

The Book of Genesis

Chapter Thirty Two

Jacob's New Name - Israel

Lesson Verse: Eph 6:12

I. Lesson Introduction

- A. Jacob finds himself in dire straits. He is a man with four wives, twelve children, many animals, and servants. He cannot go back to his father-in-law's home. He cannot easily enter into his home land because he cannot slip in with all his possession unbeknown to Esau. Reality sets in and he realizes he is helpless.
- B. Although it has been over 20 years, Jacob remembered that Esau planned to kill him for his deceptive acts. He must now face his brother Esau. Jacob has no place to turn.
- C. Some Points to Ponder:
 1. When we have disagreements with our family, friends, and brothers and sisters within the local church body, why is it so important to not allow these grievances and disagreements to remain?
 2. Does appeasing someone we have offended with gifts relieve us of blame? Does appeasement removes any obligations on our part to restore relationships?
 3. Is it necessary for Christians to get alone with God and wrestle as did Jacob?
 4. What was significant about changing Jacob's name to Israel?

II. Lesson

A. Jacob Comes Face To Face With His _____ (*Num 32:23*)

1. No matter where we may run, or how hard we try, we cannot escape from the errors of our past. As long as those errors remain they will haunt us. What we must do is stop and face them. That is the only way we will be free.
2. When the children of Israel were ready to enter the Promised Land, the tribe of Ruben and Gad wanted to stay on the other side of Jordan. They would go and help conquer the land, and afterwards they would settle down on this side of Jordan. Moses told the tribes that if they failed to honour their vows, there was one thing for certain: Their sins would find them out.
3. So will ours. Our sins know exactly where we are and we know exactly where are sins our: they are with us, *Psa 32:1-5*. King David was well aware that his transgression was with him continually. There was no place to run to get rid of it except to the Lord, *Ps. 38:1-22*. This is where Jacob finds himself, face to face with a deed committed twenty years ago. His sin is about to find him.
4. Jacob Sought Esau.
 - a. Jacob sought to elevate Esau by calling him 'lord' (4).
 - b. Three time Jacob referred to Esau as lord. Four times Jacob referred to himself as a servant. Jacob was trying to elevate Esau while debasing himself.
5. Diplomacy was not one of Jacob's attributes, *Prov 18:19*.
 - a. Solomon tells us that it is easier to conquer a city than it is to win back an offended _____ . Why is this? Why is it easier to raise the flag of victory upon the walls of a conquered city than it is to humble our hearts and apologize to our brother?
 - b. What we seldom realize is that in order to raise the flag in victory someone else has to either die or surrender to our dominating display of power. In our quest for victory we will destroy all hope of mending the strife.
 - c. Contentions between brothers, Esau and Jacob, whether in our church family or in the immediately family, divide. In just a matter of time family members choose sides and before long, a family feud has erupted. Often the weapons of our strife may be our tongues and, in extreme cases, blood may be shed. After all, was it not those from His own household that had the Saviour crucified?
 - d. Many times we allow some little word, some little action, or even good intentions to be taken out of context. Sometimes we are the offender and sometimes we are the offended one. Once the injustice has begun, we allow it to take root in our hearts. Contention is the only thing known to

