



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 54



THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literat Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB PREPARES TO MEET ESAU

Gen 32:1 "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ² And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim. ³ And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴ And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: ⁵ And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. ⁶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. ⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; ⁸ And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. ⁹ And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: ¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. ¹¹ Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. ¹² And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. ¹³ And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; ¹⁴ Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, ¹⁵ Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. ¹⁶ And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. ¹⁷ And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? ¹⁸ Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. ¹⁹ And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. ²⁰ And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. ²¹ So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night 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." (Genesis 32:1-23)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

As Jacob goes on his way, the angels of God met him, and he recognizes them as "God's host." He then sent messengers into Edom,

commanding them to speak to Esau concerning his circumstances, gifts he had prepared for him, and arrival. After hearing that Esau was coming with four hundred men, Jacob feared and divided

the company with him into two groups, thinking this would guarantee the survival of one group. Jacob then prays to God with great humility, asking for deliverance, and reminding the Lord

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what He had promised. That night he prepared a gift for Esau, taking from the increase that God had given to him. He put each herd in charge of a servant, and commanded them to keep a distance from one another. He then told them that when Esau asked who they were, where they were going, and whose flocks they were herding, to say they belonged to Esau's servant, Jacob, and that they were gifts to Esau. During the night he took his wives and their children and sent them over the ford Jabbok with all that he had kept.

GOD'S MANNER OF REPORTING HISTORY

It is imperative that we note the manner in which God reports history. It will assist us in shaping our own idea of life. To the point of our text, the lives on which the record has particularly focused is Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Other records are, in a way, incidental, although they are important. However, these are the people who were most critically involved in God's eternal purpose – what He initiated on earth, and would culminate in glory.

Over a period of around 2,000-2200 years, the focus is placed upon five men. And even in their lives, a relatively small percentage of their lives is reported.

- ➔ Adam, for example, lived 930 years, yet we only know things related to the beginning of his life.
- ➔ Noah lived 950 years. We know nothing of the first 480 years, and little of the last 330 years.
- ➔ Abraham lived 175 years. We know barely anything about the first 75 years of his life. In the last 100 years we are only exposed to matters relating to his call to be used by God.
- ➔ Isaac lived 180 years. Extremely few things are revealed about his life – those things relating to his relation to the purpose of God.
- ➔ Jacob lived 157 years. The only parts of his life that are revealed are those bearing on the purpose of God.

In all of these men, incidentals that were not related to what God was doing were not reported. There is no record of the novelties of their lives.

WHY ARE SUCH RECORDS GIVEN?

NAME	LIFE	RECORD
ADAM	930	1-Creation 2-Names animals 3-Given Eve 4-Sins and cast out
NOAH	950	1-Builds ark 2-Saved from flood 3-Curses Ham
ABRAHAM	175	1-Call 2-Time in Egypt 3-Experiences with Lot 4-Related to Ishmael 5-Related to Isaac 6-Divine appearances
ISAAC	180	1-Obtaining a wife 2-Time in Gerar 3-Jacob & Esau 4-Divine appearances
JACOB	157	1-Experience with Esau 2-Obtaining a wife 3-Time with Laban 4-Confronting Esau 5-Time in Canaan 6-Time in Egypt

There is a reason for, what appears to be, truncated history. First, there is a purpose for Scripture, and it is not merely to familiarize us with history. The purpose for Scripture is succinctly stated:

➔ **TO EQUIP THE MAN OF GOD.** *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (2 Tim 3:16-17).

➔ **THAT WE MIGHT LEARN HOW TO LIVE IN HOPE.** *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."* (Rom 15:4).

➔ **TO PROVIDE PROFITABLE EXAMPLES OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MEN.** Of the things that are reported it is written, *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"* (1 Cor 10:11).

SPECIFIC PEOPLE WERE CHOSEN

Specific people were chosen in which we might see how God works with men. The function of both faith and hope were demonstrated in them, as well as the effect of the call of God upon men – producing diligence, obedience, perseverance, etc. The lives of those early saints introduced us to what God is doing in salvation. In them we see the kind of response that is induced by the work of God, and what is required for men to walk with Him.

Those early saints were not super-human specimens. Their records were not written in order for us to see what a person could do if he put his mind to something particular. **The revelation of human potential was not the point. Rather, it was to demonstrate what God could do with men who were themselves unequal to the things they were called to do.** Although things were faced like barren women, an impotent

man, a son who was unqualified for the inheritance, abuse by foreigners, famines, and a host of other things that were faced, **the will of the Lord was done in these people.**

The record of their lives was tailored to produce correct ideas about God, His calling, faith, and hope.

SOMETHING TO BE LEARNED

I approach this matter with great caution, lest I speak in a way that appears to be condemning. Our lives are not to be lived with a focus on the daily details of life. That is, we are not to become absorbed with the minutia of life. Speaking of this very thing, Jesus said, *"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"* (Matt 6:25). To the mind of the flesh, that does not seem like a practical thing. However, that is only because *"the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"* (Rom 8:7).

Doctrinally, our lives are to be lived in this manner.

➔ **A LIVING SACRIFICE.** *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of*

God." (Rom 12:1-2)

➔ **TO THE GLORY OF GOD.** *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* (1 Cor 10:31)

➔ **GIVING THANKS TO GOD.** *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* (Col 3:17)

➔ **THE DYING AND LIVING OF JESUS SEEN IN OUR BODIES.** *"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."* (2 Cor 4:10-11)

➔

THE FASHION OF THE TIMES

The fashion of our times is to focus on the mini-details of life – complaining about every little inconvenience, and overstating outward advantages. **This is not an area in which men can legislate to others. It is something that is best addressed by exhortations to live for the Lord, and to ponder what is written in the heavenly "books" concerning our lives** (Rev 20:12). There are professing Christians who have experienced less acute consciousness of the Living God than Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **In this day of salvation, this is not an acceptable circumstance.** Every person in Christ has continual access to God – access *"with confidence"* (Eph 3:12).

