. Yov'Ioth 30:1). See I Samuel 9:4. Although Jerusalem was also known as Shalem or Salem (Genesis 14:18), this is a different city (Chizzkuni).] in the vicinity of Shechem [This was also Abraham's first stop in the Holy Land (Genesis 12:6)]. He set up camp in view of the city. He bought the piece of open land [This was later Joseph's burial place; Joshua 24:32.] upon which he set up his tent for 100 kesitahs [In the Talmud, Rabbi Akiba notes that in Africa (or Phrygia, see Genesis 10:2) a kesitah is equivalent to a ma'ah (Rosh HaShanah 26a). A ma'ah is usually seen as one twenty-fourth of a shekel (Tosefta, Bava Bathra 5:4), and hence the 100 kesitahs would be around 4.17 shekels. Other sources state that a ma'ah is one twentieth of a shekel (Targum on Exodus 30:13), and hence the 100 kesitahs would be 5 shekels (Sefer HaYashar). According to others, the kesitah is equivalent to a sela or two shekels, and hence the price was 200 shekels (Bereshith Rabbah 79; Ralbag; MeAm Lo'ez/The Torah Anthology 3:155). See Job 42:11.] from the sons of Chamor, chief of Shechem [(Ibn

Caspi). Or, 'father of Shechem.' See Genesis 34:19.]. He erected an altar there, and named it God-is-Israel's-Lord (El Elohey Yisrael)..

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Ya'akov came shalem to Ir Shechem, which is in erez Kena'an, when he came from Padan Aram; and encamped before the Ir.

And he bought a chelkat hasadeh (piece of land), where he had pitched there his ohel, from the yad Bnei Chamor Avi Shechem, for a hundred pieces of kesitah (money).

And he erected there a Mizbe'ach, and called it El Elohei Yisroel.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

#### *The Amplified Bible*

#### Jacob Settles in Shechem

When Jacob came from Paddan-aram, he arrived safely and in peace at the city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, and camped in front of the [walled] city. Then he bought the piece of land on which he had pitched his tents from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. There he erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

#### The Expanded Bible

Jacob left ·northwestern Mesopotamia [Paddan-aram] and arrived safely at the city of Shechem [12:6] in the land of Canaan. There he camped ·east of [before] the city. He bought a ·part [parcel; portion] of the field where he had camped from the sons of Hamor father of Shechem for one hundred ·pieces of silver [qesitah; <sup>c</sup>an uncertain monetary unit; Josh. 24:32; John 4:5, 6, 12; Acts 7:16]. He ·built [erected] an altar there and named it ·after God, the God of Israel [El-Elohe-Israel].

#### Kretzmann's Commentary

And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city. After living at Succoth a number of years, until Dinah, his daughter, had become a young woman, during which time Jacob also made a visit to his aged father at Hebron and brought back the old nurse of his mother, Deborah, he finally entered Canaan proper with his family and at least some of his herds and flocks. He came into his home country in good health, as the Lord had promised him, and encamped before the city of Shechem, which the Hivite prince Hamor had built since the time of Abraham, calling it after the name of his son. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, for an hundred pieces of money. Jacob, trusting in the promises of the Lord and preparing for an even more permanent residence in Canaan than Abraham, bought a possession for himself during his lifetime. This piece of land, with the so-called Jacob's well, is shown to this day at the southeast opening of the valley of Shechem. Jacob paid for this land one hundred pieces of money, the value of which can no longer be determined. Some scholars think that each piece of money was worth as much as a lamb, while others are of the opinion that there was money in those days which, in a crude manner, had the figure of a lamb stamped upon it. And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe Israel (God, the God of Israel). That was Jacob's confession after the many years of travel and sojourn in strange countries: The strong God is the God of Israel. He had experienced the mighty power of God in numerous instances, and was thankful for the days of peace and rest which he now enjoyed. For this reason also his worship, which he formally instituted at Shechem, consisted chiefly in proclaiming the name of this true God. In this all believers, who ever and again enjoy the rich blessings of the Lord in wonderful measure, will cheerfully imitate the aged patriarch.

#### NET Bible®

After he left Paddan Aram, Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan, and he camped near [*Heb* "in front of."] the city. Then he purchased the portion of the field where he had pitched his tent; he bought it [The words "he bought it" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons. In the Hebrew text v. 19 is one long sentence.] from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred

pieces of money. There he set up an altar and called it "The God of Israel is God [*Heb* "God, the God of Israel."]."

The Voice

At last Jacob came to the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan. Overall it had been a safe *and peaceful* journey from Paddan-aram. He camped outside of the city and purchased the land on which he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor (who was Shechem's father) for one hundred pieces of money. And there also he built an altar he called El-Elohe-Israel, *which means "God, the God of Israel."*

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

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov <sup>[He restrains]</sup> came to Shalem <sup>[Complete]</sup>, a city of Shekhem <sup>[Shoulder]</sup> which is in the land of Kena'an <sup>[Lowered]</sup>, in his coming from Padan-Aram <sup>[Field palace]</sup> and he camped at the face of the city,...

Footnote: - The verse appears to be missing one or two prepositions. There are several possible translations for this verse depending on where the preposition or prepositions are placed. One possible translation is "and Ya'aqov came to Shalem, a city of Shekhem." Another possible translation is "and Ya'aqov came in completeness to the city of Shekhem" (the word Shalem would be a noun rather than a proper name). Another is "and Ya'aqov of Shalem came to the city of Shekhem" (nowhere does the text suggest that Ya'aqov is from Shalem which would invalidate this translation).

...and he purchased a parcel of the field, where he stretched there his tent, from the hand of the sons of Hhamor <sup>[Donkey]</sup>, the father of Shekhem <sup>[Shoulder]</sup>, with a hundred qeshiytah, and he caused to stand erect an altar there and he called out to him, El-Elohey-Yisra'el <sup>[El of the powers of Yisra'el]</sup>,...

Concordant Literal Version

And coming is Jacob in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, at his coming from Padan, Syria. And camping is he before the city. And acquiring is he a portion of the field where his tent is stretched out, from the hand of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred coins, sterling. And setting up is he there an altar, and calling on El-Elohim-Ishral.

Modern English Version

Jacob came peacefully to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan Aram, and camped before the city. He bought a parcel of a field, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. He erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

NASB

#### Jacob Settles in Shechem

Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

New King James Version

#### Jacob Comes to Canaan

Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

Young's Updated LT

And Jacob comes in to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, in his coming from Padan-Aram, and encamps before the city. And he buys the portion of the field where he has stretched out his tent, from the hand of the sons of Hamor, father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitah. And he sets up there an altar, and proclaims at it God—the God of Israel.

### The gist of this passage:

Then Jacob moves to Shechem and buys a piece of land to set up his tent from the sons of Hamor. He sets up an altar there to God.

18-20

## Genesis 33:18a

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
bôw' (בוא) [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
Ya'ăqôb (יעֲקֹב) [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
shâlêm (שלם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAIM</i> ]	<i>whole; complete, completed, finished; safe, at peace; cherishing peace and friendship</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #8003 BDB #1023
Or this may be the proper noun:			
Shâlêm (שלם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAIM</i> ]	<i>whole; complete, completed, finished; safe, at peace; cherishing peace and friendship; transliterated Salem</i>	masculine singular proper noun/location	Strong's #8004 BDB #1024
ġyr (גֵּר) [pronounced <i>ġeer</i> ]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
Sh <sup>e</sup> kem (שֶׁכֶם) [pronounced <i>shek-EHM</i> ]	<i>shoulder; back; [elevated] track of land; transliterated Shechem</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7927 BDB #1014

The Latin and the Greek (and possibly the Syriac) has Jacob and company coming to the city of Shalem in Shechem.

**Translation:** [Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem,...](#)

Later, Jacob came safely and peacefully to Shechem, which between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim east of the Jordan River. It is from these two mountains that the curses and the blessings will be read by the children of Israel after entering into the land and taking it.

Genesis 33:18a [Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem,...](#)

### Jacob comes safely to Shechem

1. Sometimes, there is a single word in a verse which carries with it so much information.
2. The word *safely* is shâlêm (שלם) [pronounced *shaw-LAIM*], which means, *whole; complete, completed, finished; safe, at peace*. Strong's #8003 BDB #1023.
3. Although there is a great deal of discussion about this word, whether it ought to be a proper noun or not, let's consider several reasons why this word is used here.
4. Jacob seems to have suddenly stopped, almost right where he was, and established a permanent residence in Succoth. I have suggested on numerous occasions that his injuries suffered the night before when wrestling with the Angel of God may have made it impossible for him to go on. From everything that we read in Genesis 32, this appears to be a serious injury—so, it is not an impossibility for Jacob to come to the conclusion, "I cannot continue traveling west," so he just stops and says, "We are going to stay

## Jacob comes safely to Shechem

- here.” This would account for Jacob building a house there, with the idea that he is going to remain there permanently (and when I say *Jacob building a house*, I do not mean that he personally did all of the work).
5. We’ve discussed that he may have lived in Succoth for ten years or so, and have given good and persuasive reasons why it was not simply a year or two; but also why he did not live there for 20 years.
  6. This may have afforded Jacob enough time to repair from his injury.
  7. The word *shâlêm* can certainly mean *in peace*, but it can also mean, *whole, complete* and even *in good health*. Could this single word suggest that Jacob’s body repaired itself to the point where he could circumnavigate once again?
  8. Is it possible that Jacob thought (or even said), “God, I cannot go any further. You know this. You did this to me. So I am stopping right here!”
  9. Could this very easily explain why Jacob chose not to follow Esau? Could he have been in desperate pain, a fact that he chose not to share with his brother Esau?
  10. Also, to go from Succoth to Shechem, Jacob and company would have had to have crossed the Jordan River. Let me suggest that was a much bigger deal than it would be 450 years later when Joshua crosses it. I would therefore say with reasonable confidence that, their crossing of the river could have gotten pretty hairy; and it was a marvelous thing that all of them crossed over safely.
  11. I would certainly suggest that *shâlêm* is also used to indicate that Jacob arrives in Canaan in peace, as this was Jacob’s prayer to God when he left Canaan. 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; emphasis mine) Even though the word here is *shâlôm*, in the original Hebrew, without the added vowels, this would look no different that *shâlêm*.
  12. All of this information suggests that arriving safely in Shechem was a very big deal for this family.

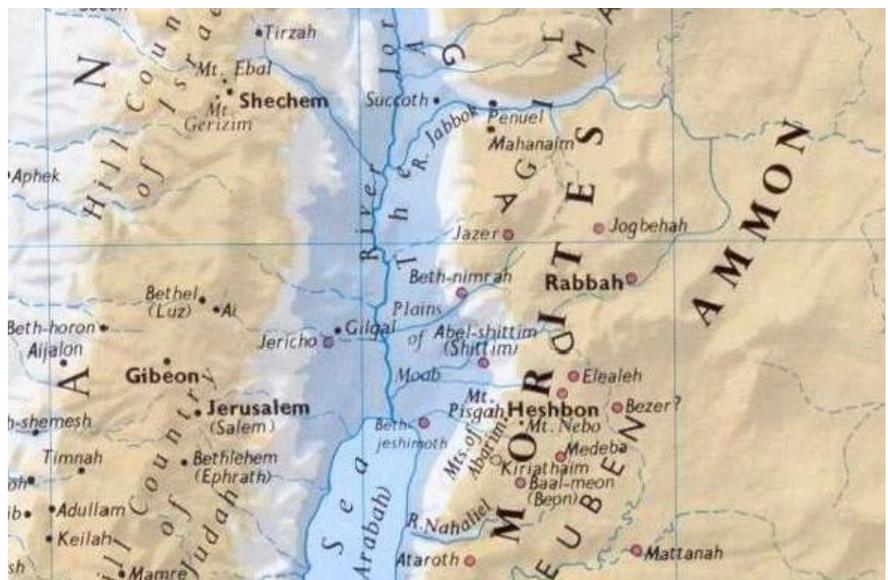
I believe that it is very likely that Jacob expected to live his life out in Succoth.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**Map of Shechem and Succoth** from Bible Atlas Map in e-sword; Map 018a. Paddan-aram is far off the map toward the east-northeast. You can find Succoth off the Jabbok River, which feeds into the Jordan from the east. Shechem is opposite Succoth on the other side of the Jordan.

Shechem was already an established city, but really more like a village—possibly of just one family. It appears that the father, Hamor, named the city after his firstborn son (or vice versa), which could have been named after one of his ancestors who founded the city.



This is the first city in the land which is mentioned in the Bible. Abraham travels through it back in Genesis 12:6. Jacob had been reading the Scriptures (which is what we have studied so far) and this was the first recorded place where God spoke to Abram and promised to give his descendants the land there. Having recently wrestled with the God of Israel and knowing of the history and the promises, Jacob decides that this would be a good place to settle.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

NEV Commentary: *Shechem was the spot where Abraham had built an altar upon entering Canaan, the promised land. Jacob progressively felt a sense of identity with Abraham and Isaac on a spiritual level.*<sup>301</sup>

Jacob's travels are chronicled, and at no time is there any indication that he first went south to Seir. He did not cover much ground when going to Succoth; and then he travels a relatively short distance further west to go to Shechem.

Genesis 33:18a *Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem,...*

If we are actually looking at the city of Shechem (rather than at an outpost of Shechem...

### The City of Shechem (various commentators)

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *[Shechem] was situated in a narrow valley, abounding with springs, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, having the former on the north, and the latter on the south; 10 miles from Shiloh, and 34 from Jerusalem. It became the capital of Samaria, after the ruin of the city of that name.*<sup>302</sup>

Bible Query: *Though the city was in ruins in Abraham's time, the site of the city was known, as Can Archaeology prove the Old Testament? p.26 says. Abraham did not purchase the city, but rather land near Shechem.*

Bible Query continues: *The Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology p.518-522 gives a lot of detail on Shechem. It was always being rebuilt because it was on a hill that could be fortified and had an excellent spring. Shechem was rebuilt around 1900 B.C., but Pharaoh Senusert III (ca.1880-1840 B.C.) captured it. Shechem was destroyed again about 1750 B.C. It was rebuilt, but was destroyed again by the Egyptians c.1550 B.C.. It was rebuilt, in the time of the Amarna letters (1500-1200 B.C.) which mention it as the center of the king Lab'ayu who was in confederation with the "Habiru" invaders. It was rebuilt, but destroyed by the Assyrians by the Aramaeans, King Menaham of Israel, and the Assyrians in 723 B.C.*<sup>303</sup>

Clarke: *Shechem is called in Acts 7:16, Sychem, and in John 4:5, Sychar; in the Arabic it is called Nablous, and to the present day Neapolis. It was near to Samaria; and the place where the wretched remains of the sect of the Samaritans were lately found, from whom Dr. Huntington received a perfect copy of the Samaritan Pentateuch.*<sup>304</sup>

College Press Bible Study: *Jacob came to the city of Shechem: "so called from Shechem, the son of the Hivite prince Hamor, Genesis 32:19; Genesis 34:2 ff" (K-D). "But most writers, following the Septuagint, take Shalem as a proper name—a city of (prince) Shechem (cf. ch. 34, Judges 9:28)" (Jamieson). (Cf. marginal rendering, A.S.V., to Shalem, a city). There seems very good reason, however, for the view that the original word was adjectival (not a proper name meaning to Shalem) signifying, safe, peaceful, hence enforcing the twofold reference to Jacob's return in peace (Genesis 32:18. cf. Genesis 28:21). Genesis 12:6 seems to indicate that the city of Shechem was not known in Abraham's time; we may conclude that Hamor founded it and called it by the name of 'his son.*

<sup>301</sup> From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen33com.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

<sup>302</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 33:18.

<sup>303</sup> *Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>304</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18.

## The City of Shechem (various commentators)

College Press continues: *In the allocation of the land to the twelve tribes, Shechem fell to Ephraim (Joshua 20:7), but was assigned to the Levites and became a city of refuge (Joshua 21:20-21). It was the scene of the promulgation of the law, when its blessings were announced from Gerizim and its curses from Ebal (Deut. 27:11 ff., Joshua 8:33-35). It was here that Joshua assembled the people just before his death and delivered his "farewell address" (Joshua 24:1-25). The later history of the site is closely associated with the Samaritans and their sacred mount, Gerizim. The memory of Jacob's abode there is preserved by "Jacob's Well" at Sychar (John 4:1-26): the ruins of Shechem itself have been unearthed by archeologists, at the east end of the pass between Ebal and Gerizim. Sychar is called "Shechem" in the old Syriac Gospels.*<sup>305</sup>

Gill suggests that Shechem might be equivalent to Sychar, which is found in John 4:5.<sup>306</sup>

Lange: *The city [of Shechem] was not in existence when Abraham sojourned in this region (Genesis 12:6). The Hivite prince Hamor had built it and called it after the name of his son.*<sup>307</sup>

NIV Study Bible: *[Shechem is an] important city in central Canaan, first built and inhabited during the patriarchal period. Jacob followed in the footsteps of Father Abraham (see Genesis 12:8). Jacob dug a well there (see John 4:5-6) that can still be seen today.*<sup>308</sup>

A couple of things. First of all, the name *Shechem* is likely a recent thing. The established city or town may have been around for awhile, but it likely received its name from Hamor, giving it the name of his son (there is certainly the possibility that Hamor could have settled there and so named his first son after the city). Secondly, we have no idea if the well found there today is the same as the one dug by Jacob. This is certainly a long-time tradition, but does it really go back 4000 years?