- man that has the ability to thrive in stone. Once contentions imbeds itself in a heart of stone, they grow to be stronger than the bars of a castle.
- e. There are only two forces in the universe that can move these bars imbedded in a heart of stone. One is a forgiving spirit, and the other is the Lord. If we continue to allow contention to grow, and if we do not dissolve this stone and rid our life of it, Jesus just may have to become a stone mason and chip the stone away little by little or just blow the stone up with a blast and start all over with the little pieces.
 - f. One thing is certain: there will be no fruit of the spirit growing in a heart of stone. *Luke 6:45*.
6. The Messengers Return (6). Jacob sent out his ambassadors to find Esau and make a peace offering. They return but the message they deliver is not one Jacob wanted to hear.
 7. Esau's _____.
 - a. If Jacob believed that Esau was going to forget the past, the army seemed to dispel that concept.
 - b. Esau has an army of over 400 men.
 - c. What does Jacob have at his command? Just a few women and children.
 8. Jacob is afraid and divides his company.
 - a. He acts out of fear instead of faith, *Rom 14:23*. Anyone with any military or police training will tell you that fear is contagious and it must be squelched immediately. When an army acts out of fear, the decisions made are usually costly.
 - b. United we stand. Divided we fall. It is OK to divide, but first we must multiply. Jacob divided his family. His thoughts are that if one party is attacked the other may escape. What is sad about all of this is the fact that Jacob acted before he prayed. Furthermore, his prayer was not one of forgiveness, but was rather one of deliverance. Jacob wanted God to deliver him from the threat of Esau without Jacob having to ask Esau to forgive him.
 9. Jacob's _____ (9-12).
 - a. Jacob's prayer is one of asking God to do something for him. Jacob has yet to ask God what is it I can do for you? Jacob referred to the Lord as the Lord of his fathers. Is not he the God of Jacob as well?
 - b. Reminded God of the covenant (9).
 - 1) Jacob reminded the Lord that he left the house of Laban because the Lord told him it was time to return. He conveniently pleaded his case that should something happen to the mother and the children, that the promises of God would become null and void. He is about 97 years old at this time and in a few years another son will be born to him. He is almost as old as Abraham was when Isaac was born.
 - 2) Still no forgiveness on the part of Jacob. Still no confession that he lied to his father Isaac when he stole the blessing. This prayer is very narrow-minded and selfish.
 - c. Humbled himself before God (10)
 - 1) As near he comes to confessing is when he states that he is unworthy of any blessings, but he has yet to say that he is sorry for his deceptive ways.
 - 2) He has yet to apologize for not paying his vows made to the Lord twenty years ago.
 - 3) He is even so bold as to tell the Lord that by the power of his staff he passed over Jordan, and now, he has divided his household into two bands.
 - 4) To hear him tell it, he has done all this by himself. Naturally we ask then why is he bothering to pray, if Jacob is doing it all. Just what is it he expects God to do?
 - d. Asked God for deliverance (11).
 - 1) The reason he prays is because right now he is definitely afraid of his Esau. He was not afraid when he deceived him into selling him the birth right. Fear did not bother him when he lied to Isaac. Now he fears. Fear is something that cannot be fought with physical abilities. We must fight fear with courage, neither or which have physical attributes.
 - 2) For the past 20 years Jacob has not had to face his brother. Esau did not come looking for Jacob. Jacob did not really come looking for Esau. Esau was just some thing that Jacob could not avoid. Before Jacob could lay hold on the family blessings, he must first face Esau. That was why he prayed. He needed God to get the blessing.
 - e. Again reminds God of the promised blessings (12).

10. Jacob Sought To _____ Esau (14-20).

- a. After his prayer of deliverance Jacob decided to do what every man does that relies on self for self-preservation. He decided to appease Esau with the works of his hands.
- b. He believed that if he gave him a large enough present it would put some salve on the sore between them.
- c. He is willing to try and buy a little peace of mind. He has not realized that all he must do is humble his heart and he could have all the peace of mind he wanted. It is easier to appease than it is to humble self and apologize.

