

Genesis Chapter Thirty-two



~ Today, the sun rises on another great chapter in the Bible. I used to feel like I say that about every chapter, but I realize now I don't say it about every chapter. I only say it about ninety-seven percent of the chapters we come to. Well, this chapter is the high point in the life of Jacob. We have seen some very poor decisions by Jacob and the consequences of his sins; so, I feel very definitely that this is the turning point in his life. This is not the calling from God to Jacob in regard to salvation, however, because Jacob has been God's man since his beginning. God says He preordained and predestinated us before the foundations of the world were laid. If you're a believer – that means you! We're not going into the doctrine of election today; that's the job of Peter when we get to his epistles. We will consider it thoroughly at that time. In this report from our Spiritual Safari, we're going to see a very definite transformation in the heart and life of Jacob.

Jacob and Lot are two prime examples teaching us that we need to be very careful about judging other people's salvation. There are many, many people that don't appear, act or live as a Christian probably should – but – I'm also sure that they are saved! That is, I'm ALMOST sure they are saved – I really don't know. I mean, how could I? To presume to know would not be credible; except the Bible says Lot was a just man – so, that's okay with me. I will leave that in the hands of the Lord; but because I see no evidence, it gives me questions. I could, likewise, say I don't have any questions in this regard and that I take all of this at face value - in the so called "blind faith" - but I don't have blind faith. In fact, my faith is, apparently, smaller than a mustard seed grain so, quite frankly, I sometimes question if I even have any faith at all. Jacob, to his credit, has had spotted revelations from God and there has been a response; even if the response has been in an arrogant and using sort of way. Sorry friends, looks like we're just in a

terrible mess that could get mean and nasty in our safari – shall we look to the Lord? ~

Father in Heaven, God and Creator of this universe, please lead us in all understanding and wisdom as You cripple Jacob. Perhaps You will finally get our attention without all the unnecessary drama today. I understand You had no problem breaking Jacobs's leg; for Whom Thou lovest, Thou chasteneth. Lord, I know that's your method; and I know that discipline is the only method You use. Father, I ask that You put us not through the fires of testing to prove us unto Yourself; but that You examine our lives and see if there be any guile found within us. Isaiah saith, "...the Lord giveth power to the faint and to those that have no power giveth he strength." I am faint today, Lord, and I need strength! ~

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

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

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

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

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

~ As soon as Jacob breaks from Laban he is in God's direct will for his life. So, God's angels immediately met him. Unfortunately for Jacob, this is when God also begins to really deal seriously with Jacob in his life; and God is going to literally break Jacob now – both physically and spiritually. Remember, Jesus saith, "whosoever shall fall upon this Rock shall be broken, but whosoever this Rock shall fall upon shall be ground to powder." Breaking Jacob is the only way the Lord could bring him into a real and vital

relationship with Him. Well, even with all of that love from God, Jacob still thinks he is just ever so clever. He cannot let go of the manipulations. He plans to refer to Esau as “lord” – and to himself as “thy servant Jacob” – but that wasn’t the way Jacob had left things so long ago. How utterly confused and conflicted this man still is....

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

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

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

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

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

~ Here, I’m sure Jacob interrogates his servant and asks, “....did you note any animosity in Esau?” To which the servant replies, “....no, he seemed rather glad to see me and glad that you were coming to meet him. In fact, he’s coming to meet you.” Of course, Jacob thinks Esau is glad to have the opportunity to kill him in revenge. So, Jacob, again, is being unreasonable here. I think I could make the case he wasn’t trusting the Lord. “Two bands” speak of the divided mind of Jacob as he appeals to God for mercy. Jacob appeals to God on the grounds that God is Lord of his father Abraham and Isaac. From here forward we will see a change in the life of Jacob. This will be the first humility Jacob ever shows in his life. It is the first acknowledgment that Jacob MIGHT be a sinner when he finally realizes in confession to God, saying, “....I’m not worthy of the least of Thy mercies.”

We will do well to bow in reverent prayer and follow Jacob now to the Throne Room of God our Father by confessing along the same lines.

The number of Christians who either do not realize or refuse to acknowledge that they are sinners is altogether frightening. Some string sinful lifestyles out so long that decades slip away in waste. Thank God He says He will restore the years the locust hath eaten – but it would certainly do well to slip into obedience down here and walk in harmony, not hostility, with God, would it not? I talk to people regularly around this forum on which I teach – and even in my own church – who go out of their way to tell me that they do not sin. They tell me all about the things they have done and advise me of their salvation repeatedly – of which I'm still not totally convinced with most of them - and they also seem to always question my salvation. They seem to have NO IDEA that their old nature isn't going to Heaven – but is going back to dust! That self-awareness is what causes Jacob to cry out further to the Lord here....