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *a city of Shechem: Or, rather, "the city Shechem," which was situated in a narrow valley, abounding with springs, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, having the former on the north, and the latter on the south; 10 miles from Shiloh, and 34 from Jerusalem. It became the capital of Samaria, after the ruin of the city of that name. Joshua 24:1; Judges 9:1; John 4:5, Sychar, Acts 7:16, Sychem, Padan-aram, Genesis 25:20, Genesis 28:6-7, Genesis 35:9, Genesis 46:15.*<sup>309</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: "Shechem" ...can refer to

1. a person's name, Genesis 33:18-19; Genesis 34:2; Num. 26:31; Joshua 17:2; Joshua 24:32; Judges 9:28
2. a topological region between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerazim. The same root (BDB 1014 I) means "shoulder" or "shoulder-blade."
3. a city, Joshua 20:7; Joshua 21:21; Joshua 24:1; Judges 8:31

It is first mentioned in Genesis 12:6 in connection with Abram and now with Jacob (cf. Genesis 37:14).<sup>310</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *"Shechem" was located in the heart of the Promised Land at the commercial crossroads of Canaan in the pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The city was the place where Abraham first camped when he arrived in Canaan from Haran and is the place where he built an altar to worship the Lord in response to the Lord appearing to him and promising him and his descendants the land of Canaan (See Genesis 12:6-7).*<sup>311</sup>

<sup>305</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-33:17.

<sup>306</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>307</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857-1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18-20 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>308</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 57 (footnote) (slightly edited).

<sup>309</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>310</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:18-20.

<sup>311</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

## The City of Shechem (various commentators)

Whedon: *Jacob came in peace to a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. It was doubtless at or near "the place of Sichem," mentioned Genesis 12:6, and the city had probably been built here since the time of Abraham's first arrival. The city may have taken its name from the shoulder of land on which it was built, (Genesis 12:6, note,) or from Shechem, the son of Hamor, or, possibly, from one of his ancestors of the same name.*<sup>312</sup>

Shechem was a city founded by Hamor, named after Hamor's son (Genesis 34:2). It was a city which did not exist during the time of Abraham.

Shechem is where God first appeared to Abraham; and it appears to be the first place where Abram stopped upon entering into the land. *And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.* (Genesis 12:5–6; ESV)

What we find in Genesis 12:5–6 is very likely a gloss added/substituted in by a later reader/author of this material. Abraham would not have known this place by the name of Shechem, but his son Jacob would have.

If the text of Genesis was transmitted orally for many hundreds of years, it makes perfect sense that, periodically, old place names would be replaced with new place names, so that those hearing this history recited understand what area is being spoken of.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Chuck Smith: *The Bible doesn't give up these time passages except that we note the ages and the events and we know that many years had to transpire. So probably eight or more years transpired between the time that he saw Esau and before he ever started journeying down toward Hebron. He stayed up in the area of Shechem for many, many years.*<sup>313</sup>

F. B. Meyer makes this comment: *Jacob was tempted by the fat pastures of Shechem, without thought or care of the character of its people, and he lived to bitterly rue his choice. How many religious parents have made the same mistake! They first encamp near the world, pitching their tent doors in that direction; then they buy a parcel of land, and finally their children contract alliances that end in shame and disaster.*<sup>314</sup>

May I point out that (1) God sent Jacob back to the land of Canaan, and this is his actual entry point. (2) The reason that God was giving the land to the Hebrew people and taking it away from the Canaanites is, the Canaanites are degenerate and getting worse. We have had hints of this in previous chapters—Isaac and Rebekah's disappointment with Esau's Hittite wives, for instance. (3) Of all the people of the land, the Hivites are the only ones who will make an alliance with the sons of Israel. Hamor, who founded Shechem, is a Hivite.

Now, where Meyer is right is, this is a degenerate people, and the sons of Israel should be considering no familia bonds with them (as the sons of Hamor will suggest in the following chapter). In fact, the next chapter will be a lesson on God maintaining the purity of the Hebrew people.

<sup>312</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 33:18.

<sup>313</sup> Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:1–20.

<sup>314</sup> F. B. Meyer, *Through the Bible by Day (A Devotional Commentary)*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

Although Jacob is unaware of it, his sons would take Israel by force and they would be ordered to destroy most of the people of Canaan.

You will note that there is some sort of discussion about whether Jacob had come to a city named Shalem, outside of Shechem or whether God brought him safely to Shechem (which is in the land of promise). I believe that Jacob is referencing his vow which he made to God, when he was departing from Canaan over 20 years ago. Genesis 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; emphasis mine) The word in this passage is a cognate of shâlêḿ. It is shâlôwm (שׁוֹלֵם) [pronounced *shaw-LOHM*], which means *completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated*. Strong's #7965 BDB #1022. There are a variety of opinions on this:

Genesis 33:18a *Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem,...*

### Genesis 33:18a: Shalem or safety? (Various commentators)

Alford: *It seems very improbable that the word Shalem should be a proper name, as the A. V. after the LXX. and Vulgate has rendered it. No such place is known in the neighbourhood of Sichem (Nablus), nor mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. The meaning is far more probably 'in peace.'*<sup>315</sup>

Benson: *Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem — Or rather, as the Hebrew may be rendered, he came safe, or in peace, to the city of Shechem. After a perilous journey, in which he had met with many difficulties, he came safe at last into Canaan.*<sup>316</sup>

Clarke: *The word שׁוֹלֵם shalem, in the Samaritan שׁוֹלֵם shalom, should be translated here in peace, or in safety. After resting some time at Succoth, which was necessary for the safety of his flocks and the comfort of his family, he got safely to a city of Shechem, in health of body, without any loss of his cattle or servants, his wives and children being also in safety.*

Clarke continues: *Coverdale and Matthews translate this word as above, and with them agree the Chaldee and the Arabic: it is not likely to have been the name of a city, as it is nowhere else to be found.*<sup>317</sup>

Gill offers this theory: that Shalem might be equivalent to Salim, which is near Aenon, where John the baptizer was baptizing (John 3:23).

Gill also proffers the theory that *shallem* might be viewed as an appellative, which could be understood to mean, *safe and sound, or whole.*<sup>318</sup>

L. M. Grant: *[Jacob] left all these buildings behind and journeyed to Shalem, a city of Shechem. Shalem means "peace," and Jacob was not at peace at Succoth, but finds it apparently at Shalem.*<sup>319</sup>

<sup>315</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>316</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18–19.

<sup>317</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>318</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>319</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

## Genesis 33:18a: Shalem or safety? (Various commentators)

Lange: *And Jacob came (to Shalem) in good health.—The word שָׁלֵם is taken by the Sept., Vul., and Luther [and by the translators of the Eng. Bib.—A. G.], as a proper noun, to Shalem, which some have regarded as another name for Shechem, and others as designating an entirely different place, and the more so, since the village of Salim is still found in the neighborhood of Shechem (Robinson: “Researches,” vol. iii. p. 114 ff.). But it is never mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, and שָׁלֵם as an adjective, refers to the שָׁלֵם, Genesis 28:21. Jehovah has fulfilled His promise.*<sup>320</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett offers an interesting interpretation here: *The stress that Jacob came in peace is never made elsewhere. The writer is preparing for what follows and stressing that in it all Jacob was guiltless. He had no intentions of belligerence.*<sup>321</sup>

In the next chapter, there will no doubt a contrast between the sensibilities of Jacob and those of Hamor’s son, Shechem. However, Jacob sons will show themselves to be even more prone to violence and duplicity, given the right set of circumstances.

Matthew Poole: *[O]thers take it for an appellative noun, and render the place thus, he came safe or whole to the city of Shechem; to note either that he was then cured of the lameness which the angel gave him; or rather, to note the good providence of God that had brought him safe in his person, family, and estate through all his dangers, first from Laban, then from Esau, till he came to this place, where it seems he intended to make his abode for a good while, had not the following miscarriages obliged him to remove.*<sup>322</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *And Jacob (leaving Succoth) came to Shalem—the word שָׁלֵם, rendered by some expositors as here (LXX; Vulgate, Syriac, Luther, Calvin, Poole, Wordsworth), is better taken as an adverb signifying in peace or in safety (Onkelos, Saadiah, Rashi, Dathius, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Keil, Kalisch, et alii), meaning that Jacob was now...safe.*<sup>323</sup>

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *The word Shalem in the Samaritan Shalom, should probably be rendered “in peace,” or “in safety;” as it is translated by the Chaldee, Arabic, Coverdale, and Matthewes. John 3:23, John 4:5; Acts 7:16.*<sup>324</sup>

John Wesley: *[Jacob] came safe, or in peace, to the city of Shechem. After a perilous journey, in which he had met with many difficulties, he came safe at last, into Canaan.*<sup>325</sup>

Jacob’s prayer, when leaving the land, was all about returning to it in safety. Therefore, I believe the word refers to a safe return as opposed to the name of an outlying town.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

We are not really given any reason for Jacob’s move to Shechem. In Succoth, Jacob is building what appears to be a permanent place to live—a house for himself and booths for the cattle; but then, in the next verse (after the passage of 10 or so years), he is coming to Shechem, which is on the other side of the Jordan River.

My thinking is this: Jacob was injured by the Angel of God at the end of Genesis 32. I don’t believe that he could have followed Esau all the way to Seir, even if he wanted to. So, he took the first reasonable place and claimed

<sup>320</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange’s Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18–20 (Exegetical and Critical) (slightly edited).

<sup>321</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>322</sup> Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>323</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>324</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>325</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 33:18.

it and built a home there (in Succoth). He has not really crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan (v. 18 specifies that Shechem is in Canaan, whereas the same is not said of Succoth).

I probably speculate a bit too much, but many commentators do it far more: *Bush thinks that Jacob had originally contemplated entering Canaan from the south after rounding the Dead Sea, probably with a view to reach Beersheba, but that, after his interview with Esau, he suddenly altered his route, and entered Canaan directly by crossing the Jordan and driving up his flocks and herds to Shechem, the first halting-place of Abraham (vide Genesis 12:6).*<sup>326</sup>

We are only given the facts of the move; we are not given any reason why (the same is true about Jacob not following his brother Esau down to Seir). I believe that the reasons which I gave are sound and reasonable.

The Biblical Illustrator says<sup>327</sup> that Jacob was not to go to Succoth or Shechem but to Bethel, citing this passage: Gen. 31:11–13 *Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, "Jacob,...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."* God was not hinting to Jacob that he needed to leave Paddan-Aram and go to Bethel specifically. God simply identified Himself to Jacob as the God of Bethel. If God wanted Jacob to leave Paddan-Aram and go to Bethel, He would have said so. Instead, God said, "Return to the land of your kindred [= near relatives]."

That was not the only missed shot from BI here; they also compared Jacob camping out in front of Shechem to Lot pitching his tent before Sodom (did he even do that?). This entire commentary, attributable to F. B. Meyer, is a **travesty**.

Genesis 33:18b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾāsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #776 BDB #75
Kēnaʿan (כְּנַעַן) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>NAH-ghan</i> ]	which possibly means <i>merchant</i> and is transliterated <i>Canaan</i>	masculine proper noun; territory	Strong's #3667 BDB #488
bē (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<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
bōwʾ (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #935 BDB #97

<sup>326</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:18.

<sup>327</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18.

## Genesis 33:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Paddân (פַּדָּן) [pronounced <i>pahd-DAWN</i> ]	<i>to extend, a plateau; garden, field; transliterated Paddan, Padan</i>	proper singular noun/location with the directional hê	Strong's #6307 BDB #804
<p>The directional hê is the <i>âh</i> (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the <i>directive hê</i> or the <i>he locale</i>, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question <i>where?</i> 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 <i>heaven</i> and the most literal rendering in the English would be <i>heavenward</i>. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions <i>to</i> or <i>toward</i>.</p>			
ʾĀrām (אֲרָם) [pronounced <i>uh-RAWM</i> ]	<i>the highland, high region; exalted; and is transliterated Aram; sometimes rendered Syria, Mesopotamia</i>	singular proper noun	Strong's #758 BDB #74

NIV Study Bible: *Paddan Aram means "plain of Aram," which is another name for Aram Naharaim.*<sup>328</sup>

**Translation:** ...which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram.

Shechem, where Jacob goes next (after Succoth) is east of the Jordan, firmly in the land of Canaan.

The group of Canaanites who lived here were Hivites (Genesis 34:2), who, as a people, will be the only ones to submit to the sons of Israel when Joshua takes the land (Joshua 9:7 11:19). We will save a more lengthy description for the next chapter, where the sons of Israel will come into close contact with the sons of Hamor, a Hivite.

The wording is unusual. Instead of saying, *And Jacob then moved from Succoth to Shechem*, it reads **Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. He camped out before [this] city.** (Which is a reasonably literal translation). For some reason, his move to Shechem is associated with Paddan-aram, which is where Jacob has been living and working for Laban. One impression that one might have is, Jacob and his family did not live long in Succoth (despite building a house and animal shelters). I would not interpret it in that way. Once Jacob crosses over the Jordan River, he has entered the land of Canaan. When in Paddan-Aram, God told him to return to Canaan. At this point, Jacob has actually entered into Canaan, as God had told him to do, thus completing his trip from Paddan-Aram.

Genesis 33:18a-b **Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram.**

<sup>328</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 57 (footnote) (slightly edited).

## Genesis 33:18b: Coming to the Land of Canaan from Paddan-Aram (commentators)

Dr. John Gill: *when he came from Padanaram; from Mesopotamia, from Haran there; Shechem was the first place in the land of Canaan he came to, when he came from there, and where he came in the greatest safety, he himself, wives, children, and servants, in good health, without any loss of any of his cattle and substance; and without any ill thing befalling: him all the way there, being delivered from Laban and Esau, and from every danger, and from every enemy.*<sup>329</sup>

Matthew Henry points out: *Though the land of Canaan was his by promise, yet, the time for taking possession not having yet come, he is content to pay for his own, to prevent disputes with the present occupants. Note, Dominion is not founded in grace. Those that have heaven on free-cost must not expect to have earth so.*<sup>330</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *“When he came from Paddan-aram.” This is a general note referring to the fact that this is Jacob’s first contact with the Promised Land after leaving Paddan-aram. It does not necessarily signify immediacy.*<sup>331</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The two prepositional phrases “in the land of Canaan when he came from Paddan Aram” alert the reader that the Lord has fulfilled His promise to Jacob at Bethel just prior to entering into exile with Laban in Paddan Aram to bring him back home to Canaan (See Genesis 28:15).*<sup>332</sup>

God’s plan called for Jacob to leave Paddan-Aram and return to Canaan. God told Jacob that directly. The mention of Paddan-Aram and Canaan in the same breath simply indicates that Jacob fulfilled God’s command.

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It is interesting that he says that this is on his coming from Paddan-aram, as he has lived semi-permanently in Succoth. Likely, the sense of it is this: he has not really returned from Paddan-aram until he enters into the land of Canaan by crossing over the Jordan.

Interestingly enough, Jacob will not go to his father until the middle of Genesis 35, when his father is apparently dying (or, already dead). I think my sense of it—that Jacob did not complete his trip until his foot was on Canaan land—best explains this situation.

I would also suggest that a reference to Shechem as being in Canaan means that Succoth is not.

*Lange: Keil infers from these words that Succoth could not have been in the land of Canaan, i. e., on the west of the Jordan. But the words here, indeed, refer to the immediately following Hebraic acquisition of a piece of ground, just as in the purchase of the cave at Hebron by Abraham it is added, “in the land of Canaan”.*<sup>333</sup>

<sup>329</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18 (slightly edited).

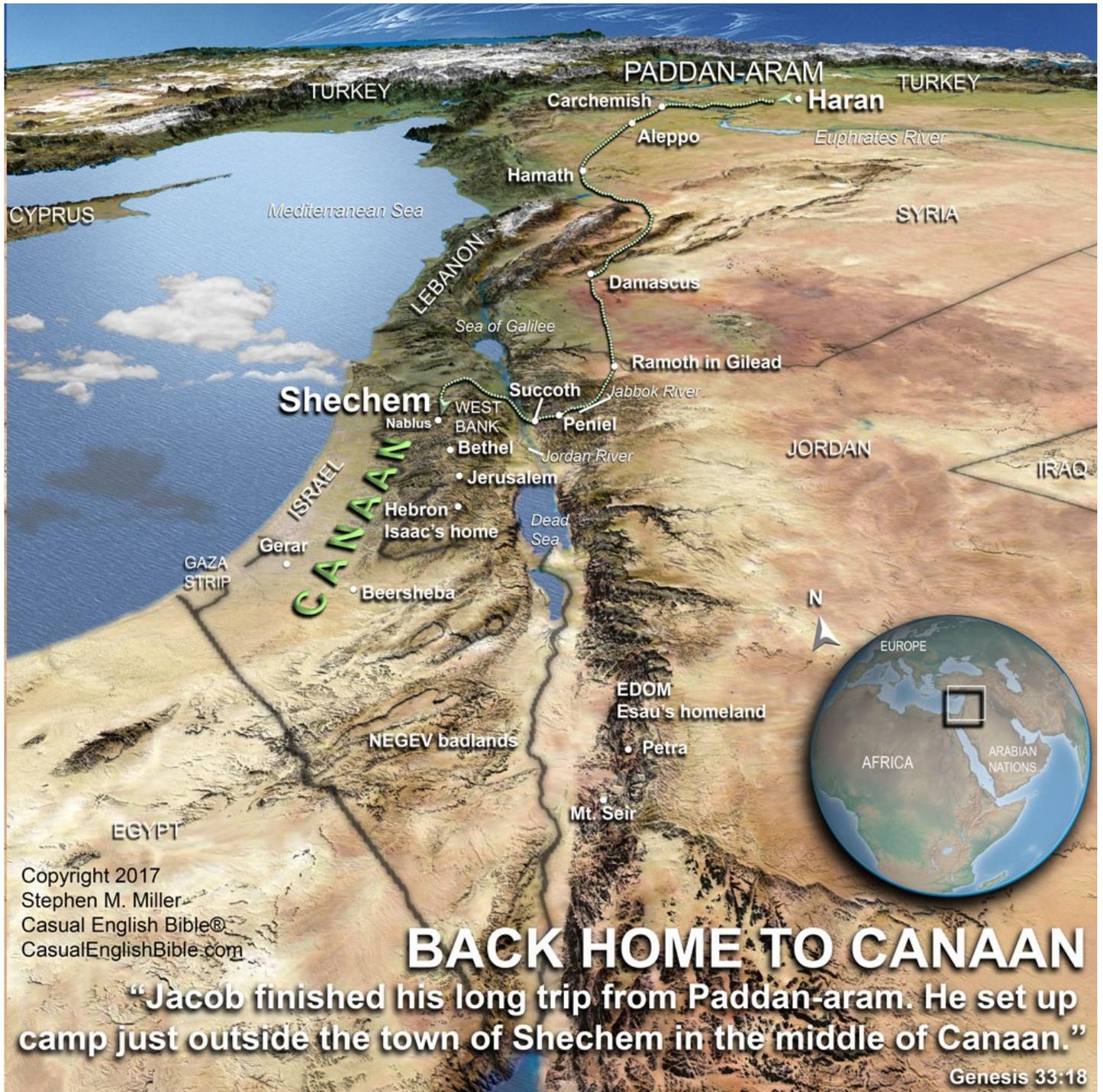
<sup>330</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:16–20.