B. **The Lord _____ With Jacob (22-32). The Right Battle – the Battle before the Battle**

1. Here is one of those great events, that when read about, we wonder just why the God of Creation could wrestle with someone and not overcome them with the twitching of a finger? Why would God spend all night wrestling with a man that is about 97 years old? Why would a man 97 years old want to wrestle all night? There is not one answer to these questions but several.
 - a. One answer lies in the fact that God used Jacob as an illustration for us, **Rom 15:4**. Jacob is old by our standards, but still physically strong and independent of God. He has not bothered to seek forgiveness, but still expects the blessing. Does this sound familiar?
 - b. Jacob could have saved himself a weary night by a simple act of humility. If we would just humble our hearts and let go of those things that hinder our relationship, the blessing of the Lord would be at our beck and call.
2. Jacob Is Alone With _____ (24).
 - a. Jacob's company is divided into two bands. They passed over the brook and Jacob is left alone. This is the first time in 20 years that he has been alone with God. He is right where he was when he left home years ago. It was when he was alone with God that he had a vision, but no earthly possession; he was running from Esau, and now he faces Esau. He again has no possessions at hand, but he now has God at hand.
 - b. That this was a literal physical wrestling match between man and Creator is no doubt. However, it is also a spiritual battle between Creator and creation. The creation was not willing to be subdued or come under subjection of its Creator.
 - c. Before the night is over, the Creator must inflict bodily pain to His creation.
3. Jacob divested himself of his possessions, but held on to his _____ and _____ (23-24).
 - a. If Jacob feared for the safety of his family, as he told the Lord (11), then why did he spend the night away from them? This was not rational and the decision was most likely made in fear. Jacob was alone and away from family and the earthly possession wherein he laboured under the hand of Laban. However, there are a couple of things he will not let go of and they are his strength and pride.
 - b. God wanted him to get rid of all things that stood between them. Jacob wanted to come to God on Jacob's terms. This mode and method that Jacob uses is still much in vogue today.
4. Christians must get alone with God and allow Him to show us what we are holding on to that prevents Him from blessing us.
 - a. There comes a time in the lives of each Christian when we must get alone with God and do some serious soul searching. We must remove *self* apart from family and possessions and determine just what are the most important things in our lives. It is in times such as these when we must let go and let God do a work in us.
 - b. Born again children of God are aware they have some blessings coming to them. They are not ashamed to remind God when their blessings are overdue. They come boldly to the throne of grace in spite of how they treat their brothers and sisters in the church. Some cannot understand why God has withheld power and prestige from them. Others do not hide their face in shame when they seek a financial blessing even though they fail to give to God what is already His. Some of us are even ready to wrestle a blessing from God just as did Jacob. We do act much like Jacob.
5. The MAN Who Wrestled With Jacob (24).

- a. God had to bring Jacob to a place where Jacob must solely depend on him. Jacob fought the Lord so hard and long and the heart of Jacob was so determined, that the Lord had to strike Jacob in the heart of his strength before Jacob would let go and simply cling to the Lord.
 - b. For a 97 year old man willing to wrestle with the Lord all night, one question naturally comes to mind: "Why was he afraid of Esau?" Why would Jacob wrestle with the Lord all night, his Creator, and be afraid to humble his heart and confess his sin to his brother? There is not but one answer: Pride.
 - c. The Man that wrestled with him was the Messiah. Hosea verified that the man that wrestled with Jacob was the Lord Himself. (Hos. 12:3-4)
6. The Lord had to bring Jacob to a place where He could use him.
- a. Jacob wrestled in the flesh against what he first thought was flesh. Refusing to surrender, he held on to the angel of the Lord. After he refused to let go, the Lord touched him in the hollow of his thigh, and with all his strength gone, all he could do was cling. He was blest but it cost him because he would not surrender.
7. God must get each of us to a place where we can be used.
- a. Each of us must realize that we must let go of ever what it is that hinders us from being in his will. We ought to be ashamed if God should have to wrestle it from us. The secret to getting prayers answered, the secret of having our way with God is not wrestling with Him. The answer is being in his will.
 - b. Jacob wanted the blessings that went with the birthright. However, he did not want to let go completely and trust the Lord. Jacob is afraid of Esau and has no desire to face him. This mattered not, he was determined to hold on to God and demand a blessing.
 - c. Before God could give him the blessing, he had to be brought to a place where he could do nothing but cling. Jacob was forced to cling, because God touched him in his stronghold, and Jacob immediately became powerless. All Jacob had to do was be humble and the blessing would have been given to him without him demanding it. God already promised it.
 - d. Now let us compare self to Jacob. Each of us must examine our heart, our motives, and God's will for us. Before we demand the blessing, we ought to be willing to give up those things that prevent us from being where God can bless us has He already promised. We must take this a step further and come to the conclusion that if I remain obstinate, God might just do to me what he did to Jacob. He might cause me some physical pain to get my attention.
8. The _____.
- a. Jacob already had deceived Esau into selling him his birthright. Years later he lied to Isaac and tricked him into giving him the better of the blessing while Esau was away. At Bethel one night God promised him seven things. Now here he is wrestling a blessing from the Lord again.
 - b. Jacob's opponent entreated him to let Him go, *Ex. 33:20*.
 - 1) This man wrestling with Jacob was the pre-incarnate Christ. It was not proper nor fitting for Jacob to see the face of the Lord. This meant little to Jacob. Jacob not only spent the night physically wrestling with the Lord, he also spent the night in agonizing prayer. The Lord is ready to leave Jacob because Jacob would not let go, physically and spiritually, of the things in his life. The Lord would have come back and deal again with Jacob until Jacob relented. The Lord prevailed not this night (25, against Jacob).
 - 2) Jacob already had many things promised to him. He was not satisfied until he had it all. Just what it is he would not let go, we are not told exactly. I believe it was his strength and pride. God wanted Jacob to be dependent on Him. Jacob was not ready to walk by faith where God wanted to go. This is manifested in the next two chapters.
 - c. With no strength left, Jacob could not fight, only cling. *Psa 20:6 Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.*
 - 1) The Lord was ready to leave Jacob, but Jacob would not let go of Him. The Lord touched his thigh and Jacob became limp and weak. The fight was gone out of him, and now physically exhausted he could only hold on, cling, to the Lord.