Unlike the patriarchs of old, the least in the Kingdom has the indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:11; 1 John 3:24).

I call upon you learn from the record of holy men how to live, what to accent, and the role of faith and hope. These manners were:

➔ Introduced by the *"fathers."*

➔ Presented in the Law, together with its Types and Shadows.

➔ The Prophets revealed the benefits of living for God, and the penalties for failing to so live.

➔ John the Baptist announced the necessity for repudiating past manners.

➔ Jesus lived out the sanctified life before men, and taught them of its essentiality.

➔ The apostles defined holiness, teaching that it was necessary for Divine acceptance.

All of this is to say that the reason for and objective of living must extend further than the moment. In order for that to take place, the minutia of life cannot be our stress, nor can we afford to allow it to capture our attention for any extended period. No believer can afford to get caught up in the daily details of life, or focus upon them as though there was no existence or experience after death. This is confirmed by the manner in which the lives of the patriarchs are made known – a Divinely deliberate manner.

THE ANGELS OF GOD MET JACOB

Gen 32:1 ***"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him."*** ² ***And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim."***

AS JACOB WENT ON HIS WAY

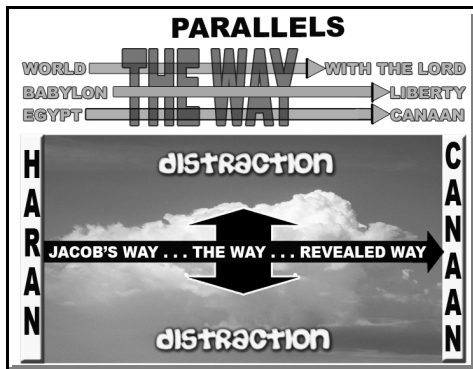
"And Jacob went on his way . . ."

Other versions read, *"So Jacob went,"* ^{NKJV} *"Now as Jacob went,"* ^{NASB} *"Jacob also went,"* ^{NIV} *"So Jacob and his household started on again,"* ^{LIVING} *"went forth unto his own way,"* ^{ABP} *"departed for his journey,"* ^{BRENTON} *"was on his way back home,"* ^{CEV} and *"went on the journey he had begun."* ^{DARBY}

"His way" was Jacob's **appointed** way – the way back to Canaan. By definition, Jacob's *"way"* was the way of *"return unto the land of"* his *"kindred,"* the way specified by the Lord God Himself (Gen 31:13). **So far as Jacob was concerned, it was the way of obedience, and the way of faith.**

This had to do with the will of the Lord. Actually, Jacob was not safe in any other “way.” **God would not be with him in any other way.** The Lord had promised, *“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father . . .”* *“And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee . . .”* *“I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred”* (Gen 26:3; 31:3,31).

Divine direction and blessing takes place while men are in His appointed way. When Abraham’s servant went to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac, he told how God had directed him to the appointed place. *“And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren”* (Gen 24:27).



A Kingdom Secret

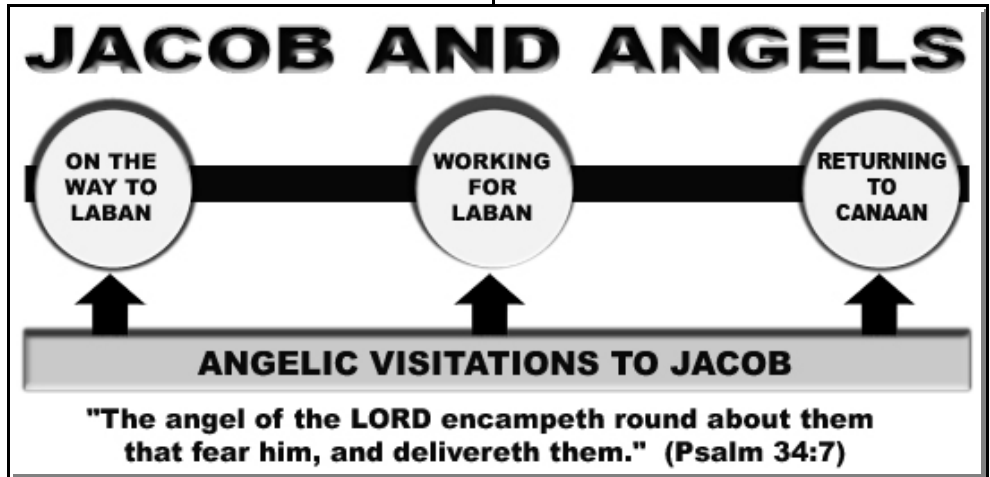
Many professing Christians maintain a very sloppy spiritual walk. They really are not very close to the Lord, and appear to be unaware that this is the case. They are too close to the world, and spend too little time preparing themselves for their appointed death and the day of judgment. Simply put, they are not walking on the strait and narrow way (Matt 7:13-14) – the “highway” called “the way of holiness” (Isa 35:8).

The critical factor of which they are unaware is that Divine direction is only experienced when one is “in the way,” or traveling on the proper road. Solomon put it this way: *“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”* (Prov 3:6). David said it this way: *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He*

So far as words are concerned, this is certainly easy enough to understand. However, where the heart is fragmented, and man’s foundational impetus is not the Lord, this truth, by design, remains a mystery.

THE ANGELS OF GOD MET HIM

“ . . . and the angels of God met



delighteth in his way” (Psa 37:23).

Further, there is only one way that leads to glory. Encapsulated in a Person, it is the Lord Jesus Christ, who said *“I am the Way”* (John 14:6). By this, Jesus did not mean He was the methodology, or a kind of code that is uttered when His name is spoken. He is rather “the way” in the sense of a road, or highway. The idea is that the way to heaven involves the fellowship of Jesus, into which we have been called (1 Cor 1:9). There is awareness, sensitivity, reciprocity, and participation on this God-given Way.