<sup>331</sup> Dr. Peter Pett, *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>332</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

<sup>333</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange’s Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18–20 (Exegetical and Critical).

**Back Home to Canaan** (a map from the Casual English Bible); from [Stephen Miller's CEB site](#); accessed April 14, 2019. This map, not set exactly to normal north-south direction, gives us an idea of the route taken by Jacob.



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**Jacob Moves to Shechem** (a map from the Common English Bible); from [Stephen Miller's CEB site](#); accessed April 14, 2019. This map has south at the top, north at the bottom. It gives us a possible route for Jacob.



**Does v. 18 come from a different document than v. 17?** One more issue to deal with. The Cambridge Bible suggests<sup>334</sup> that there is such a radical jump from v. 17 to 18 that there must have been different original sources. That is quite an assumption that there are a variety of sources out there and somehow they got all thrown together (the is the JEPD theory), and, if memory serves, that is one of the fundamental views of the Cambridge Bible.

However, just as likely, these are the memories of one man (Jacob), whose life is treated in a fairly episodic manner in the Bible. If you were to look back on your life, it is more likely that you would put together a document which is episodic rather than a very long cohesive narrative. In fact, much of what we read about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is episodic. When we come to Joseph, we will follow a fairly carefully constructed narrative which lasts several years. Joseph's life, even though there are periods of time which are skipped over, still seems like a fairly seamless narrative (in contrast to the narratives of the lives of his ancestors). Interestingly enough, I have strong reason to believe that the Joseph narrative involves the contributions of two different men, Joseph and Judah. However, it fits together so well that, it is not clear that, suddenly, we switch from Joseph's point of view to Judah's.

<sup>334</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:18.

Here, simply because we jump from one place (where Jacob should not have necessarily stopped in the first place) to another, where Jacob is finally in the land of Canaan, simply indicates a gap in Jacob's narrative. The mention of Paddan-Aram simply indicates that God told Jacob to move from Paddan-Aram to the land of Canaan, and, his move to Shechem places him in the land of Canaan. God's exact words were: "**Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.**" (Genesis 31:13b; ESV) Jacob was in Paddan-Aram (where God spoke to him) and now he is finally in the land of Canaan (*the land of your kindred*), the place where God told Jacob to go. This simply pulls together Jacob's trip from where God spoke to him to where God told him to go. To me, that is a much simpler and less-convoluted explanation than is found in the Cambridge Bible.

Now, is it possible that we now have a new narrator? Could Judah be the narrator at this point? I would have to look at the subsequent chapters more carefully, but, clearly there are things going on in Genesis 34 which would have been better known to Jacob's sons than to Jacob.

To explain: I believe that the book of Genesis was an oral history which continued to be repeated throughout the ages. Each patriarch would repeat his memorized portion of Genesis (that which occurred before his time) and then he would add in his own personal history. At some point, this *public reading* of Genesis would be handed off to the next logical person, who would pick up the narrative from where the patriarch left off.

Now, Jacob will go from this fairly uninspiring life to a place of great respect when he is in Egypt. His death will be treated very much like the death of a Pharaoh. How did this happen? Let me suggest that Jacob, Judah and Joseph (and possibly others) would, at various times, speak the Word of God (that is, the book of Genesis). This would have been their oral tradition. There was great respect by Pharaoh for Joseph and Jacob; so there may have been many Egyptians present at such an oral presentation. People react in a variety of ways, when they hear the Word of God. Some are moved and very appreciative; others reject it outright. There is every reason to believe that Egypt very much embraced their new immigrants, the Hebrew people, and embraced their God (spoken of through the Genesis narration). A positive response from the Egyptians would very much explain their great, nationwide respect for Jacob.

This, of course, does not mean that all subsequent generations of Egyptians would feel the same way. One or two generations later, the Egyptians would enslave the Hebrew people.

I should emphasize that this continued oral tradition is a theory, and I don't know that I could fully support it with any reference in Genesis. However, the tradition of reading the Scriptures aloud is long-standing with the Hebrew people, and that does have clear historical precedent. Secondly, the book of Genesis is organized into chiasmi, which is an excellent way of memorizing a long narrative passage. And there is no reason to think that men of that era were not capable of memorizing a single book. In fact, it is possible that the book of Job was also passed along in this same fashion.

However, so there is no confusion on this point, the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are clearly books which were written down by Moses or narrated by Moses to Joshua (or another **amanuensis**).

### Genesis 33:18c

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 33:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
chânah (חָנָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-NAW</i> ]	<i>to bivouac, to camp, to encamp in [or, against], to set up camp; to lay siege to; to incline, to decline, to bend down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2583 BDB #333
'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
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Pânîym preceded by the generally untranslated 'êth means <i>before, in presence of</i> .			
'îyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i> ]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

**Translation:** He camped out before [this] city.

Jacob is doing some moving about. He appeared that he might stay permanently in Succoth (because he built a house there), but he did not. My thinking is, he did not move much further from where he was after being injured wrestling with the Angel of God.

Nothing is said about Jacob going to see his father Isaac.

Why did he make this move? No reason is given. What was the time frame? None is given, although the mention of Paddan-aram (Laban's land) makes it sound as if he was not destined to live for very long in Succoth, I think that there are clues which suggest his time in Succoth was somewhere between 5 and 10 years (his sons and daughter are children when they leave Paddan-Aram, but they are clearly adults in Genesis 34 in Shechem).

My thinking is, Jacob knew God wanted him to move to Canaan—God told him that specifically. So, even though he stopped at Succoth and apparently expected to live out his life there, he healed to the point where he was able to move about easier (after his injury from the Angel of God); so he resumed his trip.

Did God speak to Jacob another time while in Succoth? I doubt that, as God is not mentioned. Did Jacob realize that he was not far enough into the land of Canaan? Well, in Succoth, he was outside the land of Canaan proper.

Sometimes, God gives us the motivations for the actions of this or that person; and many times, the Bible does not speak to their motivations, which would therefore, be unimportant to the overall narrative. So, even though this chapter leaves us with a few unanswered questions, we can speculate as to some of the motivations; and we may reasonably assume that knowing the answers would not be helpful to us spiritually speaking.

One thing which will become obvious is, the style of Joseph, in subsequent chapters, where motivations and actions are often easily determined; as opposed to chapters like this, presumably written (spoken) by Jacob.

We will come across a whole new set of questions regarding Jacob and Esau in Genesis 36:6–8 **Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. (Esau is Edom.) (ESV)**

On the other hand, we will be given the reasons why Jacob and company move out of Shechem, and that is clearly one of the oddest chapters in Scripture. Perhaps the sudden move out of Succoth and perhaps the reason for not going down to Seir are not really edifying to us; and, for that reason, are left out of the narrative. Or, perhaps they were presented in that way to allow for speculation.

Lange proposes a question and answers it: *And it appears, indeed, that, either from Succoth or Shechem, he made a visit to his father Isaac at Hebron, and brought from thence his mother's nurse, Deborah, since Rebekah was dead, and since she, as the confidential friend of his mother, could relate to him the history of her life and sufferings, and since, moreover, she stood in closer relation to him than any one else. Nor could Jacob, as Keil justly remarks, now an independent patriarch, any longer subordinate his household to that of Isaac.*<sup>335</sup>

At some point, Deborah, his nursemaid, will become a part of Jacob's company. When did this happen? I have assumed that she traveled with him to Haran, having been the only person who is available and has actually made this trip before. There is no reason to mention her until she becomes a material part of the story, which happens when she dies.

Both my take and Lange's take on Deborah are based upon supposition and little else.

Genesis 33:18 *Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. He camped out before [this] city.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:19a			
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
qânâh (קָנָה) [pronounced kaw-NAWH]	<i>to get, acquire, obtain; [of God] to found, to originate, to create; to possess; to redeem [His people]; [of Eve] to acquire; to acquire [knowledge, wisdom]; to buy [purchase, redeem]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7069 BDB #888
'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
chel <sup>e</sup> qâh (חֵלְקָה) [pronounced khel <sup>e</sup> -KAW]	<i>smooth and slippery place, smooth part, smoothness, flattery; allotment, a portion, a part [of land]; field</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #2513 BDB #324 & #325
BDB treats this as a homonym, where the translations <i>allotment, a portion, a part [of land]; field</i> are Strong's #2513 BDB #324.			
William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: " <i>Piece</i> " is the noun <i>chelqah</i> (חֵלְקָה) ( <i>khel-kaw</i> ), which refers to a well defined field or tract of land. <sup>336</sup>			

<sup>335</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:17 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>336</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

Genesis 33:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâţâh (נָטָה) [pronounced naw-TAWH]	<i>to stretch out, to spread out, to reach out; to pitch [a tent]; to bow, to extend, to incline, to turn</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5186 BDB #639
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
The two word 'âsher + shâm can be rendered <i>where, in what place, to what place</i> when found together. Sometimes, the addition of the verb <i>to be</i> might be appropriate to smooth out the phrasing.			
'ohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-heh]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #168 BDB #13

**Translation:** He purchased a parcel of the field (where he had pitched his tent)...

Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob purchased a parcel of land. The size is not revealed to us. It would seem that this must be a considerable amount of acreage, given Jacob's possessions and people (which continued to grow).

Some readers may realize how Joshua will lead the sons of Israel into Canaan to take it by force. God has not told Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob about that; nor has God suggested that they take the land by force (or take whatever they want by force). Jacob here is accepting God's directive to move to the land of Canaan, and he is making his move more permanent with the purchase of this land.

*Whedon writes: Abraham's only purchase of land was a place to bury his dead; Jacob now probably found the land more thickly settled, and found it necessary to buy land in order to dwell in peace. On this same land he dug the famous well at which the Saviour taught the Samaritan woman. John 4:5–6; John 4:12.<sup>337</sup>*

On the other hand, it is interesting that Jacob is said to live in a house in Succoth, but he is pitching a tent on the land which he just purchased near Shechem. Does this suggest that, at this point, he is more amenable to traveling in the land? This is easily attributable to Jacob being unable to easily walk at the end of Genesis 32 (so he purchases a home to live in and stay in); but when he finds he is able to move more easily (5–10 years later), he may be keeping his options open. The *why* behind this is conjecture on my part.

*Keil (quoted by Lange): This purchase shows that Jacob, in his faith in the divine promise, viewed Canaan as his own home, and the home of his seed. Tradition fixes this parcel of land, which, at the conquest of Canaan, fell as an heritage to the sons of Joseph, and in which Joseph's bones were*

<sup>337</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 33:19.

buried (Joshua 24:32), as the plain lying at the southeast opening of the valley of Shechem, where, even now, Jacob's well (John 4:6) is shown.<sup>338</sup>

Genesis 33:19a-c He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent.

I do not recall any comments on Jacob pitching a tent before Shechem. My explanation would be this. When they stopped in Succoth, Jacob believed himself to be physically ruined for life (having had his leg hurt when wrestling to the Angel of the Lord). He apparently managed to walk before his brother Esau, but, once Esau was gone, Jacob looked to put down permanent stakes at the first possible opportunity.

At this point, he realizes that he is able to locomote with his leg, and so he is obedient to God, and moves into the land of Canaan. He stops at Shechem, perhaps again because movement is difficult for him. However, he goes with a tent rather than with a house, intending later to move on.

Now, the mention of his leg injury and how it impacts everything is pure speculation on my part, as this injury is not specifically mentioned again after Genesis 32. To remind you, this is all we know *after* the wrestling match: Genesis 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. So, Jacob could walk, but it involved limping. Was there a point at which pain caused Jacob to stop and rest? That is certainly a reasonable possibility.

It is quite fascinating how so many commentators remember the wrestling match in Genesis 32 and later suggest that Jacob, after that match, reaches great spiritual heights; but those same commentators do not mention his injury after that.

L. M. Grant is one of the few commentators to speak of Jacob using a tent here: [*When arriving in Shechem, Jacob*] does not build a house, but pitches his tent. At least he seems to realize that, in being away from Bethel, he should maintain pilgrim character.<sup>339</sup>

Genesis 33:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more 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> .			
bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Chămôwr (חֹמֶר) [pronounced <i>khuh-MOHR</i> ]	<i>ass, male donkey, he-ass, burrow; transliterated Hamor</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2544 BDB #331

<sup>338</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18–20 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>339</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

## Genesis 33:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'âb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; <i>founder</i> , <i>civil leader</i> , <i>military leader</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1 BDB #3
Shekem (שֶׁכֶם) [pronounced SHEH-kehr]	<i>back, shoulder</i> ; transliterated <i>Shechem</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7928 BDB #1014

**Translation:** ...from the sons of Hamor ([Hamor] is the father of Shechem)...

Hamor apparently first settled this land and he names it after his first son. However, all of his family live in this area and rule over it. So, they are called the *sons of Hamor*.

It is easy to confuse what is being said here, so I inserted [*Hamor*] to remove the confusion.

Genesis 33:19 He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent. Hamor is the father of Shechem.

### Genesis 33:19b: Hamor and his people (various commentators)

Dr. Bob Utey: "*Hamor*" This name means "ass" (BDB 331 II). In the ancient world donkeys were considered sacred animals. We know this, not only from the Mari Tablets, but also from the fact that (1) the wealthy rode donkeys (cf. Judges 5:10) and (2) Israel's kings rode on a special donkey for their royal mount (i.e., 1Kings 1:33).<sup>340</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: [*The sons of Hamor*] apparently means the people of the tribe of Hamor; and Hamor was the founder, or chieftain, of the city of Shechem.<sup>341</sup>

William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: The name "*Hamor*" literally means, "donkey," and he was the father of Shechem who raped Dinah according to Genesis 34 and Genesis 34:2 records that "*Hamor*" was a Hivite, which is significant.

Wenstrom continues: At times the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called "*Canaanites*" but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called "*Canaanite*" (Nm. 13:29). Therefore, "*Hamor*" was a *Canaanite* and the *Canaanites* were under a curse according to the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 and thus Jacob's family could not intermarry with the *Canaanites*.<sup>342</sup>

Gen. 9:25–27 [Noah] said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant." (ESV; capitalized)

Wenstrom continues: "*Canaan*" was the "youngest" son of Ham according to Genesis 10:6 and his descendants of *Canaan* are listed in Genesis 10:15-20 and 1 Chronicles 1:13-16.

<sup>340</sup> Dr. Bob Utey, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:19.

<sup>341</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:19.