- 2) Why would he not humble his heart before day begin to break in the Eastern sky? Why was it easier to wrestle with the Lord all night than to humble his heart? Why was it easier to endure the physical pain than it was to humble his heart and tell the Lord, "I lean on you."
 - 3) The only way to answer those questions is for us to look at how long God has wrestled with us and answer it for self. Can we say as Peter and then stand by our words to whom shall we go, *John 6:64-69*.
- d. Jacob's name was changed, from _____ which meant trickster, to Israel a name that means "_____".
9. Where Is OUR Strength?
 - a. Jacob as a man stood and wrestled with God. After the night of physical and spiritual activities his named was changed to Israel. What a glorious blessing!
 - b. No longer would he be known as the joker or one who tricks. From now on when his name was called, it was as if God Himself was speaking. This was indeed what actually happened because God used the twelve tribes of Israel and through them He gave the whole world Ten Commandments and a noble race of fighters.
 - c. The only drawback to this blessing was Jacob had to realize just where his strength resided. It was not in his flesh, even though he was a powerful man at 97 years of age. It is a wise man who realizes his strength is in the Lord.
 10. David's strength.
 - a. *Psa 27:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*
 - b. It took David many years to realize just where his strength was. David was like many of us today. We fight _____ today and succumb to _____ tomorrow. Jacob was the same. He fought everyone and anyone, but at least finally learned to wrestle with God and win!
 11. Christians must realize wherein is our strength.
 - a. Where is our strength? The day we ceased wrestling with the Holy Ghost and realized we could not save ourselves, we also received a blessing by having our names also changed. We ceased being lost sinners and became born again Christians.
 - b. From that moment on we also speak as the voice of God. We have power with the Lord, and we can also prevail. The Holy Ghost lives within each of us. We have the power to take Him to places He does not want to go. We can force feed Him things the He has no desire to hear, taste, touch, see, and smell. We prevail.
 - c. However, is that our strength, making God hang around until the day breaks in the East in places He has no desire to be? No that is not our strength. Our strength is in the Lord.
 - d. Sad it is that many times God must also wound us before we humble our hearts. It is my belief that Jacob walked with a limp for the rest of his life. The limp was a constant reminder that the blessing came with great pain because he would not humble his heart. The limp was a continual arrow that pointed the way to the Lord as the source of his strength.
 12. Christians must realize what God has commanded us to do, *Acts 1:8*.
 - a. The day our names were changed we were also commanded to go and do some things for the Lord. We were told to be witnesses. We were told to go in His power and His strength.
 - b. After that night from then on each time the name of Israel is heard it is as if some one says, "God commands." The name Jacob meant heel-catcher. He would no longer be known as such. Now his actions must reflect his new name: God commands.
 - c. Just as it was expected of Jacob to reflect his new identity, the same is also expected of us. Our name is Christian. Therefore, we ought to act it. We say we go to such and such church. Does our lives reflect such?
 13. If we desire to be effective witness, we must cling to Him, *Psa 71:16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*

III. Conclusion – What is YOUR Name in heaven?