It is as we are walking on the appointed Way that we are directed by God. That is, when we are in fellowship with Jesus, depending and relying upon Him, casting our burdens upon Him, and following close to Him, that we are directed by God and led by the Spirit to our appointed destination. The person who chooses to walk “in the flesh” (Rom 8:8) cannot be consciously directed by the Lord. **“The flesh” closes the spiritual eyes, and stops the ears.**

him. . .” Other versions read, *“God’s messengers approached him,”* ^{CEB} *“God’s angels met him”* ^{CSB} *“God’s angels encountered him”* ^{NAB} *“angels of God came to meet him”* ^{NLT} *“messengers of God come upon him”* ^{YLT} *“he saw the camp of God encamped,”* ^{ABP} *“came face to face with the angels of God,”* ^{BBE} *“he saw the host of God encamped,”* ^{BRENTON} *“some of God’s angels came and met him,”* ^{CEB} *“he saw God’s angels,”* ^{ERV} *and “messengers of God come upon him.”* ^{YLT}

The word translated “met” has the following lexical meaning: *“TO ENCOUNTER, MEET, REACH . . . LIGHT UPON, JOIN,”* ^{STRONG’S}

Now a host of angels meet Jacob: *“the angels of God.”* The text does not relate any words that passed between “the angels of God” and Jacob. The text does confirm that Jacob knew what had happened, and was keenly aware that he was confronting God’s angels. **This is now the third time Jacob has consciously come into contact with angels.**

➡ ON THE WAY TO LABAN’S HOUSE. *“And*

he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Gen 28:12)

➔ **WHILE IN LABAN'S EMPLOYEE.** "And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee." (Gen 31:11-12)

➔ **UPON PARTING FROM LABAN.** "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." (Gen 32:1)

into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Gen 28:13-15)

The Word of God tells us that "the angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear Him" As it is written, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psa 34:7). When Israel traveled from Egypt to Canaan, God told them, "Behold, **I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared**" (Ex 23:20).

This was doubtless the case with Jacob. Here, however, they became

"met" Jacob in the appointed "way" in which he was traveling, means they were sent forth by God, and that Jacob was an "heir of salvation." Considering the spiritually primitive nature of the times in which Jacob lived, his response is rather arresting.

THIS IS GOD'S HOST

"... And when Jacob saw them, he said, **This is God's host**..." Other versions read, "this is God's camp," ^{NKJV} "this is the camp of God," ^{NIV} "this is God's army," ^{RSV} "God's encampment," ^{NAB} "God lives here." ^{LIVING}

The word "host" is taken from a word meaning, "ENCAMPMENT, CAMP... PLACE OF ENCAMPMENT... CAMP OF ARMED HOST... ARMY CAMP" ^{STRONG'S}

The word "host" is usually used in a military sense of a number of soldiers, or an army, gathered together in one place—i.e. (Gen 21:32; Ex 14:4; Num 2:3-4; 31:14; Josh 3:2; Judges 4:2; 7:13; 2 Kgs 5:1).

The idea appears to be that Jacob saw this host surrounding him, on the right hand and on the left. He also concluded this was a holy place. This would be an example of what is declared in the 34th Psalm: "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psa 34:7).

In view of fierce opposition, Paul said the apostles were set forth as a "spectacle" to angels (1 Cor 4:9). He also suggested they were present when the saints assembled together (1 Cor 11:10). The fact that they are not only ministers to the saints, but observers as well, motivated Paul to charge Timothy: "I charge thee **before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels**, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Tim 5:21).

HE CALLED THE NAME OF THE PLACE

"... and he called the name of that place Mahanaim." Other versions read, "two camps," ^{CJB/YLT} "camps," ^{DOUAY} "encampments," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "God's Territory," ^{LIVING} "campground," ^{MESSAGE} and "two armies." ^{AMPLIFIED}

In each case Jacob was where the Lord had directed him, doing what he was supposed to be doing: Leaving Canaan to go to Haran, Spending time in Haran obtaining a wife and possessions, and leavening Haran to go to Canaan.

In each case Jacob was where the Lord had directed him, doing what he was supposed to be doing: Leaving Canaan to go to Haran, Spending time in Haran obtaining a wife and possessions, and leavening Haran to go to Canaan.

Heavenly messengers were sent to instruct, encourage, and direct him.

➔ **ON THE WAY TO LABAN'S HOME JACOB WAS TOLD:** "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again

apparent to Jacob, confirming their presence.

Angels' Primary Ministry

In Christ, we are informed of, what appears to be, the primary ministry of holy angels: "But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, **sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?**" (Heb 1:13-14).

Angels do not come at the behest of men. They are "sent forth" by God to "minister for them" who shall be heirs of salvation. Other versions read, "sent out to render service for the sake of," ^{NASB} "sent to serve," ^{NIV} "sent out to help," ^{CJB} "sent out to care for," ^{NLT} "For ministration," ^{YLT} "help and care for," ^{LIVING} and "for the assistance of." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The fact that the angels of God

The word *"Mahanaim"* is in the plural, and means *"TWO CAMPS."* ^{STRONG'S} This indicates the scope of Jacob's protection. This is a depiction of the encampment of angels *"round about"* those who fear the Lord (Psa 34:7). The circumstance is associated with righteousness by the apostle Paul: *"By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left"* (2 Cor 6:7).

Keep in mind, this is a name Jacob gave to the *"place."* Thus he associated this place with the gathering of *"the host of God"* – a place in which Jacob was absolutely safe – and he knew it!

This is the second place named by Jacob, the first being *"Bethel"* (Gen 28:19).

The Practice of Giving Names to Places

So far as the record is concerned, the practice of naming places did not begin until after the calling of Abraham, about two thousand years after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden.