<sup>342</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

### Genesis 33:19b: Hamor and his people (various commentators)

Wenstrom continues: *Genesis 9:25 is a revelation of the decree of God, which is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future of the descendants of Canaan who were the descendants of Noah's youngest son Ham. This decree is simply a declaration of God's sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future concerning Canaan's descendants.*

Wenstrom continues: *Noah does "not" pronounce a curse upon Ham but rather his youngest son Canaan since it would be Canaan's descendants, the Canaanites who according to the Bible were idolatrous and involved in gross immorality and the occult.*

Wenstrom continues: *Noah was "not" punishing Ham's youngest son Canaan for what Ham did but rather simply issuing a prophecy concerning the nation of Canaanites that would come from Ham through Canaan.*

Wenstrom continues: *The Canaanites would not suffer the curse and the bondage because of the sins of Ham but rather because of their own sins. God was simply looking down the corridors of time and in His omniscience saw what would take place in the future in regards to the descendants of Canaan and through Noah, the Holy Spirit revealed this to Noah's sons.*

Wenstrom continues: *The phrase "servant of servants he shall be to his brothers" refers to universal or worldwide servitude since Noah predicted that Canaan would be both a "servant" to Shem and Japheth meaning that the Canaanites would be servants to not only one nation or one other group of nations but to "all" other nations. Remember, all the nations existing today descended from Noah's three sons, therefore, when Noah says that Canaan would serve his brothers, he means that their servitude would be universal.*

Wenstrom continues: *Genesis 9:25-27 was written on behalf of Israel and the history of the Canaanites would be of great interest to Israel since the Lord had promised Israel the land of the Canaanites. The Lord used the nation of Israel under Joshua to pour out His judgment upon the Canaanites for their immoral degeneracy (Gen. 15:16; 19:5; Lev. 18; 20; Deut. 12:31). The Canaanites were defeated on the battlefield, destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19).*

Wenstrom concludes: *Now, we must remember that this curse upon Canaan was conditional meaning that any Canaanite who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, could escape it. An example is Rahab the harlot who was a Canaanite and placed her faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ and after a period of purification, was brought into Israel's society. Therefore, Jacob and his descendants, the Israelites can have nothing to do with the Canaanites and this is witnessed by the fact that Abraham prohibited Eliezer his servant from getting Isaac his son a Canaanite woman and Isaac issued the same prohibition to Jacob.<sup>343</sup>*

As is true of all peoples, Christ Jesus has paid for the sins of every man, so Israelites, Arabs, those descended from anyone—any person can believe in Jesus Christ and be eternally saved.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

In Acts 7:16, Saint Stephen says that Abraham purchased this land from the sons of Hamor. We will explain that later near the end of this verse.

In Genesis 34, Jacob is living in Shechem and his family is interacting with both Hamor and with Shechem. Therefore, these final verses logically belong with that next chapter.

<sup>343</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

## Genesis 33:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
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
mê'âh (מאה) [pronounced may-AW]	<i>one hundred, a hundred, hundred</i>	feminine singular numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
q <sup>e</sup> sîyṭâh (קשיטא) [pronounced qess-ee-TAW]	<i>an ingot; a stamped coin; a silver piece; something weighed out; money of a specific weight</i>	feminine singular noun:	Strong's #7192 BDB #903

The NET Bible: *The Hebrew word קשיטא (qÿsîtah) is generally understood to refer to a unit of money, but the value is unknown. (However, cf. REB, which renders the term as "sheep").*<sup>344</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *kesitahs, the etymology of which is uncertain (Kalisch), though connected by some philologists (Gesenius, Furst) with kasat, to weigh; translated lambs (Onkelos, LXX; Vulgate), but believed to have been a certain weight now unknown, or a piece of money of a definite value, perhaps the price of a lamb (Murphy), which, like the shekel, was used for purposes of commercial exchange by the patriarchs (Gesenius)—probably a coin stamped with the figure of a lamb (Bochart, Munter); but coined money does not appear to have been of so great antiquity (Rosenmüller, Wordsworth, Alford).*<sup>345</sup>

**Translation:** ...for a hundred silver coins.

We do not know the value of these coins, but many are willing to speculate. Gesenius compares this passage with Genesis 23:16 and says that each coin is worth 4 shekels. However, these are different purchases. Abraham is purchasing in Genesis 23:16 land which is south of Jerusalem from Ephron; and here, Jacob is buying land north of Jerusalem from the sons of Hamor. Therefore, we cannot assume that the purchase prices here are identical.

Genesis 33:19 He purchased a parcel of the field (where he had pitched his tent) from the sons of Hamor ([Hamor] is the father of Shechem) for a hundred silver coins. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:19a-c He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins.

### Genesis 33:19c: The value of 100 silver coins (a discussion)

Many have suggested that the word used here, q<sup>e</sup>sîyṭâh (קשיטא) [pronounced qess-ee-TAW], refers to a *lamb*; and that these are coins stamped with a lamb. Perhaps the significance is, when they were first produced, this was a common price to pay for a lamb.

The Cambridge Bible: *Apparently a qesitah was a piece of metal used for money; elsewhere it is mentioned only in Joshua 24:32; Job 42:11. Whether it denotes a small coin, or an ingot, cannot be determined.*<sup>346</sup>

Clarke goes into the most minute detail: *As kesitah signifies a lamb, it may imply that Jacob gave the Hamorites one hundred lambs for the field; but if it be the same transaction that St. Stephen refers to in Acts 7:16, it was money, τιμησ ἀργυριον, a sum or price of silver, which was given on the occasion.*

<sup>344</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

<sup>345</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:19.

<sup>346</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 33:19.

### Genesis 33:19c: The value of 100 silver coins (a discussion)

Clarke continues: *It has been conjectured that the money had the figure of a lamb stamped on it, because it was on an average the value of a lamb; and hence it might be called a kesitah or lamb from the impression it bore. It is certain that in many countries the coin has had its name from the image it bore; so among our ancestors a coin was called an angel because it bore the image of an angel; hence also a Jacobus, a Carolus, a Lewis, (Louis d' Or), a Joe, because certain coins in England, Spain, France, and Portugal, bore on one side the image of the kings of those countries, James, Charles, Lewis, Joseph, or Johannes. The Athenians had a coin called βους, an ox, because it was stamped with the figure of an ox. Hence the saying in Aeschylus:..."I must be silent concerning other matters, a great ox has come upon my tongue;" to signify a person who had received a bribe for secrecy, i.e., a sum of money, on each piece of which an ox was stamped, and hence called βους, an ox.*

Clarke continues: *The word opes, riches, is a corruption of the word oves, sheep, because these animals in ancient times constituted the principal riches of their owners; but when other cattle were added, the word pecunia, (from pecus, cattle), which we translate money, and from which we still have our English term pecuniary, appears to have been substituted for oves, because pecus, pecoris, and pecus, pecudis, were used to signify all kinds of cattle large and small.*

Clarke concludes: *Among our British and Saxon ancestors we find coins stamped with the figure of an ox, horse, hog, goat, etc., and this custom arose in all probability, both among them and other nations, from this circumstance, that in primitive times the coin was the ordinary value of the animal whose image it bore. It is, all circumstances weighed, most likely that a piece of money is here intended, and possibly marked with the image of a lamb; but as the original word הַטִּישָׁה kesitah occurs only here, and in Joshua 24:32, and Job 42:11, this is not sufficiently evident, the word itself being of very doubtful signification.<sup>347</sup>*

Keil and Delitzsch: *הַטִּישָׁה is not a piece of silver of the value of a lamb (according to the ancient versions), but a quantity of silver weighed out, of considerable, though not exactly determinable value.<sup>348</sup>*

Lange: *Onk., Sept., Vul., and the older commentators, regard the Quesita as a piece of silver of the value of a lamb, or stamped with a lamb, and which some have held as a prophecy pointing to the Lamb of God. Meyer (Heb. Dict.) estimates the Quesita as equal to a drachm, or an Egyptian double-drachm. Delitzsch says it was a piece of metal of an indeterminable value, but of greater value than a shekel (see Job 42:11).<sup>349</sup>*

Dr. Peter Pett: *[This] payment was made in quantities of silver. The uncommon Hebrew word probably indicates a weight measure.<sup>350</sup>*

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *This coin is called kesitah (lamb). Gesenius suggests that this was probably of the value of a lamb. Ancient coins were often stamped with the image of an animal, which they represented.<sup>351</sup>*

Dr. Bob Utley: *"for one hundred pieces of money" This is a rare Hebrew term, הַטִּישָׁה, qesitah (BDB 903). It is an unknown weight of metal (cf. Joshua 24:32; Job 42:11), possibly (1) the price of a lamb (LXX) or (2) a weight (mina) of metal in the shape (or imprint) of a lamb.<sup>352</sup>*

<sup>347</sup> Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:19.

<sup>348</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>349</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18–20 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>350</sup> Dr. Peter Pett, *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>351</sup> *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:19.

<sup>352</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:19.

Whedon cites Gesenius, whose forte was Hebrew,<sup>353</sup> in contradiction to most of these opinions: *The Sept. and Vulg. render a hundred lambs, a sense, says Gesenius, "which has no support either from etymology or in the kindred dialects, nor is it in accordance with patriarchal usages." The word means some sort of money, in precious metal, weighed out, as Abraham weighed out the silver for Machpelah, (xxiii, 16,) but the exact value of a hundred kesitah cannot now be ascertained.*<sup>354</sup>

Given the Hebrew people and their long-standing profession of shepherding, it does not seem out of character for them to have a specific weight of silver which is equivalent to the value of a sheep (at say, the age or 2 or 3). The problem would be, had they developed any way to coin this silver or are we dealing strictly with weights here? Had they interacted with someone in the land (or even back in Paddan-Aram) who was skilled in this realm? We read about what appears to be silver coinage in Genesis 20:16, silver by weight in Genesis 23:15–16; and silver and gold jewelry in Genesis 24:53. So, whether or not we know exactly who fashioned these coins and jewelry in the first place, we have abundant Biblical mention of them.

Joseph himself, when he is prime minister of Egypt, will have a cup made of silver. Certainly, if cups can be made from silver, then they had the technology to make coins and jewelry from silver as well. All of this information is given to us on both sides of this passage.

### Chapter Outline

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The patriarchs owned very little land in Canaan. Abraham purchased a plot of land to be buried on; and here, Jacob is buying some land apparently for his extended family to live on.

Although this was not spoken of before, Jacob apparently had some money which he had been saving. Although we are only told a little about his livestock, which came with him from Paddan-aram, at some point, Jacob acquired a fair amount of silver as well (whether this came with him from Paddan-aram or whether he sold some of his animals in Succoth, we do not know).

Insofar as I can recall, this may be only the second purchase of land by the patriarchs.

Genesis 33:19a-c [He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins.](#)

### Genesis 33:19c: The Purchase of Land by Jacob (various commentators)

Stephen Armstrong: *Like Abraham and Isaac, Jacob remains a wanderer, proof that he knew and accepted God's promise of a future inheritance in the land. In fact, Jacob buys a small plot of land to accommodate his family. The fact that Jacob buys land in the place that God has already told Jacob He would give him proves that Jacob understood that grant would come in a later time. Specifically, it shows that Jacob looked forward to an eternal inheritance in the land.*<sup>355</sup>

The Cambridge Bible: *The purchase of this plot of ground was historically important. It was the burial-place of the bones of Joseph (cf. Joshua 24:32; Acts 7:16). The possession of such small pieces of territory (cf. the purchase of Machpelah ch. 23) constituted no claim for the possession of the country: the patriarchs were "strangers and sojourners," Genesis 23:4.*<sup>356</sup>

<sup>353</sup> I consult the Gesenius Hebrew lexicon as often as I do BDB.

<sup>354</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 33:19.

<sup>355</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>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 33:19.

### Genesis 33:19c: The Purchase of Land by Jacob (various commentators)

Gill: *Jewish writers generally interpret [this particular use of money in such a way that]...twenty of them went to a shekel; so that a hundred of these must make a very small and contemptible sum to purchase a piece of ground with.*<sup>357</sup>

T. H. Leale from the Biblical Illustrator: *[Jacob] bought a parcel of ground as a pledge of his faith in the future possession of that country by his posterity (Genesis 33:19). This purchase of a portion of land, concerning which God had promised Abraham that it should be his, showed Jacob's deep conviction that the promise was renewed to him and to his seed.*<sup>358</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch write: *This purchase showed that Jacob, in reliance upon the promise of God, regarded Canaan as his own home and the home of his seed.*

Keil and Delitzsch continue: *This piece of field, which fell to the lot of the sons of Joseph, and where Joseph's bones were buried (Joshua 24:32), was, according to tradition, the plain which stretches out at the south-eastern opening of the valley of Shechem, where Jacob's well is still pointed out (John 4:6), also Joseph's grave, a Mahometan wely (grave) two or three hundred paces to the north (Rob. Pal. iii. 95ff.).*<sup>359</sup>

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob sets up camp by the city. He is so moved by the fact that he is now back in the land of God's covenant that he determines to set up a permanent shrine there. Thus he buys a piece of land so that he can build a permanent memorial. The fact that Hamor is willing to sell him land is a sign of the good relations between the two, although the purpose for which it was bought would influence the situation.*<sup>360</sup>

Skinner speaks of this purchase of this land as the burial place for Joseph (Joshua 24:32) many centuries later: *It is significant that Israel's claim to the grave of Joseph is based on purchase, just as its right to that of Abraham, ch. 23.*<sup>361</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *The act of buying a field implied residency or at least shows legal residency.*<sup>362</sup>

I believe that Jacob understands that God has given him and his descendants this land, and that God wants him here in the land. We don't know how much Jacob understands beyond that. Like many of Jacob's actions, it is hard to determine if he is operating by instinct or responding to the doctrine in his soul. We just do not know how much doctrine is there.

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Genesis 33:19a-c He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins.

### Genesis 33:19: Did Jacob buy this land or Abraham? (Bible Query)

Q: In Gen. 33:18–19 and Joshua 24:32, did Jacob purchase the land at Shechem, or did Abraham purchase it as Acts 7:15–16 and Gen. 23:16–20 say?

A: Abraham purchased land in Mamre near Hebron for Sarah in Genesis 23:16–20, but that is not in the same place. As for the land purchased in Shechem, there are two possible answers.

Jacob and Abraham bought it: Both Joshua 24:32 and Genesis 33:18-19 say Jacob, Abraham's grandson, was

<sup>357</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:19.

<sup>358</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 33:19–20.

<sup>359</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>360</sup> Dr. Peter Pett, *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>361</sup> *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>362</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:19.

## Genesis 33:19: Did Jacob buy this land or Abraham? (Bible Query)

the person who purchased the land near Shechem. Regardless of whether Abraham came to witness the purchase of the land with the money he passed on to Isaac or not, one could say that the clan of Abraham purchased the land. Even today, a teenager, with his father's consent, can buy a car in his father's name. Stephen might be mistaken: Since Jacob purchased the land his sons were buried on, yet Jacob himself was buried at Mamre with Abraham, Stephen might have been accidentally combined these two separate events. Even if Stephen were mistaken, the Bible would still be inerrant. The Bible simply recorded, inerrantly, what Stephen said, mistake and all.

*Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:18. See Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions p.142-145, 1001 Bible Questions Answered p.309, Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties 379-381, and the discussion on Genesis 50:13 for more info.

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I found the explanation in Bible Query somewhat difficult to follow. I think this will be more clarifying.

the ESV; capitalized will be used below:

### Did Jacob or Abraham buy this land?

1. First thing that we need to do is compare the passages:
2. Abraham appears to have bought the land:
  - 1) Abraham purchases the field of Ephron where there is a cave; and Abraham's intention is to bury his wife there. Genesis 23 is devoted to Abraham buying this land from Ephron the Hittite in front of numerous Hittite witnesses. Abraham is also buried there (Genesis 25:10); and Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob (Genesis 49:29-31).
  - 2) Acts 7:14-16 [Stephen is speaking] **"And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem."**
3. Jacob appears to have bought the land:
  - 1) Genesis 33:19 **And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, he bought for a hundred pieces of money the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent.**
  - 2) Joshua 24:32 **As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.**
4. There is the additional problem of who the land was purchased from. Stephen in Acts suggests that Abraham bought his land from Shechem, but in Genesis 23, Abraham buys this land from Ephron the Hittite.
5. There are at least three different explanations here:
  - 1) Stephen intentionally mixes the narratives together, without giving the complete details (which were unimportant). The idea was, the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Joseph; along with the wives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all buried in Canaan as an act of faith in what God had promised them. Most, but not all of them, are buried in the land purchased by Abraham. Stephen was not after exact historical precision, as that was not the point he was making.
  - 2) Stephen got the narratives wrong, unintentionally mixing them up. This is not the only problem that we run into with Stephen's sermon.
  - 3) Or, we did not get Stephen's complete and total quote, which would have been something like this: Acts 7:14-16 [Stephen is speaking] **"And Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his kindred, seventy-five persons in all. And Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died, he and our fathers, and they were carried back [either] to Shechem [or to the field of Ephron] and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought [from Ephron; or in the land that Jacob bought] for a sum of silver**

## Did Jacob or Abraham buy this land?

- from the sons of Hamor** [that is, Hamor and his sons] **in Shechem.**"
- 4) A fourth explanation is, Stephen knew of the differing circumstances. When he said *Abraham*, he was referring to both Jacob and Abraham in context; and when he said *Shechem, sons of Hamor*, that this was simply shorthand for anyone in the land before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
  - 5) A final possibility is, Abraham also purchased some land from Hamor which is adjacent to the land that Jacob bought (or Abraham bought some land from Hamor which required Jacob to complete the payment in order to keep it). Although these are possible scenarios, they are also convoluted. Furthermore, Hamor and Shechem seem to be more or less contemporaries of Jacob and his sons; so how would Abraham have bought this land from Hamor (I guess he would have been very young); and why would Abraham have bought this land?

When dealing with apparent contradictions, I find that it is better to list out the Scriptures, define the problem as simply as possible, and then explain it.

The first four explanations are very similar to one another, and they reasonably explain Stephen's statement.

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At some point, Jacob gave or willed this land to Joseph (or to Joseph's line), and Joseph's bones were buried there. John 4:5 **So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph.** Joshua 24:32 **As for the bones of Joseph, which the people of Israel brought up from Egypt, they buried them at Shechem, in the piece of land that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money. It became an inheritance of the descendants of Joseph.** (ESV; capitalized)

Genesis 33:18–19 **Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram. He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent.**

What went on with the various groups of Canaanites was problematic, and it would be so for many generations. You may recall the Lot got mixed up in the city of Sodom, and he had to be removed when God came in and destroyed that city (along with several others).

