

GENESIS 32: JACOB'S FINAL BLESSING

I. INTRO

- A. Have you ever felt completely alone?
 - i. Maybe literally, or maybe emotionally
 - ii. Maybe even spiritually
 - iii. Did God meet you in those times?
- B. Genesis 32 finds Jacob surrounded by family and an army of angels
 - i. Over the course of the chapter he slowly becomes more and more alone
 - ii. Until at the end he is completely alone on the side of the river
 - a. This is where God meets him

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Jacob left Laban and was met by some angels
- B. Jacob then sent messengers to his brother Esau to greet him
 - i. They returned and said Esau was coming with 400 men
 - ii. Jacob was afraid so he split up his people into two camps
- C. Jacob prayed and asked God for deliverance
 - i. He reminded God of His promises
- D. Then he split up his flocks into droves
 - i. He instructed his servants to take the droves as gifts to Esau one by one
 - ii. Hopefully they would appease Esau enough to not attack him
- E. In the middle of the night Jacob sent his wives and children across the ford of the Jabbok
 - i. He was left alone when a man came and wrestled with him until morning
 - ii. Then the man injured Jacob's hip
 - iii. He gave him a new name – Israel
 - iv. Jacob called the place Peniel because he had seen God face to face

III. ANGELS – V.1

- A. Also means *messengers*
- B. Same word as used in verse 3
- C. Two possibilities
 - i. To encourage him

- a. Jacob was leaving one man who wanted to kill him to go to another man who wants to kill him
- b. He received a vision of angels at Bethel when he left the promised land
 - i. He faced uncertainty and fear
- c. Now, re-entering the promised land, he faces the same uncertainty and fear
- ii. A cherubim guarded the east gate of the garden of Eden to keep people out
 - a. Genesis 3:24 ***He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.***
 - b. Now Jacob meets angels at the eastern border of the promised land
 - c. They let him in
- iii. Either possibility would have hopefully had a strengthening effect

IV. MAHANAIM – V. 2

- A. Means two camps
 - i. God’s camp and Jacob’s camp
 - ii. Or, God’s army and Jacob’s army

V. JACOB SENT MESSENGERS – V. 3

- A. God’s messengers came to him
- B. Now he sent messengers to Esau

VI. TO ESAU – V. 3

- A. To notify him of his coming
- B. So Esau wouldn’t think Jacob was coming to attack him¹

VII. THE LAND OF SIER – V. 3

- A. Mountain range southeast of the land of Canaan
 - i. Esau drove out the Horites who originally lived there
 - a. Genesis 14:6 ***and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness.***
- B. This was Esau’s inheritance
 - i. Deuteronomy 2:3-5 ***‘You have been traveling around this mountain country long enough. Turn northward and command the people, “You are about to pass through the***

¹ Armstrong, S. (2012, September 16). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 32A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_32a

territory of your brothers, the people of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful. Do not contend with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.”

- C. Esau was no longer living in Canaan
 - i. He could have stayed there to make it difficult for Jacob to claim his inheritance
 - ii. But God preserved the land for Jacob

VIII. YOUR SERVANT – V. 4

- A. Jacob was the patriarch of the family by birthright
- B. But he humbles himself to be his servant
 - i. Non-confrontational tone

IX. I HAVE OXEN, DONKEYS, FLOCKS, MALE SERVANTS AND FEMALE SERVANTS – V. 5

- A. Jacob wanted Esau to know he already had plenty
- B. He wasn't there to take anything from Esau²
 - i. Like he had taken the birthright

X. THAT I MAY FIND FAVOR – V. 5

- A. The last time he saw Esau he had taken his blessing
 - i. Esau wanted to kill him
 - ii. Now Jacob wants to make amends
- B. Jacob already has God's favor
 - i. He shouldn't be seeking Esau's favor

XI. FOUR HUNDRED MEN – V. 6

- A. This was a large army
 - i. Abraham took 318 men to fight against a powerful king

XII. GREATLY AFRAID – V. 7

- A. Jacob assumed the worst
 - i. Even though he had just been encouraged by the angels from God
 - ii. Even after everything God has already done to protect him
- B. Rebekah told Jacob she would send for him after Esau was no longer angry

² Guzik, D. (2018). *Genesis 32 - Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau*. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-32/>

- i. Genesis 27:43-45 ***Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away— until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?"***
- ii. Rebekah never sent for him
- C. Jacob's former sins were haunting him

XIII. DIVIDED THE PEOPLE – V. 7

- A. Makes defeat more likely against a large army
 - i. He is assuming he would lose anyway³

XIV. TWO CAMPS – V. 7

- A. Jacob was still in the place called *two camps*
 - i. But he forgot about the reason why he called the place Mahanaim⁴
 - ii. Instead of trusting in God's armies he tried to outwit Esau
- B. Jacob has weak faith
 - i. But the measure of his faith doesn't affect God's protection over him

XV. AND JACOB SAID – V. 9

- A. Jacob's fear caused him to turn to the Lord in prayer⁵
- B. It was a last resort when he had no other option left

XVI. I AM NOT WORTHY – V. 10

- A. Jacob knew he did not deserve God's promises or protection
 - i. Matthew 5:3 ***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***
 - ii. Doesn't stop him from asking for God's help

XVII. BUT YOU SAID – V. 12

- A. Jacob reminded God of His promises
 - i. If Esau attacks and kills him, God can't fulfill His promise to Abraham
- B. We should remind God of His word when praying
 - i. Not because He forgot but so we can remember

XVIII. EVERY DROVE – V. 16

- A. This was a large portion of Jacob's wealth

³ Armstrong, S. (2012, September 16). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 32A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_32a