➔ After making a covenant with Abimelech, Abraham called the

name of the place *"Beersheba"* (Gen 21:31) – *"well of the oath."*

➔ Previously, Abraham had called the name of the place where he was to sacrifice Isaac *"Jehovahjireh"* (Gen 22:14) – *"The Lord provides."*

➔ Isaac named the well for which the herdmen of Gerar strive, *"Esek"* (Gen 26:20) – *"to strive, contend."*

➔ Isaac named a second well where the same kind of striving took place, *"Sitnah"* (Gen 26:21) – *"strife."*

➔ After digging another well for which the herdmen did not contend, Isaac named it *"Rehoboth"* (Gen 26:22) – *"wide places."*

➔ Isaac named the place where his servants had dug and found water, *"Shebah,"* later called *"Beersheba"* (Gen 26:33) – *"an oath"* and *"well of the sevenfold oath."*

➔ When Jacob had the dream of a ladder set up on the earth and reaching into heaven, he called the name of the place *"Bethel"* (Gen 28:19) – *"house of God."*

➔ When the angels of God met Jacob en route to Canaan, he named the place *"Mahanaim"* (Gen 32:2) – *"a double camp."*

➔ After wrestling with an angel of God, Jacob named that place *"Peniel"* (Gen 32:30) – *"face of God."*

This practice accents the effects of having some experience of the blessing of God. As men became more knowledgeable of God, they were able to make more intelligent associations of their experiences with Him.

This is still the effect realized by those who live by faith. As their life in Jesus progresses they make more and more associations of their life with God and His purpose, as it has been revealed in Christ Jesus.

Carnal and ungodly people fail to make such associations. They are unable to perceive the working of the Lord in their lives – whether for good or bad. Consequently, they do not shape their lives around the Lord and His will. They live as though there was no God.

JACOB SENT MESSENGERS BEFORE HIM

"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."

Prior to this, the last time Esau is mentioned is Genesis 28:9: *"Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife."* That is a full twenty years before the

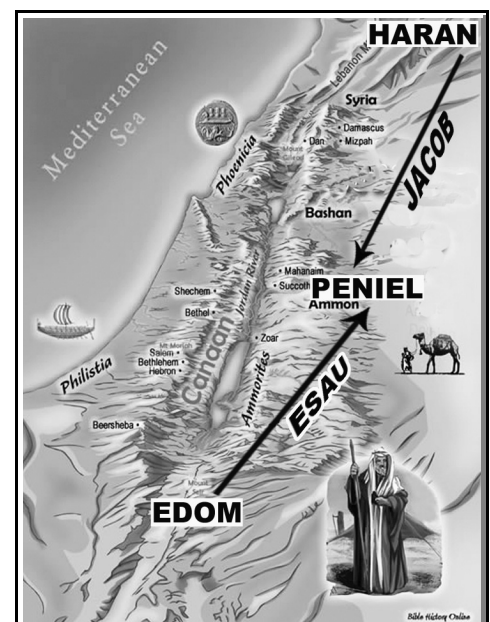
occasion recorded in this text.

This is also only the second time in Scripture *"Seir"* is mentioned, the first being Genesis 14:6, relating to the conquests of Chedorlaomer. Further, this is the first Scriptural reference to *"the country of Edom,"* the only other mention having to do with Esau's name being called *"Edom"* (Gen 25:30). Therefore, for the first time we learn that Esau settled in *"the land of Seir,"* *"the country of Edom."*

JACOB SENT MESSAGES

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

Thus far, Jacob has traveled from



Haran to Mount Gilead (Gen 31:21-23) – a distance of around three hundred miles. Now, he has traveled from Mount Gilead to Peniel and Penuel. I have no idea of the distance, having diligently looked for an answer, and finding none.

I do not know the distance from Edom to Peniel, but assuming Esau came from there, it appears to approximate the distance from Haran to Peniel. If Jacob sent messengers into Edom – and the text states that he did – it would have been several days journey, even if they were traveling at a brisk pace. Then, there is the time required for Esau to come to where Jacob is, which would also require a significant amount of time.

However, all of that is incidental to the point I want to make. **Behold how little, or no thought at all, is given to the possibility of inconvenience, or the amount of time that was required.** The people of that time did not appear to think in that mode, which is so characteristic of our times. Also, Jacob did not intend on them meeting for a brief period of time, then going on about their business.

uneasiness, or being adrenalized with a sudden rush of religious euphoria and excitement. Very few people invest much of themselves in being “*renewed in the spirit*” of the mind (Eph 4:23), or the culturing of the “*new man*,” which is “*renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him*” (Col 3:10).

It is ironic that our times are characterized by such business. The Industrial Revolution produced a lot of time that could be used at the discretion of the people – time they did not have before. And yet, for most people – even in “church” people, there is little time left for things specifically relating to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). How can this be? Now the populous, particularly of our country, is spending more and more time on matters that are really not essential to life in general, and specifically to spiritual life. It may be a career, entertainment, hobbies, or even amassing money. But whatever it may be, it has produced a world of spiritual dwarfs at the best, and infants at the worst.

given us.

MY LORD ESAU

“And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau . . .” Other versions read, “*my master Esau*,” ^{NIV} “*to Esau*.” ^{GWN}

Notice, several hundred years later, the Spirit, speaking through Moses, referred to Esau as Jacob’s “*brother*” (Gen 32:3). Through Isaac, God has said to Jacob, “*Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee*” (Gen 27:29). Some may object to Jacob’s manner, saying it is a manifestation of unbelief. But let us not be hasty to judge one with whom God has aligned Himself – “*the God of Jacob*” (Ex 3:6; Psa 20:1; Matt 22:32’ Acts 7:32,46). There are some matters that must be considered.

- ➡ Isaac had not yet died, and thus the mantel had not yet passed to Jacob (Gen 35:29).
- ➡ The time for Jacob’s supremacy had not yet arrived.
- ➡ The promise of Jacob’s superiority over his brethren was more applicable to his progeny than to himself.
- ➡ Esau was a lord over his own territory, Edom (Gen 36:31).