Jacob, without benefit of God's specific guidance at this point, finally crossed the River Jordan and purchased land in Canaan. No doubt, he believed this to be his best move. I doubt that he realized that his family would come under the watchful eye of Shechem, son of Hamor.

The sons of Hamor sell Jacob a plot of land—we do not know if, at the selling of this land, if they had ulterior motives or not. Wenstrom reasons<sup>363</sup> that, since the Hittites seemed reluctant to sell land to Abraham that all Canaanites would be reluctant to sell their land. That is faulty reasoning, for several reasons: that there was reluctance on the part of the Hittites is a matter of interpretation; one group not wanting to sell their land does not mean that another group does not want to either; and selling one's land is only one way to lose it (land can be taken by force).

Do the sons of Hamor have ulterior motives? It is possible. It is also possible that one of them has ulterior motives and he urges his brothers to sell. My point being, we do not know what is going on in the minds of the sons of Hamor.

Similarly, Wenstrom suggests that Jacob is placing his family into a dangerous situation by purchasing land here. Again, there is not enough evidence to support that. Jacob's family will have some problems, but could this have been foreknown? Is this Jacob's fault? There is simply not enough evidence to take this point of view.

<sup>363</sup> From [https://www.gracenotes.info/bible\\_studies/genesis.pdf](https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf) (Genesis 33); accessed April 11, 2019.

Finally, Jacob does what he should have done a long time ago:

Genesis 33:20a			
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
nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced <i>naw-TSAH<sup>b</sup>V</i> ]	<i>to station oneself, to take one's stand, to stand up, to set something upright, to erect; to fix, to establish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5324 BDB #662
Whedon: <i>Erected</i> — <i>Rather, established. Having now obtained land of his own, he establishes his household altar, perhaps on the very spot already consecrated by the ancient altar of Abraham. Genesis 12:7.</i> <sup>364</sup>			
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
miz <sup>e</sup> bêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced <i>miz-BAY-ahkh</i> ]	<i>altar; possibly monument</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4196 BDB #258

**Translation:** [He built an altar there...](#)

It is only on occasion that Jacob is said to worship God. Here he builds an altar (he will be directed by God to build another altar in Genesis 35). You will recall that, when we studied Abraham, almost every place that he stopped, he is said to build an altar (I exaggerate only slightly). This helps to explain the dramatic difference between Abraham and Jacob—God seemed to be on Abraham's mind a great deal. However, Jacob did not spend as much time considering God in his own life.

I have made the remark that, *it's about time*; but Jacob could have been specifically waiting until he entered into the land of Canaan.

Jacob's purchase of this land inside Canaan and then the building of the altar certainly reveal a more spiritually mature Jacob. Remember that his wrestling match with the Angel of God is 5–10 years in his rear view mirror. So his interaction with God was certainly a jump start, but he enjoyed some spiritual progress during that time. On the other hand, whereas some commentators want to gush over Jacob's spiritual growth, there will be incidents which follow that indicate that Jacob is far from supergrace.

Jacob had made a vow to God when he left the land of Canaan. God first told Jacob: [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, capitalized) When Jacob awoke the next morning: [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."](#) (Genesis 28:20–22; ESV; capitalized)

There is a minor problem here with the translation in v. 20. Jacob did not erect an altar. In Scripture, one *builds* (banah) an altar. There are a few exceptions: in Gen 35:1, 3 Exodus 30:1, altars are *made* (asah) and in

<sup>364</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 33:20.

1Kings 16:32 an altar is *raised* or *set up*, as a building (kum is the Hebrew word). The Hebrew word used and which is translated *to raise* or *to erect* is the Hiphil imperfect of nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced *naw-TSAB*]. Natsab has a variety of applications, but in the Hiphil imperfect, it is used in conjunction with erecting a pillar (Genesis 35:14, 20 2Samuel 18:18) but **not** in conjunction with erecting an altar.

Perhaps, what has happened here is that there was a mistake in the transcribing at some point in time and wrote mizbêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced *miz-BAY-akh*] instead of matstsêbâh (מַטְסֵבָה) [pronounced *mats-tsay-BAW*] from memory, from a mistake in hearing or from using mem to abbreviate for matstsebah and then it was filled in with mizbeach instead. The point of all this is that Jacob did not erect an altar, but he *pillared a pillar* or *set up a pillar*. This is one possible point of view. However, many understand this to mean Jacob built or set up an altar.

Genesis 33:20a [He built an altar there...](#)

### Genesis 33:20a: Jacob erected an altar (various commentators)

Benson: [*Jacob*] [erected there an altar](#) — 1st, In thankfulness to God, for the good hand of his providence over him. 2d, That he might keep up religion and the worship of God in his family.<sup>365</sup>

The Cambridge Bible points out that we do not know the form of this altar, which is okay: [*This*] verb [*is*] used elsewhere, not of an altar, but of a “pillar” or upright stone. Cf. Genesis 35:14; Genesis 35:20 and Joshua 24:26. Hence many prefer here to read “pillar” (*maṣṣêbah*) instead of “altar” (*mizbêah*).

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: [*This chapter*] ends on a positive note, that he builds an altar, that he is worshipping God, he is oriented to the authority of God. It shows that he has clearly been humbled and is under the authority of God.<sup>366</sup>

T. H. Leale from the Biblical Illustrator: [*Jacob’s purchase of this land and then the building of an altar*] was an evidence of his faith...His piety is seen—

1. In an act of worship. “He erected there an altar.” This was in keeping with his vow (Genesis 28:21).
2. In the use of blessings already given. He called the altar “El-Elohe-Israel” (Genesis 33:20). He now uses his own new name, Israel, for the first time, in association with the name of God. He uses that name which signifies the Mighty One, who was now his covenant God. He lives up to his privilege, uses all that God had given. He had vowed that he would take the Lord to be his God.
3. In the peace he enjoyed. He arrived in peace at his journey’s end (Genesis 33:18).<sup>367</sup>

Murphy: This was the very spot where Abraham, about 185 years ago, built the first altar he erected in the promised land (Genesis 12:6-7). It is now consecrated anew to the God of promise.<sup>368</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: “he erected there an altar” This designated a place, time, and manner of worshiping. It allowed prayer and sacrifice to be offered to YHWH (cf. Genesis 8:20; Genesis 12:7-8; Genesis 13:18; Genesis 22:9; Genesis 26:25). This is a fulfillment of YHWH’s promise of Genesis 28:15.<sup>369</sup>

John Wesley: He erected an altar - In thankfulness to God for the good hand of his providence over him. That he might keep up religion, and the worship of God in his family.<sup>370</sup>

<sup>365</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:20.

<sup>366</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

<sup>367</sup> *The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 33:19–20.

<sup>368</sup> *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 33:20 (suggestive comments).

<sup>369</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:20.

<sup>370</sup> John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 33:20.

Some, like Leale, try to make too much out of Jacob's piety. I left out the part where Leale said Jacob gave himself up entirely to God. Well, he didn't. He is still a very imperfect Jacob, whose acts and deeds are sometimes admirable and sometimes not.

Altars are mentioned 13 times in the book of Genesis: Gen. 8:20 12:7,8 13:4,18 22:9 26:25 33:20 35:1,3,7.

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines**

We should duly note that, at this point in the Jewish Age, each patriarch was responsible for the worship which occurred within his family. I would suggest that this worship involved the offering of lambs and other animal sacrifices to God, along with the *reading* of Genesis, up to that point in time. There was probably no actual manuscript of Genesis; it was probably spoken from memory, being passed down generation after generation.

In any case, the responsibility for Y<sup>e</sup>howah worship fell on Jacob's shoulders, just as it had fallen earlier upon Abraham and then upon Isaac.

By this altar to the God of Israel, Jacob has distinguished himself from all those in his periphery.

<b>Genesis 33:20b</b>			
<b>Hebrew/Pronunciation</b>	<b>Common English Meanings</b>	<b>Notes/Morphology</b>	<b>BDB and Strong's #</b>
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' (קָרָא) [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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<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
'Êl (אֱל) [pronounced <i>ALE</i> ]	<i>God, god, mighty one, strong, hero; transliterated <i>EI</i></i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #410 BDB #42
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated <i>Elohim</i></i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Although this is listed as one of the spellings of <i>Elohim</i> , it is simply the construct form. <sup>371</sup>			
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ'êl (יִסְרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated <i>Israel</i></i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
Some list this entire title as Strong's #415 BDB #42. <sup>372</sup>			

<sup>371</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 44.

<sup>372</sup> *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 42.

**Translation:** ...and called it *Él-Elohim of Israel*.

God had given Jacob the name *Israel*, so essentially, he is calling this place *Él the God of Me*.

Throughout his life, Jacob has made many missteps, and he has clearly been in rebellion against God, but here, so naming this altar, reveals some growth and understanding on the part of Jacob. He had a great and special relationship with God, and that all who came from his loins would be Israel.

Leupold: *After the example of Abraham (Genesis 12:8) as he entered the land, Jacob also builds an altar unto the Lord. The name of the altar embodies the sum of Jacob's spiritual experience, which he sought to transfer to coming generations. So he gives the altar a name which is in itself a statement to the effect that 'the God of Israel' is an 'el, i.e., 'a Strong One,' i.e., 'a mighty God.'* Jacob is remembering God's promise, and God has in an outstanding way proved Himself a God well able to keep His promises. The common name for God, 'el, covers this thought. By the use of his own name, 'Israel,' Jacob indicates that the restored, new man within him was the one that understood this newly acquired truth concerning God.

Leupold also makes some interesting remarks about accusations made by others: *We believe those to be in the wrong who assume that while Jacob was in Paddan-aram he lapsed into the idolatrous ways of men like Laban and so practically forsook the God of his fathers. Nothing points in that direction. The meager evidence available rather points to a fidelity on Jacob's part, which, though it was not of the strong ethical fibre as was that of Abraham, yet kept him from apostasy. Since it stood in need also of some measure of purification, God took Jacob in hand, especially at Peniel, and raised his faith-life to a higher level.*<sup>373</sup>

Genesis 33:20 He built an altar there and named it *Él, the God of Israel*.

### Genesis 33:20b: The Name of Jacob's Altar (various commentators)

Benson cites the obvious (which I missed): *[Jacob] dedicated this altar to the honour of El-elohe-Israel, God the God of Israel: to the honour of...the God of Israel, as a God in covenant with him. God had lately called him by the name of Israel; and now he calls God the God of Israel.*<sup>374</sup>

Gosman: *The name of the altar embraces, and stamps upon the memory of the world, the result of the past of Jacob's life, and the experiences through which Jacob had become Israel.*<sup>375</sup>

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob also erected an altar, as Abraham had previously done after his entrance into Canaan (Genesis 12:7), and called it El-Elohe-Israel, "God (the mighty) is the God of Israel," to set forth in this name the spiritual acquisition of his previous life, and according to his vow (Genesis 28:21) to give glory to the "God of Israel" (as he called Jehovah, with reference to the name given to him at Genesis 32:29), for having proved Himself to be El, a mighty God, during his long absence, and that it might serve as a memorial for his descendants.*<sup>376</sup>

The NET Bible: *Rather than translating the name, a number of modern translations merely transliterate it from the Hebrew as "El Elohe Israel" (cf. NIV, NRSV, REB). It is not entirely clear how the name should be interpreted grammatically. One option is to supply an equative verb, as in the translation: "The God of Israel [is] God." Another interpretive option is "the God of Israel [is] strong [or "mighty"]." Buying the land and settling down for a while was a momentous step for the patriarch, so the commemorative naming of the altar is significant.*<sup>377</sup>

<sup>373</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>374</sup> Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:20.

<sup>375</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>376</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 33:18–20.

<sup>377</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 5, 2016.

## Genesis 33:20b: The Name of Jacob's Altar (various commentators)

College Press Bible Study: *Jacob's consecration means more than that his God is not a mere imaginary deity; it means, further, that he has proved himself actually to be God (God is the God of Israel); God in the clear, definite form El, the Mighty, is the God of Israel, the wrestler with God. Israel had experienced both, in the almighty protection which his God had shown him from Bethel throughout his journeyings, and in the wrestlings with him, and learned his might.*<sup>378</sup>

The Pulpit Commentary: *El-elohe-Israel—i.e. God, the God of Israel.*<sup>379</sup>

C. I. Scofield: *El-elohe-Israel —That is, God, the God of Israel. Jacob's act of faith, appropriating his new name, but also claiming Elohim in this new sense as the God through whom alone he could walk according to his new name. See (Genesis 14:18–23).*<sup>380</sup>

Dr. Bob Utley: *"El-Elohe-Israel" This CONSTRUCT is made up of*

1. *El, BDB 42, cf. Exodus 34:6; see Special Topic at Genesis 12:1*
2. *Elohe, BDB 43, cf. Deut. 32:15; Deut. 32:17; Psalm 18:32*
3. *Israel, see Special Topic at Genesis 32:28*

*The Septuagint translates it as "the God of Israel." The Jewish Study Bible, using the JPSOA translation in its textual footnote, has "El, God of Israel" (p. 69).*<sup>381</sup>

See below on Utley's study of Israel.

Whedon: *[Jacob] calls the new altar after his own new name, and in grateful acknowledgment of the vision and triumph at Penuel.*<sup>382</sup>

Lange: *Jacob's consecration means more than that his God is not a mere imaginary deity; it means, further, that he has proved himself actually to be God (God is the God of Israel); God in the clear, definite form of El, the Mighty, is the God of Israel, the wrestler with God. Israel had experienced both, in the almighty protection which his God had shown him from Bethel throughout his journeyings, and in the wrestlings with him, and learned his might.*<sup>383</sup>

Perhaps we should understand the naming of this altar simply commemorated that God fulfilled what Jacob had called upon Him to fulfill.

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

L. M. Grant has some thoughts about this altar and Jacob's thinking: *[Jacob] erected there an altar, but it was not because of God's word he did so. God told him later to make an altar at Bethel. He names this one at Shalem "El-Elohe-Israel," meaning "God, the God of Israel." For it was still not god's honor primarily that he was seeking, but his own blessing. At Bethel his altar's name was "El Bethel," "God of the house of God," for then he finally learned that God's glory was more important than Jacob's blessing. God is the God of His own house, not merely the God of Israel.*<sup>384</sup>

<sup>378</sup> The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 32:1–33:17.

<sup>379</sup> The Pulpit Commentary; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 33:20.

<sup>380</sup> C. I. Scofield, *Scofield Notes from the Scofield King James' Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33:20.

<sup>381</sup> Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 33:20.

<sup>382</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 33:20.

<sup>383</sup> The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18–20 (Exegetical and Critical).

<sup>384</sup> From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-33.html> accessed April 14, 2019.

For much of his life, Jacob seemed to be far more concerned with his own blessing more than with glorifying God. How many of us are like that?

NIV Study Bible: [*Jacob*] lingered at Shechem and did not return to Bethel (see Genesis 35:1), and that meant trouble (see Genesis 34).<sup>385</sup>

Jacob did remain at Shechem, but we do not have what I believe to be clear directions for him to move to Bethel. Furthermore, remember that Jacob might find it difficult to travel (we do not know how long it was that he was harmed by the hip injury of the previous chapter).

There will be trouble in Shechem. However, I think the purpose of that narrative is to see just how carefully God kept the Hebrew people separate from the various peoples around them (who were quite degenerate). Even though Genesis 36 presents to us a very prosperous Esau, the problem remains that he willingly intermixed with the people of Seir (just as Hamor will suggest to Jacob); and this is something that Jacob was not to do.

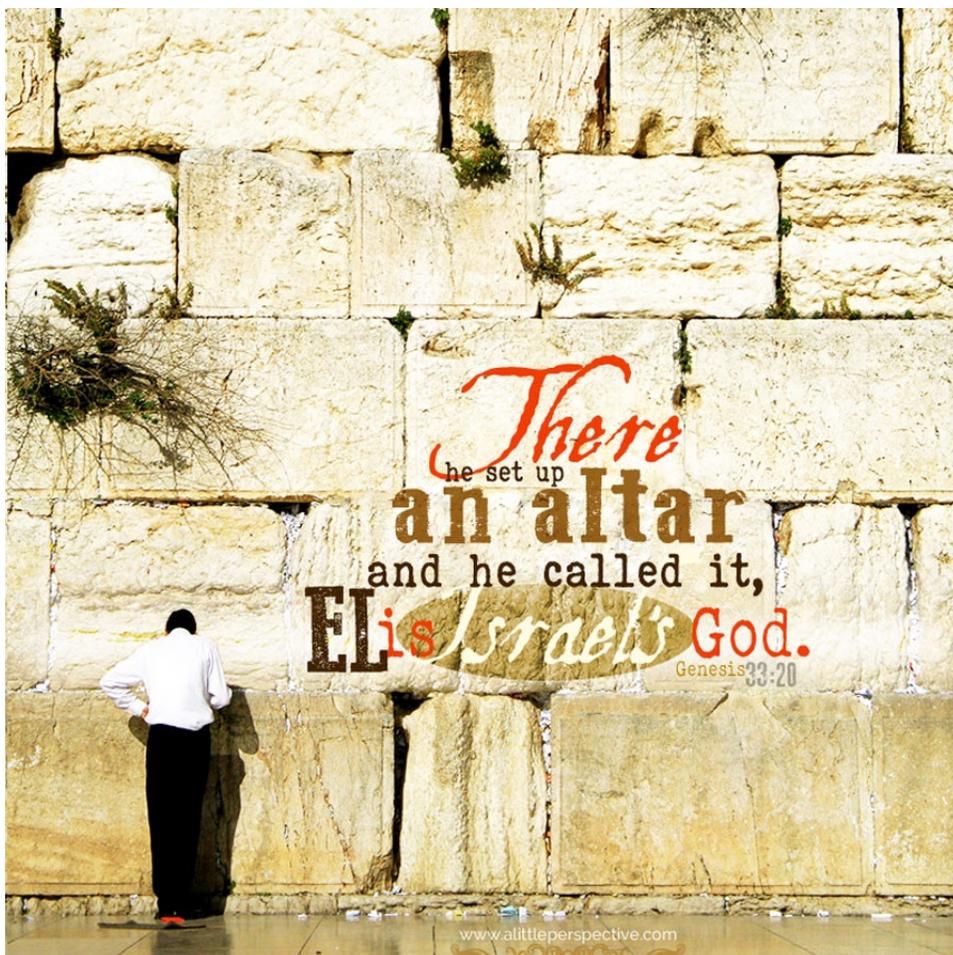
At this point, I do not want to suggest that Jacob has screwed up by not going immediately to Bethel. God allows Jacob a lot of leeway when it comes to the exercise of his free will. Furthermore, in the next chapter, we will get to know Jacob's sons a lot better, to find out why 3 of them got bumped from the firstborn position, and leaving Judah, albeit imperfect, in the top slot. Jacob will become the leadership tribe (confirmed in **Genesis 49**—([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#))) and Joseph will become the tribe which receives the double portion.