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

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

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

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

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

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

~ So, the strategy was to send out one wave of gifts to Esau and then another; so that, by the time Esau gets to the back of the caravan and to Jacob and the family, he should be satisfied with these huge gifts and not be so angry. That's Jacobs thinking, anyways – but Jacob is still a very conniving person not trusting – at least, not fully – trusting God. To his credit, Jacob has called on the name of the Lord and he has prayed - reminding Him that His instructions were to return to that land. Jacob also tells God that God should help him because Jacob is, after all, just following His orders. However, Jacob still doesn't totally believe God here! Jacob just goes right ahead and makes these other arrangements without any leading from the Lord. Many of us take our burdens to the Lord in prayer and lay them down at His feet, too. We may even spread them all out and arrange them to be seen. Then, when we are finished praying, we pack the problems back up neatly, sling them back over our shoulder, and go on our way with the burden again. At least, that's how it works out in MY life – how about yours? Do you really believe God? Do you really trust Him as you should? ~

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~ So, we're with Jacob at a very lonely and desolate place tonight. This will be a dark night for this man. To rise up and travel in the desert by night reveals a desperate situation. All the critters can see you - but you can't see them – and they are everywhere. This place they are in is a tremendous wilderness desert. The brook Jabbok is a sheep feeding area where they could cross over. It is literally one of the bleakest pieces of land on earth to this day. It's very mountainous and rugged - and here we are with Jacob crossing over. Jacob is not a happy man at this point in his life. He is filled with fear and doubt. Jacob mistreated Esau and did things Jacob's way and not God's way back then. God wanted it done His way, but it was not done His way. Jacob is reaping what he has sown. Here, Jacob is sending everything he owned and loved across the brook in a rather lame escape plan. Jacob was thinking Esau might spare the family and only kill him! Naturally, he's terrified.

So, we really need to get the rules of this wrestling match straight before we get into it with God in this report. I have heard it stated that Jacob did the wrestling - but Jacob didn't do any wrestling at all. Jacob wasn't interested in wrestling anyone. Let's be real, Jacob was running away from trouble – he wasn't running TO another fight – nor to God's will for his life. Uncle Laban is behind him - but even that didn't end well at all. I'm sure Jacob is worried that Laban will "double-back" any moment now and attack in the middle of the night, you may be sure. Esau is in front of him – Laban behind - and Jacob is no match for either one. Jacob has no idea which way to turn, and he is totally confused in his life right now. So, if you really think Jacob was looking for another fight or interested in taking on some third problem that night I say you're entirely wrong.

A very famous magazine many years ago ran an article in their Sporting section regarding who was the greatest wrestler at that time; and it said, “....no one has wrestled the greatest wrestler of all time, Jacob.” The magazine received and published a letter from some person who asked, “....can you tell me more about this new wrestler Jacob?” Many people never read anything like this safari stuff at all, friends. They never study the Bible in any meaningful fashion. So, they are spiritually dead. Jacob is out there in the dark wilderness at some totally inhospitable place by choice – his OWN choice. Jacob is looking for a peaceful way home now – not a fight. Who is the man that wrestled Jacob? There has been a great deal of speculation about who this is. Our Spiritual Safari teaches that this is the pre-incarnate Christ; and we have ample evidence to make that statement.

Hosea 12: 1 Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt. 2 The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. 3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial ~

~ Genesis XXXII

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

~ Jehovah, the pre-incarnate Christ, wrestled with Jacob that night – and God literally beat him silly. Jacob is as stubborn as a mule, and he won't give up against God. So, God will win on His Own terms. What's happening here is that Jacob will just be left clinging to a hope. That's all. Jacob won't be proud and fighting when this is all over – he'll be seriously hurting from defeat. He found out tonight that you don't get anywhere by struggling and fighting against God! The ONLY way we EVER get ANYWHERE with God is by YIELDING to Christ and to His will for our life. Let's clarify, though, believing

God is not holding onto God, believing God is to believe that God is holding onto us! Miraculous, marvelous, magical, mystical, mighty and myriad truths were revealed when God touched Jacob to break him....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

~ So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with a crippled Jacob. God broke him down to get his attention, friends. He will do that to you and I, too, in order to bring us to a total and complete dependence upon Him if He has to; and He makes no apologies for doing so. Saul of Tarsus will tell us his troubles in the seventh chapter of Romans by admitting that he couldn't win with God, either. Only when we let go and allow the Lord to hold us in His will and live through us in His Holy Spirit will He move in our lives to make us a service unto Himself. We get the victory not by fighting and struggling; but by yielding to God and allowing Him to fight and get the victory and the glory in our lives for Himself. That is not only reassuring and comforting to me; but it's the

only way we'll ever get anywhere with God today, my beloved. That's the only way we can move on and into tomorrow in our so-called safari ~