I concede that there may have been some fear and trepidation at the thought of meeting Esau. However, considering that Jacob had not yet come into his inheritance, it is understandable, although it is not ideal. Then again, the manner in which many professing Christians live ought to compel them to show mercy to Jacob.

I HAVE SOJOURNED WITH LABAN

“ . . . Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now . . . ”

Esau obviously did not know where Jacob had been, or else he would have hunted him down during

Modern times has altered the manner in which people think about serious matters. Particularly when it comes to matters pertaining to truly “religious” life, convenience and brevity of time are key issues.

The Effects of Modern Times

I do not wish to overstate this, but modern times has altered the manner in which people think about serious matters. Particularly when it comes to matters pertaining to truly “religious” life (James 1:26-27), convenience and brevity of time are key issues. One of the results of this altered way of thinking is that very little, if anything, is actually accomplished in spiritual activities. For the most part they are viewed like an opiate leading to quiet

The events of our text could not possibly have occurred in our time. They require too much inconvenience, and the investment of too much time.

As I have stated, I do not wish to spend an inordinate amount of time on this, violating the very principle to which I refer. However, it seems to me that **it must occasionally be pointed out that the manner of life being promoted and sustained in the Western world has taken much more from us than it has**

the first of the last twenty years. If this is true, God had seen to it that Esau had not heard the instructions of Rachel and Isaac to Jacob, telling him to go to Laban's house. Although Esau heard Isaac blessing Jacob, God had hidden the matter of Jacob going to Laban's house from him. This would not have been the best thing to do, so God did not let it happen. God had determined to have Jacob obtain a proper wife, begin his family, and obtain personal wealth. He would not allow anything to interfere with those objectives.

During the time Jacob was in Laban's house, Esau was increasing his dominion. However, as we will see, God will not his authority to be used against Jacob. He will "keep" Jacob, as He has promised (Gen 28:15).

I HAVE SENT TO TELL MY LORD

"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."

Jacob is now in a position to give a significant gift to Esau, whereas the last time Esau saw Jacob, he perceived him as taking something from him. Notice that Jacob is not so attached to his goods that he cannot let some of them go. He will "use" the things of the world, rather than abusing the world. This is not the manner of the Kingdom. As it is written, *"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and*

they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor 7:29-31).

Jacob tells Esau this in order that he might find grace in his sight. For what purpose did he say such a thing? To me, it was to confirm to Esau that what he had was not the result of receiving the birthright in the stead of Esau. God had blessed Jacob, and Esau needed to know that. Esau had enough consciousness of God to recognize when he had blessed someone. Thus Jacob appeals to his higher perception. By so doing he was providing a circumstance in which God could work favorably with Esau, and himself as well.

ESAU COMES WITH FOUR HUNDRED MEN

"⁶ And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. ⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; ⁸ And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape."

THE MESSENGERS RETURN

"And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau . . ."

A surface reading of the record

might lead one to the conclusion that all of this occurred on the same day. However, considering that a distance of several hundred miles was involved, this was certainly not the case.

They reported, *"We came to thy brother Esau."* That necessarily infers that they journeyed all way to Edom, where Esau was probably residing. I am sure that finding him in that vast region as not simplistic task.

Once again, note the manner in which events are reported. Only relevant details are made known. The minutia of life remains in the background. **Generally speaking, only the matters are reported during which**

some change of attitude or action took place.

This is in order that we might not be unduly distracted by curious details. It is a major accomplishment when a person learns to reason in this manner.

THE DISCONCERTING NEWS

". . . and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him..."

The disconcerting part of the message was, *"he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him."* Precisely why Esau brought four hundred men with him is not specified. It may be that he simply traveled with large retinue of men, him being a chieftain of significance.

We know from the record that when Esau first saw Jacob *"he ran to meet him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him"* (Gen 33:4). This suggests that he did not have evil intentions at all – even though it is possible that he did began his journey with such intentions, he changed his mind owing to Divine influence. I am rather inclined to the first view, persuaded that during the

A surface reading of the record might lead one to the conclusion that all of this occurred on the same day. However, considering that a distance of several hundred miles was involved, this was certainly not the case.

intervening twenty years, and realizing the considerable increase of power and influence, he no longer entertained ill will toward Jacob.

JACOB WAS GREATLY AFRAID

" . . . Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed . . ." Other versions read, *"great fear and trouble of mind,"* ^{BBE} *"terrified and felt trapped,"* ^{CEB} *"greatly afraid, and was sore troubled,"* ^{GNV} *"greatly terrified, and was perplexed,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"very much frightened. In his anxiety,"* ^{NAB} *"very afraid and upset"* ^{NET} *"feareth exceedingly, and is distressed,"* ^{YLT} *"was frantic with fear,"* ^{LIVING} *"frightened and worried,"* ^{ERV} and *"Very scared . . . Panicked."* ^{MESSAGE}

It was not the fact of Esau coming to meet him, but rather the consideration of the four hundred men coming with him that induced this fear. **Jacob probably reasoned that this was the time when Esau would seek the revenge he promised twenty years earlier.**

It might be reasoned that this response was wholly unjustified. After all, God had promised Jacob, *"I will be with thee"* (Gen 31:3). And again, *"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"* (Gen 28:15).

However, at this point Jacob is not thinking of himself, to whom, and for whom, the promises were made. **He is thinking of his wives and children – and God had made no specific promise related to them.**

One might surmise that Jacob should have been able to deduce this from what God had said. After all, God had promised the land of Canaan to Jacob's seed *"after"* him (Gen 28:4,13). **Notwithstanding, no promise had been made concerning their protection.**

The art, if I may call it that, of spiritual reasoning had not yet been

developed as fully as it would be. Abraham, *"the father of all them that believe"* (Rom 4:11), was able to reason within the framework of faith. There are two notable examples of this:

➡ **CONCERNING THE PROMISE OF THE BIRTH OF ISAAC:** *"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, He was able also to perform"* (Rom 4:18-21). In this case, Abraham's reasoning refused to take into consideration his own impotence, or the deadness of Sarah's womb. He thought of the promise of God within the context of Divine aptitude, not that of himself and Sarah.