**Genesis 33:20** (a graphic); from [A Little Perspective](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

Jacob is now in the land of promise, as God had directed him, and he has erected an altar to God. This indicates that Jacob is on the right track at this point in time.

So far, things look good for Jacob—he left Paddan-Aram, as God instructed him to do; he has dealt with both Laban and Esau (we may assume that God is mostly involved in making these meetings go well); he has gone into the land of Canaan; and he has erected an altar to God.

If we take a wide view of Genesis 32–33, things look good in the spiritual realm for Jacob. However, we have been reading between the lines, and carefully considering his every action; and it is clear that Jacob is in a good place, but not that he has reached the high ground of spiritual maturity.



<sup>385</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 57 (footnote) (slightly edited).

Genesis 33:20 He built an altar there and called it *Ēl-Elohim of Israel*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:18–20 Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. He camped out before [this] city. He purchased a parcel of the field (where he had pitched his tent) from the sons of Hamor ([Hamor] is the father of Shechem) for a hundred silver coins. He built an altar there and called it *Ēl-Elohim of Israel*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 33:18–20 Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram. He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent. Hamor is the father of Shechem. He built an altar there and named it *Ēl, the God of Israel*. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 33:18–20 Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram. He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent. Hamor is the father of Shechem. He built an altar there and named it *Ēl, the God of Israel*.

### SPECIAL TOPIC: 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; Exod. 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. 1Kings 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 April 7, 2019.

A pillar was used as a memorial stone (Genesis 35:20 2Samuel 18:18), as a boundary between two disputing factions (Genesis 31:45) and as a pillar with some religious significance (Genesis 28:18 33:20 2Kings 17:10 10:26).

Dr. Peter Pett: *From this time on Shechem is a sacred place to the family tribe and later to Israel. It was in the neighbourhood of Mount Gerizim (Judges 9:7) in the hill country of Ephraim (Joshua 20:7). It was the place where God first revealed Himself to Abraham when he initially entered the land, and where he built his first altar to Yahweh (Genesis 12:6). That indeed may be why Jacob came there and why he was determined to establish a permanent altar to God. It was where Joshua would later renew the covenant and where the bones of Joseph would be buried (Joshua 24). By establishing this altar in the name of God the God of Israel Jacob is confirming his new name and applying it to the family tribe. From now on they will proudly call themselves 'Israel' (Genesis 34:7).*<sup>386</sup>

Recall Jacob's promise, when he originally left Canaan: *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."* (Gen 28:20–22; ESV)

Jacob laid a great many qualifications which God had to meet in order for him to worship Him; yet God did for Jacob what he asked. *That is grace.*

It is interesting that Jacob builds some permanent structures in Succoth; and then moves to Shechem, actually purchasing land there. However, there will be trouble in Shechem (which is the subject of Genesis 34).

Genesis 33:18–20 *Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram. He camped out before this city. He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent. Hamor is the father of Shechem. He built an altar there and named it ÉI, the God of Israel.*

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<sup>386</sup> Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 33:18–20.

**Genesis 33:11–20 Jacob Reaches Home** (a summary on a slide); from [Slide Serve](#) (Slide 16); accessed March 9, 2019.



## Jacob Reaches Home

### Genesis 33:11-20

- **v. 11** Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. Thus he urged him, and he took it.
- **Jacob insists** on **giving** a **blessing** to **Esau** for the **blessing** he **stole** from **Isaac**.
- **Jacob** is making a **biblical restitution** for the **harm he caused** someone else.
- **Esau** desires to **journey together** with his brother **Jacob** to Esau's home in Seir.
- **Jacob makes** an **excuse** of weary children, flocks, and herds **to stay behind**.
- **Jacob** has **no intention** of **following Esau**. He may still be **afraid** of his brother.
- **Esau goes** back home, **south** to **Seir**. But **Jacob** goes **west** to **Succoth**.
- **Succoth** means "**booths**". **Jacob builds booths** for his **livestock** there.
- **Jacob** finally **reaches Shechem** in **Canaan**, about **20 miles west** of **Succoth**.
- **Jacob purchases** a piece of **land** for **100 pieces** of money (*qesitahs*).
- **Jacob pitches** his **tent** there. He **believes God** that this is the **Promised Land**.
- **Jacob builds** an **altar "El-Elohe-Israel"**: "God, the God of Israel" or "**God, the God of he who strives with God**". **Jacob worships** the **God** who **changed his name**.
- This is the **first altar Jacob builds**. **Abraham also built** an **altar** in Shechem, and it's **possible** this is a **reconstruction** of it. **Previously**, Jacob built **pillars** as a **witness**.
- By building an **altar**, Jacob commits to **worship** God.

Ballinger's translation: Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth. Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

### Jacob Remembers Bethel (vv. 17–20) (Jack Ballinger)

1. In these verses we have Jacob's itinerary after his permanent separation from Esau (they would meet one more time sixty years later at the death of Isaac).
2. Esau traveled south to Seir and Jacob traveled north two miles from the Jabbok stream to a place he named Succoth.
3. Jacob left the land in 1746 BC (Isaac was 100 yrs old) and returned twenty years later in 1726 BECAUSE.
4. He was sixty years of age and his children ranged from thirteen to six years of age.
5. Joseph was six years of age at this time.
6. His first stop was Succoth so named after the animal shelters he built there (v. 17).
7. Places Jacob has named thus far: Bethel, Mahanaim, and Peniel.

## Jacob Remembers Bethel (vv. 17–20) (Jack Ballinger)

8. These all grew out of a supernatural encounter, but not so with Succoth.
9. The term translated "booths" is succoth.
10. The narrator informs the reader that Jacob built a house at this site.
11. Living in tents was the *modus vivendi* of the three patriarchs with only this one mention of an exception.
12. Succoth is a town east of the Jordan in the territory of Gad (Josh. 13:27).
13. Succoth is generally considered to be identified with modern Tell Deir-alla.
14. The lapse of time spent here is not told us.
15. Jacob moves from Transjordan to Cisjordan and arrives for the first time in twenty years in Canaan proper.
16. This explains the statement in v. 18 "which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padda-aram."
17. His next stop was the outskirts of the Canaanite city of Shechem (v. 18).
18. Hence, the: "he camped before the city."
19. Shechem first appears in the patriarchal narrative as a place mentioned in transient when Abraham first entered the land passing on his way to Bethel and the Negev (12:6).
20. Shechem was a Canaanite town.
21. The residents of Shechem are identified as "the sons of Hamor", that is, "the sons of the donkey."
22. Based on evidence from Mari, the designation must refer to members of the community whose relationship was based on a covenant formalized by the ritual sacrifice of a donkey.
23. This accounts for Near Easterners giving their children animal names.
24. Jacob upon arriving in the land of promise proper strikes a real estate deal with the locales to purchase a plot of ground (v. 19).
25. The price he paid is said to be one hundred qeshitah.
26. It is not known what one qeshitah weighed so it is not known how much he spent on this piece of land.
27. Jacob follows the pattern of his grandfather (chap. 23) in this regard.
28. Jacob sole purpose in purchasing this plot of land on the outskirts of Shechem was to erect and altar there (v.20).
29. In so doing he follows the example of he grandfather (12:7, 8; 13:18; 22:9) and his father (26:25).
30. The usual verb for this activity is *banah* (cf. v. 17) but here the verb *natsab* is used (cf. 35:20).
31. It means 'to stand upright/erect.'
32. This verb recalls 28:12-13 where it is used in connection with the stairway to heaven that Jacob saw in his nocturnal vision.
33. The stairway was "set on the earth/ground with its top reaching heaven."
34. Furthermore it is used of Yahweh who "stood" or was "standing above it" (participle).
35. This supplies a link between the two narratives (separated by 20 years).
36. In his vow at Bethel Jacob had raised the issue of whether God would safely return him to his father's house (28:21).
37. God's faithfulness to His promise to Jacob is the background to the erection of this altar on the outskirts of Shechem on the parcel of land he purchased from the local Canaanites.
38. Also, at Bethel Jacob had promised "if God will be with me..." then Yahweh will be my God" (28:20-21).
39. Hence the naming of the altar which he called El-Elohe-Israel.
40. El is 'God', Elohe is 'the God of' connected to Jacob's "new" name 'Israel' which was conferred on him at the Jabbok.
41. Hence, "God, the God of Israel."
42. At Bethel Jacob said that if God be with him on his journey and bring him safely back to the land then, "Yahweh will be my God."
43. Jacob has as yet to actually arrive at Bethel, but that will come later on (35:1, 3, 6, 8, 15).
44. Back in the land proper Jacob "erects" and altar for worship and pay tribute to the faithfulness and grace/favor of God.
45. Like Jacob of old God fights both for and against those who are positive.
46. The trials He puts us through are for our own good as we move ever closer to the objective.
47. His fighting against us is light compared to His fighting for us so that we like Jacob can prevail against men (opponents like Laban and Esau) and God.

## Jacob Remembers Bethel (vv. 17–20) (Jack Ballinger)

48. Jacob's experience on the shore of the Jabbok illustrates the struggle we have with God in our quest to secure lasting blessing.
49. Jacob epitomizes the long struggle of the chosen people in all their ups and downs who in the end rise victorious in the conflict.
50. We too like Jacob will receive a new name befitting our Ph2.
51. Jacob survived, albeit not without a wound, the most dangerous of his potential adversaries on that river bank.
52. The old Jacob still surfaces from time to time, but the new Jacob (Israel) has attained a new standing before God.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen33.htm> accessed April 9, 2019.

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Ron Snider's translation: And Jacob journeyed to succoth; and built for himself a house, and made booths for his livestock, therefore the place is called succoth. Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, (and Jacob came in peace--city of Shechem--which in the land of Canaan) when he came from paddan-aram, and camped out- side the city. And he bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected there an altar, and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

## Summary of Genesis 33:17–20 (Ron Snider)

1. Although Jacob indicated to Esau that he would be moving south behind Esau, he instead moves north.
2. He recrosses the Jabbok river and settles in a region close to the junction of the Jordan and Jabbok rivers.
3. Since we know he was acting out of fear of Esau, and still did not trust him, this place was likely chosen because of its safety.
4. He begins building a house for himself, as well as more permanent structures for his livestock.
5. These structures were called succoth and this is how the place gets its name.
6. The problem is that Jacob is still on the west side of the Jordan and is not in Canaan proper.
7. How long he spent at Succoth is not recorded, but since Dinah was around 7 years old when Jacob departed Haran and is at least 13 years or so in Chpt 34, vs 17-20 cover some time.
8. We do not fully know what prompted Jacob to leave Succoth and finally come to Shechem in the land of Canaan.
9. It seems to me that doctrine in the soul motivated Jacob to get moving again.
10. It was not the plan of God for the patriarchs to live in permanent structures, and Jacob seems to have realized this.
11. At any rate, he arrives safe and sound in the land of promise, and pitches his camp outside of
12. A fact which must be inserted here, and explains partially why Jacob would have gone to Shechem is that Abraham had bought some land in that area previously. Acts 7:16
13. His reason for not returning to Isaac's house was simply due to the fact that he was now married and had lived outside the home for over 20 years.
14. Surely these people understood that when you married you left your father and mother. Gen. 2:24
15. So in spite of all obstacles, and in spite of all that has befallen Jacob, he arrives back in Canaan.
16. In spite of all his own efforts, he did not bring himself safely back, but God did.
17. He purchases a piece of land from the sons of Hamor, which included a son named Shechem.
18. He pays 100 qesitas, a denomination which is still unidentified.
19. He stays near the city, which he figured would afford him more protection than living out in the open
20. While Jacob recognizes God's protection, and knows the doctrine he continues to demonstrate that he has a difficult time following through with the application.
21. As the family priest, Jacob builds an altar, and calls it The Mighty one is the God of Israel.

### Summary of Genesis 33:17–20 (Ron Snider)

22. This altar was a monument to God and His grace in Jacob's life.
23. It was also a means of communicating doctrine to those who were in the region, the gospel to the UB and BD to the believer.
24. Jacob appropriates his new name for the first time and from this point on will begin to live up to his
25. For 97+ years Jacob has been a deceitful type who relied on his wits to deliver himself and advance himself.
26. This was certainly the STA trend which came from his mother's side of the family. Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Laban.
27. Jacob has grown now to the point where he is willing to overrule the STA consistently in this area.
28. He will no longer function as Jacob the tricky, but as the one who fights with God.
29. Many consider the term Israel to mean, "a soldier of God".
30. As we will see in the following chapter, making the MAJG and living the new life, does not preclude problems and struggles.

From [Markaios Bible Church](#) (link will open up in Word or WP); accessed April 13, 2019.

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Preview of coming attractions: Jacob will move back to Canaan, but not with his mother and father; and Esau would return to Seir. There will be a period of time—probably when their father dies—when Jacob and Esau do live together.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Trouble is on the horizon. The next two chapters is one of the strangest and most bizarre episodes in the Old Testament. God is showing the depravity of Jacob's family and of the Canaanites, and the rest of Genesis is really setting out the explanation for why Jacob's family needs to be taken to Egypt. What God is showing the later conquest generation here is what happens when a nation disobeys God and refuses to be separate from the Canaanites. The city of Shechem is a Canaanite city.*<sup>387</sup>

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[Exegetical Studies in Genesis](#)

## A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 33:

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

<sup>387</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed April 13, 2019.

(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 Masoretes, 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.

As we studied in the previous chapter, Jacob is very apprehensive about meeting his brother Esau some 20 years later (20 years after he connived a blessing from his half-blind father, a blessing meant for Esau). When Jacob quickly left Canaan, Esau wanted to kill him.

Genesis 33:1 And Ya'aqob [= *Jacob*] lifted his eyes and looked and saw Ěsaw [= *Esau*] coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children among Lě'ah, and Raḥěl [= *Rachel*], and the two female servants.

It is a bit confusing that Jacob had determined to divide up his people into two camps, so that the second could escape if Esau attacked the first. It appears that the first camp was made up of all Jacob's servants and the animals that Jacob traveled with. The second camp would be his wives and children, along with more animals. When we get to the actual meeting, however, there does not appear to be a separation of camps.

The confusion could come down to Jacob talking about one way of doing things, but then, doing something else.

Genesis 33:2 And he put the female servants and their children in front, and Lě'ah and her children behind, and Raḥěl and Yosěph [= *Joseph*] last.

Jacob did put Rachel, his favorite, at the back, and Leah and her in the front.

Genesis 33:3 And he himself passed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Jacob then began to move to the front, bowing himself to the ground seven times before coming to Esau.

Genesis 33:4 And Ěsaw ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Esau came to meet Jacob face to face and he fell on his neck and kissed him. Both men wept.

Genesis 33:5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" And he said, "The children with whom Elohim has favoured your servant."

Then Esau looks over the family that Jacob has arrived with. He asks about them. Jacob says that these are his wives and children.

Genesis 33:6 Then the female servants came near, they and their children, and bowed themselves.

The female servants with the children then come before Esau and bow before him.

Genesis 33:7 And Lě'ah also came near with her children, and they bowed themselves. And Yosěph and Raḥěl came near, and they bowed themselves.

Leah and her children come forward. Joseph and Rachel then come forward to meet Esau.

Genesis 33:8 Then Ěsaw said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "To find favour in the eyes of my master."

Esau asks, "What is the deal with all of the animals?" Jacob says that this is to find favor in Esau's eyes.

Genesis 33:9 But Ěsaw said, "I have enough, my brother, let what you have remain yours."

Esau tells Jacob to keep his animals. "I have plenty," he tells Jacob.

Genesis 33:10 And Ya'aqob said, "No, please, if I have now found favour in your eyes, then receive my present from my hand, because I have seen your face like seeing the face of Elohim, and you were pleased with me.

Jacob insists that Esau take the animals.

Genesis 33:11 "Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because Elohim has favoured me, and because I have all I need." And he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob continues to press Esau on this, and Esau accepts the gift.

Genesis 33:12 And he said, "Let us depart and go, and let me go before you."

Esau said, "Follow me, I will lead you."

Genesis 33:13 But he said to him, "My master knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flocks shall die.

