

Jacob Wrestles an Angel

Key Verse: *“He said, Thy name shall be no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men.”*
—Genesis 32:28

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 32:22-32

for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.” The apostle continues, saying that Esau “found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” (Heb. 12:16,17) Rebekah learned of Esau’s plan and instructed Jacob to leave Canaan. Fleeing his father’s home, Jacob traveled to Haran, in the region of Panadaram, where his grandfather Abraham had dwelt for a period after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. Jacob prospered there, but soon realized that the promises of God were of greater value. Thus, by divine providence, he was determined to return to Canaan and make peace with Esau, though he was fearful. Jacob prayed to God to deliver him from the wrath of his brother, and recalled the promises made to Abraham.—Gen. 32:9-12

Jacob continued his journey to Canaan, taking his family and all his earthly possessions with him, including his flocks and herds of animals. He was hoping to offer much to Esau to make peace with him. In fear of having

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that the blessing of the firstborn was given to Jacob, as noted in our previous lesson, he became very angry and vowed to slay his brother. (Gen. 27:41) The attitude of Esau is noted by the Apostle Paul, who speaks of him as a “profane person, ... who

a difficult encounter with Esau, Jacob sent all his possessions, animals, and his family ahead of him, with the hope of appeasing his brother prior to his arrival.—Gen. 32:14-24

Jacob was now alone, and it was at this time that an angel of the Lord appeared to him as a man. So full of faith in the power of God was Jacob that he laid physical hold upon the angel and vowed that he would not let go until he received a blessing. Jacob wrestled with the angel until dawn of the following day.—vss. 24-26

Here we can see the lesson relating to Jacob's struggle with the angel come into view. The angel appeared as a man, as was often the case in olden times. Jacob recognized him, nevertheless, as God's representative, and laid hold upon him with every fiber of strength which he possessed. We cannot for a moment suppose that the angel was not powerful enough to free himself from the grasp of Jacob. The angel continued to say "Let me go," but Jacob resisted him throughout the night. The Lord was well pleased to bless Jacob and had sent the angel for that purpose. He was first tested, however, to prove how much he really desired this blessing. (Isa. 26:4; 50:10) Jacob gained a great victory, and now God was pleased to reward his faith, energy and zeal.

Jacob got the blessing and with it a change of name. He was from then on called Israel, which signifies, "Who prevails with God." This new name was a source of encouragement to him for the remainder of his life and an incentive to continue to trust in the Lord. All of Jacob's posterity adopted this name, becoming eventually the nation of Israel. Jacob called the name of this place Peniel, meaning "The Face of God."—Gen. 32:27-30

How well does Jacob point to Christ Jesus, the true father and life-giver to Israel and to all mankind. It is he, who through faith and obedience to God, has prevailed and overcome all things, and is now highly exalted, "to the glory of God the Father."—Phil. 2:9-11 ■