➡ **CONCERNING THE OFFERING OF ISAAC AS A BURNT OFFERING.** *"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure"* (Heb 11:17-19). In this case, although the circumstance involved something that was humanly impossible, Abraham thought within the larger context of the ability of God. He did not allow the entrance of worldly views of death.

Abraham, of course, had received decidedly more revelation from God than Jacob had to this point. It does not seem right to me to assume that Jacob should have been able to reason, draw conclusions, and make proper associations as well as Abraham, or we who are living this side of the cross. This does not mean we are excusing Jacob's fear and distress as though they did not exist. **We are rather not insisting that Jacob be judged as one**

who had received as much as ourselves.

There have been others that were driven to fear, who lived in far greater light than Jacob.

➡ **THE EARLY CHURCH WHEN ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA WERE JUDGED.** *"And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things"* (Acts 5:11). This judgment by God caused great fear in the church – not a withdrawing fear, but one which promoted a holy life mingled with Ofear.

➡ **PAUL, WHEN HE CAME INTO MACEDONIA AND WAS TROUBLED ON EVERY SIDE.** *"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears"* (2 Cor 7:5). This is part and parcel of having a heavenly treasure in an earthen vessel. It is the kind of fear that results from being in situations where help cannot be realized without some form of Divine intervention. The fact that we are, in ourselves, frail creatures, causes this kind of fear to sometimes rise.

➡ **DISTRESS IS FACED BY BELIEVERS.** *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* (Rom 8:35). *"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses"* (2 Cor 6:4). There are periods of trials called *"distresses."* They are when human ingenuity and expertise run out, and it appears we are alone – although we are not really alone.

➡ **A PERIOD OF SPECIAL DISTRESS.** *"I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be."* (1 Cor 7:26). There are times of social upheaval and grievous persecution. The church at Corinth was apparently in the midst of such a crisis. Paul advised this was not a good time to get married, although there was no sin in doing so.

My point in all of this is that there

are still times when fear and distress can be experienced **without committing sin**. The real jeopardy is not going through these times, but is rather found in the way we handle them. If, by faith, we can navigate through them, we will overcome them.

JACOB'S ACTION

"...and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands . . ."

Other versions read, *"divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well"* ^{NIV} *"divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies,"* ^{NRSV} *"into two camps,"* ^{CJB} *"into two*

troops," ^{DARBY} *and "divided his household."* ^{LIVING}

Notice how Jacob does not think of himself, but of those traveling with him. He separates his household, so that they are not all together. He no doubt reasoned that Esau had no idea how many people were with him, and how many flocks and herds he had. It will now appear to Esau that Jacob's entourage is much smaller than it actually was.

JACOB'S STRATEGY

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

Jacob is thinking that Esau is

coming in hostility, and God has not informed him of anything different than that. He reasons that if Esau does attack and overcome the one group, the other will be able to escape, thus preserving have of his household and possessions.

This plan, because of its precision, confirms that Jacob was not being moved by fear alone. When fear is ruling a person, they do not think well. Jacob knows that, in the flesh, he cannot overcome Esau, who is coming with four hundred men. He thus plans so that a significant number of his household and flocks can escape. This is not the way a completely distracted man thinks.

JACOB PRAYS TO GOD

"⁹ And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: ¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. ¹¹ Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. ¹² And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

Jacob will not trust in the strategy he has developed. He will not rely upon his own wisdom. He will look to the hills from whence cometh his help. He now does what the Psalmist will say years later: *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth"* (Psa 121:2).

**O GOD OF MY FATHER ABRAHAM,
AND GOD OF MY FATHER ISAAC**

"And Jacob said, O God of my

father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac . . ."

Jacob prays to the covenant-keeping God. **He prays within the framework of the promise of God.**

This is another way of saying within the will of God:—i.e. *"and this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, He heareth us: And if we know that He h e a r u s , whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him"* (1 John 5:14-15).

Ultimately, for us, this refers to prayers that are within the framework of the New Covenant – what He is

accomplishing through Jesus Christ. For Jacob, it was praying within the framework of what God had promised Abraham, extended in Isaac, and now in Jacob. His actions and prayer extended beyond immediate safety, although that was surely included. He was thinking of his family in terms of Canaan, and in the prospect of the promises of God



"... 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."

PRAYING WITHIN THE COVENANT

Jacob is met by angels, and sends messengers to Esau telling him, seeking his favor. Esau said he would come, and Jacob was greatly distressed. – Given O. Blakely

being fulfilled.

WHICH SAID UNTO ME

" . . . the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. . . "

Now Jacob narrows his request down to the matters personally promised to him as a key participant in the Abrahamic covenant. In particular the Lord had promised to deal well with him. He had promised **"I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father"** (Gen 26:3). And again, **"I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake"** (Gen 26:24). And again, **"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of"** (Gen 28:15). And again, **"Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee"** (Gen 31:3).

Jacob is on good ground –

of the blessing was not determined by the worth of the man, or the deeds that he has done – **and Jacob knew it.**

Jacob knew he was not worthy of the smallest, or least, blessing – which blessing is extremely difficult to measure. What is small by reason of length of time, may be of great and unfathomable magnitude – like a lame man picking up his bed and walking. Of such a magnificent things as delivery from Egypt bondage, the crossing of the Red Sea, and tasting of daily manna, and water from a rock – all negated by refusing to believe.

Expressions of perceived unworthiness are found elsewhere.

- ➔ **ABRAHAM.** *"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes"* (Gen 18:27).
- ➔ **JOB.** *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:5-6).