Jacob says to give him more time. He explains that his children and young animals could never keep up.

Genesis 33:14 "Please let my master go before his servant, and let me lead on slowly according to the pace of the livestock that go before me, and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my master in Sě'ir."

"I need to allow my livestock to take their time about moving forward," Jacob requests.

Genesis 33:15 And Ěsaw said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "Why this? Let me find favour in the eyes of my master."

Esau wanted to have his own servants travel with Jacob, but Jacob appears to have said no.

Genesis 33:16 And Ěsaw returned that day on his way to Sě'ir.

Esau returns to Seir along with his entourage.

Genesis 33:17 And Ya'aqob set out to Sukkoth [= *Succoth*], and built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. That is why the name of the place is called Sukkoth.

Jacob instead goes to Sukkoth and builds himself a house there and booths for his livestock.

This helps us to understand the names of places in Genesis. When Jacob went to this place, it was not named Sukkoth. We do not know what its name was. However, once Jacob had been there for awhile and built some houses there, then it was called Succoth. In the future, everyone knows this place as Succoth, so there is no reason to retain the older name (assuming that there was one).

Genesis 33:18 And Ya'aqob came safely to the city of Shekem, which is in the land of Kena'an [= *Canaan*], when he came from Paddan Aram. And he pitched his tent before the city.

Jacob moves further into Canaan. I assume that all of this took place over several years. Maybe even a decade or so.

Genesis 33:19 **And he bought the portion of the field where he had pitched his tent, from the children of H̄amor, Shek̄em's father, for one hundred qesitah.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>A monetary unit of uncertain value, perhaps in the form of a lamb.

Jacob purchases the land when he is. He does not simply take it.

Genesis 33:20 **And he set up a slaughter-place there and called it Ĕl Eloh̄e Yisra'el.**

Jacob sets up an altar where he might worship God.

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

### Why Genesis 33 is in the Word of God

1. Just as Jacob required another meeting with Laban, he also must see Esau again. This chapter records that meeting.
2. We begin to find out a little bit about Esau's life—particularly since Jacob left Canaan.
3. Because of the traveling that Jacob does and his interaction with Esau, we are forced to review maps in order to understand where everyone is and where they are going.
4. Because of Jacob's actions in this chapter, compared to his encounter with the Angel of God, this causes many to reevaluate the idea of having a one-shot decision in the Christian life.
5. We had ample opportunities to examine Jacob, Esau and their motivation t thought that we were able to come to some very reasonable conclusions.
6. We see that God does not reach into our souls and change our volition, as free will is a very important factor in the spiritual life.
7. We compare and contrast Seir, Succoth and Shechem; and the brothers' relation to these 3 cities.

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These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

### What We Learn from Genesis 33

1. Broadly, we learn Jacob's spiritual state, how he got there, and what this teaches us.
2. A key doctrine in this chapter is applying Jacob's life and decisions to our own lives; and reviewing how the believer grows in the Church Age (Operation Z).
3. Because of some assertions made by other theologians, we briefly examine the JEPD theory (documentary hypothesis) and why it is wrong.
4. There is an assumption made by many commentators at the end of Genesis 32, which bleeds into this chapter; making it very difficult for them to correctly evaluate this chapter and some of the incidents in this chapter.
5. Because of the interaction between Jacob and Esau, we are afforded the chance to consider free will in the Christian way of life. Does God reach into a person's heart and change them? We know that free will is an important consideration in the life of Jacob, because he is associated many times with the word *neck*, which is all about free will (the direction that the neck turns is the direction that a person walks).
6. This particular study afforded us the opportunity to consider pastors and how or if we should judge them.
7. There were a great many mistakes that commentators made about this and the previous chapter. So many refused to consider that Jacob may have lied to Esau's face about come down to Seir. So many said that Jacob placed Rachel in the back grouping, in order to protect her. That is false.

## What We Learn from Genesis 33

8. We were affording time to consider generational hatred, given that Jacob and Esau were able to make up and become friends; but that their descendants have been locked in a long-standing state of animosity. Along these lines, we considered the United States and Japan.
9. A very important topic, which is not fully understood, are the words, “**Jacob have I love, but Esau I hated.**” (Malachi 1:2–3 Romans 9:13). This chapter was a good place to explain them.
10. Because people are confused about what happened in Genesis 32, when Jacob wrestled with the Angel of God, they are equally confused about growth in the spiritual life. This is most simply explained by Operation Z, which is covered in this chapter.
11. In this chapter, we deal with a sermon by Saint Stephen, where it becomes confusing as to who purchases land in Canaan and where. 3 or 4 reasonable explanations are offered to explain Stephen’s words.

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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 33

Jesus was the Angel of God in Genesis 32. What He did to Jacob appears to have affects on Jacob throughout Genesis 33. Interestingly enough, this is not the effect that most commentators suggest, but it is an effect that most commentators overlook.

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Many chapters and sections in the Bible have a chiasmic structure to them. Sometimes we better appreciate this structure *after* studying the contents of the chapter.

## The Chiasmic Structure of Genesis 33 (from Hajime Murai)

A(33:1-3)	Jacob fears and kneels before Esau
B(33:4)	Esau runs to embrace Jacob
C(33:5-7)	Esau asks about children (עִדְלִיָּהּ = <i>children</i> )
D(33:8-11)	Esau accepts Jacob's gift
C'(33:12-15)	Jacob excused regarding his children (עִדְלִיָּהּ)
B'(33:16)	Esau returns
A'(33:17-20)	Jacob thanks God and makes an altar

A: Fear/Respect/Worship. B: Meeting with and departure of Esau. C: Jacob's children. D: Esau accepts Jacob's gift (which is a much better outcome than Esau attacking and slaughtering Jacob).

Esau accepting Jacob’s gift marks the official end of their jealousy and strife.

From [http://www.valdes.titech.ac.jp/~h\\_murai/bible/01\\_Genesis\\_pericope\\_e.html](http://www.valdes.titech.ac.jp/~h_murai/bible/01_Genesis_pericope_e.html) accessed October 12, 2015 (and edited).

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Barnes gives a fairly good summary of this chapter.

### A Summary of Genesis 33 (by Albert Barnes)

#### Genesis 33:1–3

Jacob, upon seeing Esau approach with his four hundred men, advances with circumspection and lowly obeisance. He divided his family, arranged them according to their preciousness in his eyes, and walks himself in front. In drawing near, he bows seven times, in token of complete submission to his older brother. Esau, the wild hunter, is completely softened, and manifests the warmest affection, which is reciprocated by Jacob...[Any] seemingly intimating a doubt of the reading or of the sincerity of Esau, are wholly unwarranted. Esau then observes the women and children, and inquires who they are. Jacob replies that God had granted, graciously bestowed on him, these children. They approach in succession, and do obeisance. Esau now inquires of the caravan or horde he had already met. He had heard the announcement of the servants; but he awaited the confirmation of the master. **“To find grace in the eyes of my lord.”** Jacob values highly the good-will of his brother. The acceptance of this present is the security for that good-will, and for all the safety and protection which it involved. Esau at first declines the gift, but on being urged by Jacob accepts it, and thereby relieves Jacob of all his anxiety. His brother is now his friend indeed. **“Therefore, have I seen your face,”** that I might give you this token of my affection. **“As if I had seen the face of God.”** The unexpected kindness with which his brother had received him was a type and proof of the kindness of the All-provident, by whom it had been added to all his other mercies. My blessing; my gift which embodies my good wishes. I have all; not only enough, but all that I can wish.

#### Genesis 33:12–16

They now pare for the present. **“I will go with you;”** as an escort or vanguard. Jacob explains that this would be inconvenient for both parties, as his tender children and suckling cattle could not keep pace with Esau’s men, who were used to the road. **“At the pace of the cattle;”** as fast as the business...of traveling with cattle will permit. Unto Selr. Jacob is travelling to the land of Kenaan, and to the residence of his father. But, on arriving there, it will be his first duty to return the fraternal visit of Esau. The very circumstance that he sent messengers to apprise his brother of his arrival, implies that he was prepared to cultivate friendly relations with him. Jacob also declines the offer of some of the men that Esau had with him. He had, doubtless, enough of hands to manage his remaining flock, and he now relied more than ever on the protection of that God who had ever proved himself a faithful and effectual guardian.

#### Genesis 33:17

“Sukkoth” was south of the Jabbok, and east of the Jordan, as we learn from Judges 8:4–9. From the same passage it appears to have been nearer the Jordan than Penuel, which was at the ford of Jahbok. Sukkoth cannot therefore, be identified with Sakut, which Robinson finds on the other side of the Jordan, about ten miles north of the mouth of the Jabbok. **“And built him a house.”** This indicates a permanent residence. Booths, or folds, composed of upright stakes wattled together, and sheltered with leafy branches. The closed space in the text is properly introduced here, to indicate the pause in the narrative, while Jacob sojourned in this place. Dinah, who is not noticed on the journey, was now not more than six years of age. Six or seven years more, therefore, must have elapsed before the melancholy events of the next chapter took place. In the interval, Jacob may have visited his father, and even returned the visit of Esau.

#### Genesis 33:18–20

Jacob at length crosses the Jordan, and enters again the land of Kenaan. **“In peace.”**...is rendered Shalem, the name of the town at which Jacob arrived, by the Septuagint. The rendering safe, or in peace, is here adopted, because (1) the word is to be taken as a common noun or adjective, unless there be a clear necessity for a proper name; (2) “the place” was called Shekem in the time of Abraham Genesis 12:6, and the “town” is so designated in the thirty–fifth chapter Genesis 35:4; and (3) the statement that Jacob arrived in safety accounts for the additional clauses, **“which is in the land of Kenaan,”** and **“when he went from Padan–aram,”** and is in accordance with the promise Genesis 28:21 that he would return in peace. If, however, the Salim

## A Summary of Genesis 33 (by Albert Barnes)

found by Robinson to the west of Nablous be the present town, it must be called the city of Shekem, because it belonged to the Shekem mentioned in the following verse and chapter. "Pitched before the city."

Jacob did not enter into the city, because his flocks and herds could not find accommodation there, and he did not want to come into close contact with the inhabitants. "He bought a parcel of the field." He is anxious to have a place he may call his own, where he may have a permanent resting-place. "For a hundred kesitahs." The kesitah may have been a piece of silver or gold, of a certain weight, equal in value to a lamb (see Gesenius). "El-Elohe-Israel." Jacob consecrates his ground by the erection of an altar. He calls it the altar of the Mighty One, the God of Israel, in which he signalizes the omnipotence of him who had brought him in safety to the land of promise through many perils, the new name by which he himself had been lately designated, and the blessed communion which now existed between the Almighty and himself. This was the very spot where Abraham, about one hundred and eighty-five years ago, built the first altar he erected in the promised land Genesis 12:6-7. It is now consecrated anew to the God of promise.

Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 33 (edited).

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**A Summary of Genesis 33:** Let's get an overview of this chapter:

Genesis 33:1-3 **And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.**

Jacob reveals a much more humble side of himself upon his return to the Land of Promise, bowing before his brother 7 times.

Genesis 33:4 **But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.**

Esau reveals a much more compassionate side to Jacob in this passage. This time apart made these brothers yearn for one another's company (at least this was the case for Esau). Genetically, we are closer to our brothers or sisters than we are to even our parents.

Genesis 33:5-7 **And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last, Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down.**

Jacob introduces his family to Esau.

Genesis 33:8-9 **Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."**

Esau is referring to the livestock which Jacob sent first as a present to Esau.

**Genesis 33** (Bible journaling by Katy Hollway); from [Pinterest](#); accessed April 14, 2019.

Genesis 33:10–11 Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob presents Esau with a very generous gift—something which Esau clearly does not need, but Jacob urges him to accept it and he does. Much of that could be the proper culture response from each man.

Genesis 33:12 Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you."

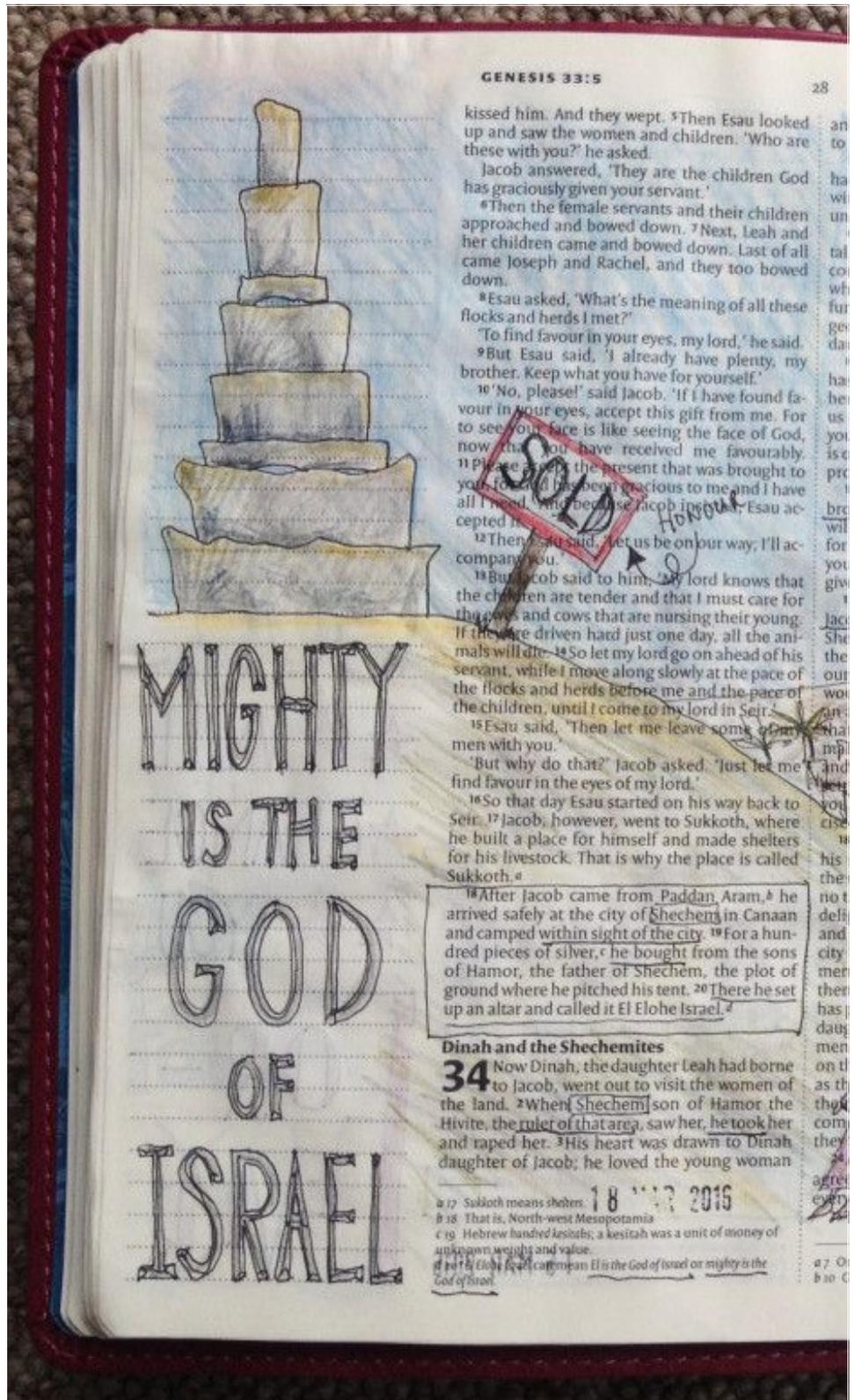
Esau is proposing that they go together, with Esau leading them.

Genesis 33:13–14 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the nursing flocks and herds are a care to me. If they are driven hard for one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

Esau will make two offers to Jacob, each of which would have insured Jacob's safe travels to Seir, Jacob refuses both offers.

Genesis 33:15 So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor [= grace] in the sight of my lord."

Jacob clearly refuses Esau's gracious offers, which suggests that Jacob was not going to follow him. Asking for favor or grace is Jacob asking to do this his own way.



Genesis 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

Esau began traveling toward Seir on this day.

Genesis 33:17–18 But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. (ESV)

Esau goes due south to Seir; and, despite what he said, Jacob does not follow him, but goes west to Succoth and then further west, across the Jordan River, to Shechem. The only reasonable explanation I can come up with for the sudden leave from Succoth is, some of Jacob's sons acted in a manner that caused them to no longer be welcome in Succoth. This is only a guess and based upon the events of Genesis 34 which follows. The problem with that theory is, the children are quite young at this point (the oldest would be 12<sup>388</sup>). The way that this is spoken of, associating Succoth, Shechem and Paddan-aram all in the same passage, it suggests that the family did not stay in Succoth for a long time.

There are no contradictions here; it is simply that there are some facts and motivations which are not told to us.

What we do know may offer some clues to answer the questions above.

### Some of the things we know about Jacob and Esau

1. Jacob first lived in Succoth and then in Shechem. These cities are on opposite sides of the Jordan River from one another and north of the Dead Sea.
2. Esau lives in Seir, which is south of the Dead Sea.
3. Therefore, Esau lives quite a distance from both Succoth and Shechem. Although moving to Shechem makes a trip to Seir less likely, Jacob was nowhere close to Seir when living in Succoth.
4. In any case, it does not appear as if Jacob had any intention of going down to Seir, although motivations regarding this are not discussed.
5. For the early period, God seemed to have the patriarchs concentrate on the land of Canaan (which is really a smaller area between the Jordan River, the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea).
6. This appears to be the case when Moses leads the people up along the east side of the Dead Sea. They actually conquer some of the land east of the Jordan. In fact, this is the first land held by the Jewish people. However, even though this is spoken of often, it is never presented like *first you will conquer the land east of the Jordan; and then you will cross the Jordan and conquer the land of Canaan*. Conquering the territory in the east is presented as necessary but incidental to the invasion of Canaan. They had to do that in order to get to the Jordan River in the first place.
7. So, perhaps Jacob only felt like he was in God's will if he moved west of the Jordan. Just a guess.
8. In any case, Jacob and Esau are no longer estranged. Esau clearly had enough men with him to wipe out Jacob and family if he wanted to. Obviously, he did not.
9. As we observed, Esau appeared to be genuinely affectionate and interested in Jacob and his life. If Jacob was conversely interested at this reuniting, it is not recorded. However, I believe that Jacob wrote many chapters in Scripture; and he will devote Genesis 36 to Esau's family.
10. Living near Shechem is going to land Jacob and his family into a jackpot. Their sister will be raped and her brothers will overreact to it (meaning, they will kill a number of innocent people as a result of this rape).
11. Sometime later, Esau and Jacob will reunite once again when their father, Isaac, dies.
12. However, Esau will live permanently in Seir; Jacob and his family will primarily live in the land of Canaan (although a famine will cause Jacob's family to later move to Egypt near the end of the book of Genesis).
13. It appears from Genesis 36:6–8 that, for a period of time, perhaps soon after the funeral of their father Isaac, Jacob and Esau lived together or near one another in Canaan. This would suggest that Esau

<sup>388</sup> Jacob lived with Laban for 20 years. He married Leah at the end of year 7 and Rachel probably soon thereafter. If Leah conceived on their wedding night, that son would be 12 when they left Paddan-aram.

### Some of the things we know about Jacob and Esau

- moved once to settle in Seir, returned to Canaan for an unspecified time, but then went back to Seir to live out his days.
14. It would make sense for Esau to meet up with Jacob at the death of their father, and then choose to remain in Canaan for some time after that to be near his brother, realizing that Jacob was not going to come down to Seir.
  15. Have you ever heard the expression, *you can't go home again*? Esau was originally raised in Canaan by Isaac and Rebekah; with Jacob. For whatever reason, he has moved to Seir. However, his genuine affection for Jacob along with the loss of their father might explain his moving back to Canaan—although this will be a temporary move. He returns to the land of his youth, but he apparently does not remain there for a lengthy period of time.

This helps to fill in some of the blanks in the history of Jacob and Esau. Unlike the chapters of Genesis written by Abraham, Jacob tends to leave out a great deal of history. It is reasonable to assume that much of this information is not spiritually edifying.

There is something very subtle here, and easy to miss.

Genesis 33:17–18 [But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. \(ESV\)](#)

It looks as if Jacob travels to Succoth (not too far from his meeting place with Esau), and this looks like a place he would live for a long time. Notice that he builds himself a house and he builds shelter for his flocks. But what does he not build? An altar to God. God brought him safely back to the Land of Promise, and Jacob had asked for; but in the first place where he settles, Jacob does not appear to be thinking about God.

Now think back on his meeting with Esau; did they sacrifice an animal to God? There was no mention of God. Both sons, perhaps overly concerned about God's promised blessing in their youth, do not appear to speak of that when they meet. God has clearly blessed both men greatly, and yet they do not acknowledge this fact.

Jacob's wrestling match with God got him through his meeting with Esau; it refocused Jacob's attention for a short while, but Jacob is back to focusing upon his own life and what he needs to do for himself and his family—without understanding that God is integral to all of this. As a result, Succoth will not be a place where Jacob remains long. Furthermore, because there is no altar in Succoth, we have almost no details of the time spent there (5–10 years). Jacob cannot get away from the fact that his relationship with God is central to his life.

Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does. His summary was pretty weak for this chapter.

### B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 33

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.

## B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 33

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.

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.

From *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 32:1-34:31.

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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

*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 33

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! ...

As Jacob passed over Jabbok in the early morn, the glittering of spears and lances in the sunlight, among the dark pine forests, betokened the approach of Esau with his four hundred men. But Jacob had nothing more to fear: the only real contest was over. It was necessary, when Jacob returned to take possession of the land and of the promises, that all that was past in his history should be past - it was so! Never, after that night, did Jacob again contend with carnal weapons; and though the old name of Jacob reappears again and again by the side of his new designation, it was to remind both him and us that Jacob, though halting, is not dead, and that there is in us always the twofold nature, alike of Jacob and of Israel. What now followed we cannot tell better than in the words of a recent German writer: "Jacob, who in his contest with the Angel of Jehovah had prevailed by

## Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 33

prayer and entreaty, now also prevails by humility and modesty against Esau, who comes to meet him with four hundred men." As already hinted, Esau had probably been just engaged in that warlike expedition to Mount Seir, which resulted in his conquest of the land, where he afterwards settled. (Genesis 36:6, 7) This accounts for his appearance at the head of an armed band. Possibly, he may, at the same time, have wished to have the revenge of giving anxiety to his brother, and of showing him the contrast between their respective positions; or he may to the last have been undecided how to act towards his brother. At any rate, under the overruling guidance of God, and "overcome by the humility of Jacob, and by the kindness of his own heart, Esau fell upon the neck of his brother, embraced and kissed him. With reluctance he accepted the rich presents of Jacob, and he offered to accompany him to the end of his journey with his armed men - a proposition which Jacob declined in a friendly spirit. Thus the two brothers, long separated in affection, were reconciled to each other. Their good understanding remained undisturbed till the day of their death."

There was nothing in Jacob's language to his brother which, when translated from Eastern to our Western modes of conduct and expression, is inconsistent with proper self-respect. If he declined the offer of an armed guard, it was because he felt he needed not an earthly host to protect him. Besides, it was manifestly impossible for cattle and tender children to keep up with a Bedouin warrior band. While Esau, therefore, returned to Mount Seir, there to await a visit from his brother, Jacob turned in a north-westerly direction to Succoth, a place still east of Jordan, and afterwards in the possession of the tribe of Gad. Here he probably made a lengthened stay, for we read that "he built him an house, and made booths for his cattle," whence also the name of Succoth, or "booths." At last Jacob once more crossed the Jordan, "and came in peace\* to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan." The words seem designedly chosen to indicate that God had amply fulfilled what Jacob had asked at Bethel: to "come again in peace." (Genesis 28:21) But great changes had taken place in the country. When Abram entered the land, and made this his first resting-place, there was no city there, and it was only "the place of Shechem." (Genesis 12:6) But now the district was all cultivated and possessed, and a city had been built, probably by "Hamor the Hivite," the father of Shechem, who called it after his son. (Comp. Genesis 4:17) From "the children of Hamor" Jacob bought the field on which he "spread his tent." This was "the portion" which Jacob afterwards gave to his son Joseph (Genesis 48:22), and here the "bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought out of Egypt," were, at least at one time, buried. (Joshua 24:32) Far more interesting than this, we know that by the well which Jacob there dug, sat, many centuries afterwards, "David's greater Son," to tell the poor sinning woman of Samaria concerning the "well of water springing up unto everlasting life" - the first non-Jewess blessed to taste the water of which "whoever ever drinketh" "shall never thirst." (John 4:14) Here Jacob erected an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel, "God, the God of Israel."

\* So the words should be translated.

From [http://philologos.org/\\_eb-bhot/vol\\_1/contents.htm](http://philologos.org/_eb-bhot/vol_1/contents.htm) accessed .

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Normally I don't do this, but this study began crazy and stayed crazy. It struck me odd that Meyer made these observations, and either odder that BI liked them and included them.

### A Super-Insane View of Jacob Moving About (F. B. Meyer)

God had not said, Go to Shechem; but, "I am the God of Bethel." Bethel, rather than Shechem, was his appointed goal. But alas! we are all too ready to fall short of God's schemes for our elevation and blessedness. And so Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem. But he did worse; he pitched his tent before the city—as Lot did, when he pitched his tent before Sodom. What took him there? Was it that Rachel persuaded him that a little society would be a pleasant relief to the monotony and seclusion of the camp life? Was it that his children urged him to it against his better mind? Was it some idea of obtaining eligible alliances for his children among the children of the land? Whatever may have been his reason, there stands the sad and solemn fact that Jacob pitched his tent before the city. Are not many Christians doing so still? They live on the edge of the world, just on the borderland; far enough away to justify a religious profession, yet near enough to run into it for sweets.

## A Super-Insane View of Jacob Moving About (F. B. Meyer)

They send their children to fashionable schools, that they may acquire the false veneer of the world, and past muster in its drawing rooms. They remove into the fashionable quarters of a town; and adopt a certain style; and throw themselves into the swim of all manner of worldly engagements—that they may get in with “society.” They choose their church, their pastimes, their friendships, on the sole principle of doing as others do; and of forming good alliances for their children. What is all this but pitching their tents towards Shechem? “But what are we to do?” say they; “our children must have society; they cannot be recluses, or be for ever shut up in our homes.” But why need we cater for them by rushing into the world? Are there not plenty of innocent pastimes, on which worldliness has never breathed its withering breath? Are there not enough elements in the bright social intercourse of the family circle; in the play of imagination and wholesome merriment; in games of skill; in the charms of books; in the recital of travel and adventure; in the witchery of wholesome songs and music; and even in the revelations of modern popular science—to beguile the hours of long winter evenings, without calling in the aid of worldly society, whose brightest hours leave a sense of vacuity and thirst, to say nothing of a positive sting? The most earnest religion does not debar us from manly sports: the swift movement of the skater over the frozen lake; the evening row; the exhilarating climb: or from the culture of the faculties of art; and music; and imagination; of science and poesy. Surely, in all these there is enough to brighten Christian homes, without grieving the Holy Spirit, or lowering their tone. But if parents and guardians will insist on something more exciting and stimulating than these, they must reckon on being called upon to pay the price. They may have the dice-box, the theatre, the dance, if they will; but they must learn, by sad experience, the bitter cost. He needs a long spoon who sups with the devil. The fact is, it is much easier to give these things than to arouse oneself to provide something better. The something better needs time and thought; and staying at home from religious meetings, to give it effect: but the ultimate benefit will more than repay the self-denial.

*The Biblical Illustrator*; by Joseph S. Exell; Pub. 1900; from E-sword; Genesis 33:18.

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### Addendum

Now that we have studied these two chapters, notice how they all fit together as a chiasmus.

#### William Ramey’s Chiasmus of Genesis 32:1--33:20

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| A  | Jacob continues his journey to Canaan (32:1a)                              |
| B  | Angels of God encounter Jacob and he names the place "two camps" (32:1b-2) |
| C  | Jacob's entourage to Esau (32:3-6)   |
| D  | Jacob fearfully prepares to meet Esau (32:7-21)                            |
| E  | Jacob and his entourage prepare to meet Esau (32:7-21)                     |
| X  | Jacob wrestles with a "man" and his name is changed to "Israel" (32:24-32) |
| E' | Jacob prepares entourage to meet Esau (33:1-2)                             |
| D' | Jacob meets Esau and bows seven times (33:3)                               |
| C' | Jacob and Esau greet each other (33:4-7)                                   |
| B' | Jacob explains his "two camps" to Esau and departs (33:8-16)               |

## William Ramey's Chiasmus of Genesis 32:1--33:20

A' Jacob arrives in Canaan (33:17-20)

What is in the center of the chiasmus is the most important aspect of it—which is the wrestling match between Jacob and Jesus Christ. Secondly, recall that for E and E', Jacob apparently made some changes. Originally, he was going to hide his family, just in case Esau killed him. However, instead, Jacob sends the present first, then his family, all being placed before Esau. The reason for the change was his encounter with Jesus Christ.

What is clearly pivotal regarding these two chapters are Jacob wrestling with God. It is fascinating that we have a chiasmus within another chiasmus. A chiasmus would make it much easier to memorize a chapter or two of text.

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015 (and slightly edited).

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 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

### Josephus' History of this Time Period

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 Phanuel, 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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It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

### A Complete Translation of Genesis 33

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Jacob and Esau meet up after 20 years	
Jacob lifted up his eyes and he looked and he saw [that] Esau is coming; with 400 men.	Jacob looked up and he saw his brother Esau coming with 400 men.
He divided up the children among [lit., upon] Leah and Rachel and the maids. Jacob [lit., he] put the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind [them]; and Rachel and Joseph behind [them].	Jacob quickly divided up his children between Leah, Rachel and the maids. Jacob arranged the maids and their children in the forefront; with Leah and her children behind them; and Rachel and Joseph behind them.
Jacob [lit., he] then went over before them. He bowed himself to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet him and he embraced him, and he fell upon his neck and he kissed him and they [both] wept.	Jacob went over before his family. He bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother Esau. Then Esau suddenly began to run toward him and he embraced him and fell upon his neck with great affection and kissed him. And they both wept during this time.
Esau looked up [lit., lifted up his eyes] and he saw the women and the children. He said, "Who are these with you?"	Esau looked at those with Jacob, and saw the women and children. He asked Jacob, "Who are these people who are with you?"
Jacob answered [lit., And he said], "[These are] the children that Elohim has graciously [given] to your servant."	Jacob answered, "God has given these children to me."

<b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 33</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
The maids and their children drew near [to Esau] and bowed down [before him]. So also Leah and her children drew near and they bowed down [as well]. And after [them], Joseph draws near, and [his mother] Rachel and they bow down [to Esau].	The maids and their children came closer to Esau and bowed down before him. Leah and her children also came closer to Esau and bowed down as well. And after all of them, Joseph came near to Esau, along with his mother Rachel, and they both bowed down to Esau.
Esau [lit., <i>he</i> ] asked, "Who [is] all this company to you, [the droves] which I have just met?"	Esau asked, "So what about these droves of animals that I have just encountered?"
And he answered, "[This is all a gift to you] To find grace in the eyes of my adonai."	And Jacob answered him, "I hope that by them, I will discover grace in your sight."
Esau then said, "There [is] much [which] I have, my brother. What is yours is yours."	Esau then said, "I am very well off, my brother. What is yours belongs to you."
Jacob then said, "No, please; if, please, I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take [this] present from me [lit., <i>my hand</i> ]. For this reason, I have seen your face [and it is] like seeing the face of Elohim. Furthermore, you have accepted me [despite my actions in the past]. [Therefore] take my blessing, please, which was brought to you. Elohim has graced me because there [is] much [given] to me [as well]." So he urged him and he took [the present].	Jacob then said, "Please reconsider. If I have discovered grace in your sight, then you will take this present from me. Seeing your face has been like seeing the face of God. And I know you that you have accepted me. Therefore, take the blessing which I brought here for you. God has given me great grace and He has blessed me greatly as well." Jacob continued to urge Esau until he took the present.
Esau [lit., <i>he</i> ] then said, "Let's break camp and let us depart. I will go in front of you."	Esau later said, "Let's break camp and depart; I will go before you."
Jacob answered him [lit., <i>and he said</i> ], "My lord knows that the children [are young and] delicate and the flocks and herds with me are nursing; and I have over-driven them [from] day one, and all the flock [might] die. Please [let] my adonai pass over before his servant and I will go forward slowly according to the pace of the cattle [lit., <i>work</i> ] who are before me and according to the pace of my children until I come to my adonai in Seir."	Then Jacob said to him, "My lord can see that my children are young and delicate and that the flocks and herds are nursing, all of which concerns me. I have possibly over-driven them from the start; and if I keep it up, all the flock could die. Let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will move along at a more leisurely pace, according to the cattle that you see before me and according to the pace of my own children. I will move at a slower rate until I come to my lord in Seir."
Esau said, "Let me please leave with you some of the people who [are] with me."	Esau said, "Let me then leave with you some of the men who are with me."
But he said, "Why [is] this? [Obviously] I have found grace in the eyes of my adonai [but I do not need them]."	But Jacob said, "There is no need; that I have found grace in your sight is good enough."
Esau returns to Seir and Jacob settles down in Succoth	

A Complete Translation of Genesis 33	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
So Esau returned that day by his road to Seir; while Jacob journeyed to Succoth [instead]. He built a house [there] for himself and he made booths for his cattle; therefore, he called the name of [that] place Succoth.	Esau returned to Seir, traveling along the King's Highway, while Jacob journeyed to Succoth instead. There, he built a house for himself and he made booths for his cattle. Therefore, he named that place <i>Succoth</i> .
Jacob moves to Shechem	
Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. He camped out before [this] city.	Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan on his way from Paddan-aram. He camped out before this city.
He purchased a parcel of the field (where he had pitched his tent) from the sons of Hamor ([Hamor] is the father of Shechem) for a hundred silver coins.	He purchased a parcel of land from the sons of Hamor for a hundred silver coins. This is where he had pitched his tent. Hamor is the father of Shechem.
He built an altar there and called it <i>Él-Elohim of Israel</i> .	He built an altar there and named it <i>Él, the God of Israel</i> .
<a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>	<a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>

R. B. Thieme, Jr. did not cover this chapter in any of his available studies. I did not come across any Psalms pertinent to this study:

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Genesis 33		
Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr. does not appear to have covered this chapter in any available series.		
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).



<b>Chapter Outline</b>		<b>Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines</b>
<b>Beginning of Document</b>	<b>Definition of Terms</b>	<b>Introduction and Text</b>
<b>Chapter Summary</b>	<b>Addendum</b>	<b>A Complete Translation</b>
<b><a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a></b>		<b>Exegetical Studies in Genesis</b>