FOR HIS SERVANT. *"Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof"* (Luke 7:6).

- ➔ **SIMON PETER.** *"When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord"* (Luke 5:8).
- ➔ **PAUL AND HIS APOSTLESHIP.** *"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God"* (1 Cor 15:9).

A Spiritual Parallel

It is still true that any boasting must be in the Lord, not in ourselves or our achievements. Through Jeremiah the Lord stated it succinctly: *"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."* (Jer 9:23-2). The apostle Paul wrote, *"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord"* (1 Cor 1:31; 1 Cor 10:17).

This truth is stated yet another way: *"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh"* (Phil 3:3). We are also admonished, *"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours"* (1 Cor 3:21).

These are all ways of confessing, *" . . . I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant. . . "* **Ponder all of the truth that has been revealed to you this very year!** Were you worthy of such a benefit? Had you somehow done enough or said enough to justify the amount of truth that has been vouchsafed to you?

I PASSED OVER THIS JORDAN

" . . . for with my staff I passed

Jacob is on good ground – covenant ground. He has brought his will into the matter, and is earnestly seeking for the fulfillment of the promises of God, in whom He is trusting.

covenant ground. He has brought his will into the matter, and is earnestly seeking for the fulfillment of the promises of God, in whom He is trusting.

I AM NOT WORTHY

" . . . I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto thy servant . . . "

O, what a marvelous confession is this! The blessing of the Lord had exceeded his worthiness. The measure

- ➔ **ISAIAH WHEN FACING THE LORD.** *"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts"* (Isa 6:5).

- ➔ **JOHN THE BAPTIST.** *"And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose"* (Mark 1:7)

- ➔ **THE CENTURION WHO SOUGHT HEALING**

over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands . . .” The meaning is, as stated in New Standard Revised Version: “for with **ONLY** my staff I crossed this Jordan.”

Jacob is referring to when he went to Haran from Canaan. All that he had when he crossed over Jordan was his staff. Now when he returns, he has two companies of people and herds for his own. God has been good to him! He went out with nothing, but he came back with untold wealth and benefits.

Another Parallel

Although the parallel breaks down, there is a comparison seen in the lives of the saints. When we were baptized fled for refuge to Christ (Heb 6:18), we had nothing of our own. But now we are “two bands” – a far more complicated being than we were before. We have the flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:17); a new man and an old man (Eph 5:22-24).

DELIVER ME, I PRAY THEE

“ . . . 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. . . .”

See, Jacob does not wholly rely on the separation of his company. He

Much can be learned from this incident. Many professing believers do not do well in the handling of crises. They “faint in the day of adversity,” because their strength is small.

knew intuitively what Asaph said in the 50th Psalm: “*And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*” (Psa 50:15).

THOU SAIDST

“ . . . 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.”

Notice how Jacob does not rely on his own expression or plea, but on the promise of God. He fulfills the admonition spoke by God through Isaiah centuries later: “**Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob**” (Isa 41:21). In his time, Job was prepared to do this of he could only speak with his Maker: “*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments*” (Job 23:3-4).

That is what Jacob is doing here –

ordering his cause before the Lord.

An Application

Much can be learned from this incident. Many professing believers do not do well in the handling of crises. They “faint in the day of adversity,” because their strength is small. As it is written, “*If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small*” (Prov 24:10). Other versions read, “*If you are slack in the day of distress, Your strength is limited,*” ^{NASB} “*If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!*” ^{NIV} and “*You are a poor specimen if you can't stand the pressure of adversity.*” ^{LIVING}

Let me encourage you to strive for excellence in this area – always taking your trouble to the Lord, and seeking the power to trust Him all through a crisis. He has urged you to seek “*grace to help in the time of need*” (Heb 4:16), and you have every reason to believe He will hear your cry. He has promised to do so!

HE TOOK FROM WHAT HE HAD

“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.*”

HE LODGED THERE THAT SAME NIGHT

“*And he lodged there that same night . . .*”

It is as though Jacob sensed the Divine Presence at that place, and therefore lingered through the night. We know nothing of what may have transpired through the night, but I tend to think he had deep cogitations concerning his role in the promises made to Abraham.

In my perception, many people do not longer long enough in the place where they have petitioned the Lord and sought grace to help in the time of

need. Too quickly they resume mundane activities, and thus some of the celestial glow they experienced commences to fade, and is soon forgotten.

HE TOOK WHAT HE HAD

“ . . . and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. . . .”

The size of this gift, prepared for

Esau, is quite significant. The total number of animals came to five-hundred and thirty. Some of these were large animals: "rams" (20), "milk camels" (30), and "asses" (20).

Jacob did not purchase these, but took them from his own flock.

She goats	200
He goats	... 20
Ewes 200
Rams 20
Milk camels	. 30
Camel colts	. 30
She asses	.. 20
Foals 10
Total 530

"... 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." Other versions read, "each herd by itself." ^{NIV}

A "drove" is a flock, or a herd. Counting the animals by groups – male and female – the count of That would that each herd would have been

Goats	... 220
Sheep	... 220
Camels 60
Asses 30
Total 530

as shown on the left side of this column. Each was independent, and considerable size. Being together they could be moved along in a more orderly manner. I would imagine that all of the flocks being seen moving along in sequence, they would have occupied a considerable amount of ground. Esau would also be able to see in one glance the gracious intentions of Jacob.

But, Jacob is not finished with the preparation. He must move his family to a place of safety.

PUT A SPACE BETWEEN

JACOB GAVE COMMANDMENTS

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."

HE COMMANDED THE FOREMOST

"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. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us."

Jacob sensed that Esau, being a man of authority in that general region, would inquire about this traveling band of people and animals. Esau would inquire concerning who they were, where they were going, and to whom

the animals belonged. It does not appear that at this time that Esau would know this was Jacob's band. Nor, indeed, would he know that these men were seeking him personally.

I WILL APPEASE HIM

"For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me."

Jacob reasons that any anger remaining in Esau would be subdued by the gracious gifts Jacob sent to him. The last time Esau had seen Jacob, he perceived Jacob as taking things from him. Now, more than twenty years later, his brother is giving him an impressive number of gifts. Surely, Jacob reasons, he will be appeased.

JACOB SENDS HIS FAMILY OVER THE BROOK

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."

THE PRESENT WENT BEFORE HIM

"So went the present over before him . . ." Other versions read, "So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him," ^{NIV} "the servants with the offerings went on in front," ^{BBE} "and So the presents

were sent on ahead." ^{LIVING}

The first thing Jacob wants Esau to see is his gift consisting of 530 animals in four herds: goats, sheep, camels, and asses.

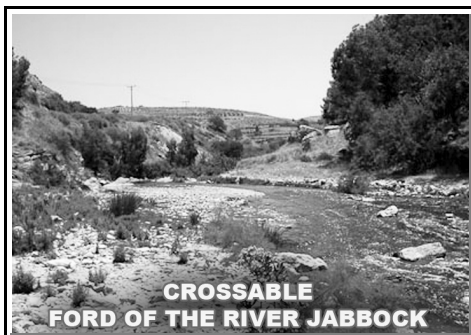
HE LODGED IN THE COMPANY

“ . . . and himself lodged that night in the company . . . ” Other versions read, “in the camp,” ^{NASB} and “with his people.” ^{BBE}

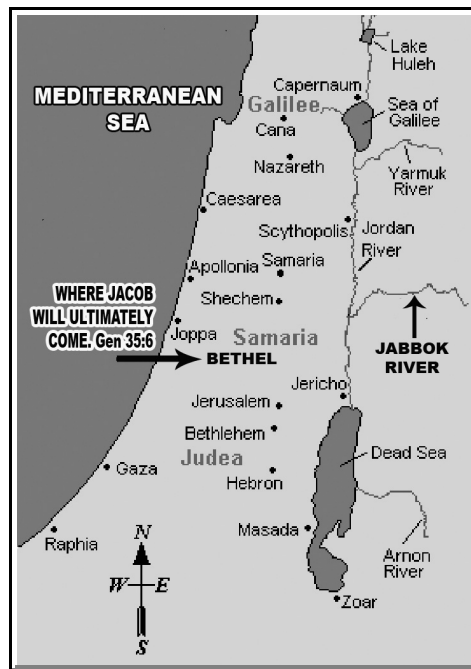
Jacob desires to stay with the people, having presented his supplication to the Lord. The Scriptures do not tell us of any dialog with the people, especially with his family. **However, I do not doubt that he prepared them as best he could for the events that would take place the next day.** There is every reason to expect him to have done this because of his speaking with Rachel and Leah prior to their departure from Laban’s house (Gen 31:4-14).

HE TOOK HIS FAMILY OVER THE FORD

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



Jabbok was a river, and “the ford” WAS “A SHALLOW PLACE IN A STREAM WHERE IT MAY EASILY BE CROSSED ON FOOT OR BY WADING.” ^{MCLINTOK & STRONG’S}



Thus Jacob is making his way back home, now being adjacent to it, separated by the Jordan River and around one hundred miles. First, however, he must deal with the matter of Esau, and the events that took place twenty years before. He does not know what he is going to face. However, he has taken some practical measures to ensure the safety of his family – his sons and the women who bare them. **He will not consent to jeopardizing them to save his own skin, so to speak.**

However, Jacob knows that he cannot, of himself, ensure their safety, nor even his own. He has laid out the matter before the Lord, asking that He protect him. Yet, even this was in view of the promises that God had made, and the covenant he had made with Abraham.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FOR US

In this record we find how men of faith approach the challenges of life. It is important to first realize that any sufferings, inconveniences, or challenges that we face are not “strange” things: i.e.–foreign things that do not belong to us. Such things are often considered to be a departure from the normality of life. Therefore Peter wrote, “Beloved, think it not

strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Pet 4:12).

Rather than considering such things as “unusual and alien to you and your position,” ^{AMPLIFIED} or “something extraordinary,” ^{CJB} or “some new thing,” ^{DOUAY} think of them as common.

The clear implication is that such difficulties are not “strange” things. Properly seen, they are, in fact, quite normal for the believer.

- From one point of view, they represent the efforts of our adversary, the devil, to dissuade us from following Jesus.
- From another, they are a testing from the Lord, to discover to us the strength or weakness of our faith.
- From still another vantage point, they are a means of participating in the sufferings of Christ. In fact, Peter adds to his comment about them not being a “strange thing.” *“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified”* (1 Pet 4:13-14).

It might appear on the surface that many of our difficulties have nothing whatsoever to do with our faith, or our alliance with Jesus. And, Indeed, those responsible for these experiences might not be doing so because you are a “Christian.” Yet, because it is God “with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:13), we must bring Him into the scenario – as Jacob did. Also, Satan uses people against us, without them knowing his wicked intentions.

A lot of God’s people do not do well in this area. They vacillate and complain under the weight of pain, sorrow, and inconvenience. However common such responses may appear,

the saints must seek to do better, relying more upon the Lord.

It is imperative that we encourage one another to do this – to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph 6:10). Earnestly seek for the fulfillment of this: *“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man*

perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are

eternal” (2 Cor 4:16-18).

None of us should ever approach life in any of its multifarious aspects as though God was not in it. God is involved in every facet of our lives, for which we have cause to give thanks. Take advantage of it!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/22/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The fifty-fifth lesson will cover verses 24 through 32 of chapter thirty-two: “JACOB WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL.” After sending the others away, Jacob is left alone, and wrestled with “a man” until the breaking of day. The man, seeing he did not prevail against Jacob, touched the hollow of his thigh, throwing it out of joint. When he asked Jacob to let him go, Jacob refused to do so until he had blessed him. It was there that Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.