⁴ Guzik

⁵ Guzik

- B. Jacob was offering the birthright back to Esau in exchange for his life⁶
 - i. He made himself Esau's servant
 - ii. Now he's offering his inheritance to Esau
- C. Jacob feared Esau more than he feared God
 - i. Jacob had God's promises
 - ii. We must fear God more than the world because we have his promises
 - a. 2 Corinthians 7:1 ***Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.***

XIX. AHEAD OF ME – V. 16

- A. Jacob still fears Esau more than God
 - i. Otherwise he would have gone first⁷

XX. APPEASE HIM – V. 20

- A. Jacob is still trying to scheme to get what he wants

XXI. NIGHT – V. 22

- A. Represents chaos, adversity, death
- B. Foreshadows what is about to happen
 - i. It is night before Jacob is about to cross a river
 - ii. Death before life

XXII. JABBOK – V. 22

- A. A tributary of the Jordan river⁸

XXIII. JACOB WAS LEFT ALONE – V. 24

- A. He was completely vulnerable
- B. This is the point when God comes to him
 - i. Just like the first time God appeared to him in Bethel
- C. God comes to us at our level
 - i. Psalm 18:25-26 ***With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.***

⁶ Armstrong, S. (2012, September 16). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 32A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_32a

⁷ Guzik

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Authentic: Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World: OT Commentary, Genesis 25-50*. David C. Cook.

- ii. Abraham was a nomad so God appeared as a traveler
 - a. Genesis 18:1-3 ***And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.***
- iii. Joshua was a military general so God came as a commander of armies
 - a. Joshua 5:13-15 ***When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.***
- iv. Jacob spent his life struggling with others so God came as a wrestler⁹

XXIV. A MAN WRESTLED WITH HIM – V. 24

- A. This man initiated the fight
 - i. He wanted something from Jacob
 - a. He wanted to take his deceiving, scheming, self-reliance from him¹⁰

XXV. UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE DAY – V. 24

- A. Reveals Jacob’s determination
 - i. He never gave up despite a difficult life
 - ii. But he was too reliant on his own strength and cunning

XXVI. HE DID NOT PREVAIL AGAINST JACOB – V. 25

- A. Even though he could have at any time

XXVII. HE TOUCHED HIS HIP SOCKET – V. 25

- A. This is a strange word to use here
 - i. Same word as used about the ladder to heaven

⁹ Wiersbe

¹⁰ Guzik

- a. Genesis 28:12 ***And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!***
 - b. The ladder was set on earth and touched heaven
 - c. Now God came down from heaven and touched Jacob
- B. Dislocated his hip as a reminder of God's grace
 - i. 2 Corinthians 12:5-9 ***On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

XXVIII. UNLESS YOU BLESS ME – V. 26

- A. Encompasses all Jacob's struggles with others
 - i. Brother, father, father-in-law
 - ii. He is always looking for a blessing¹¹
- B. Jacob wasn't commanding God
 - i. Hosea 12:3-5 ***In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God. He strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with us— the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is his memorial name...***
 - ii. He realized all he had left was to hold on to God
 - a. It was his weakness that resulted in the blessing

XXIX. WHAT IS YOUR NAME – V. 27

- A. The last time Jacob was asked this, he lied

¹¹ Sailhamer, J. H. (2008b). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (T. Longman & D. E. Garland, Eds.; Revised Edition). Zondervan.

- i. Genesis 27:18-19 ***So he went in to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.”***
- B. Jacob had to face who he was before God could change his name¹²
 - i. God did not need to know the answer
 - ii. God needed Jacob to know the answer
 - a. Just like He needed Adam to know the answer when He asked, “Where are you?”

XXX. ISRAEL – V. 28

- A. Means *he strives with God* or *God strives*
- B. Jacob received a new name from God just like Abraham
- C. Implies a new beginning or purpose

XXXI. AND HAVE PREVAILED – V. 28

- A. Jacob won through surrender
- B. Matthew 16:25 ***“For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”***

XXXII. PENIEL – V. 30

- A. Means *face of God*
- B. First memorial of Jacob’s wrestle

XXXIII. MY LIFE HAS BEEN DELIVERED – V. 30

- A. Jacob thought he would die if he saw God’s face
 - i. He was actually given new life¹³

XXXIV. THE SUN ROSE – V. 31

- A. Represents a new day, new life

XXXV. LIMPING – V. 31

- A. Second memorial of Jacob’s wrestle

XXXVI. THE SINEW OF THE THIGH – V. 32

- A. This is a Jewish custom to remind them of God’s grace
- B. Not included in Mosaic law

XXXVII. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. Jacob approached God based on the covenant He made with Abraham

¹² Wiersbe

¹³ Wiersbe

- i. We can approach God based on the new covenant through Jesus¹⁴
 - ii. Hebrews 4:14-16 ***Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.***
- B. Jacob understood he was dealing with someone more powerful than a normal human
- i. He called this person God
 - ii. This is another appearance of the Angel of the Lord
 - iii. We keep looking for the answer to man's fallen state in these patriarchs
 - a. But the answer keeps appearing to them, unknown to them

XXXVIII. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. Why do you think God gave Esau an inheritance even though he despised his birthright?

- B. Do you ever pray God's word back to Him? Do you remind Him of His promises? What effect has this had on your prayer life?

- C. How do you think God views weak faith?

¹⁴ Wiersbe

- D. How do we avoid using God as a last resort? What kind of lifestyle should we lead to make sure God is our first resort in times of trouble?

- E. Have you ever felt completely alone? How has God met you during those times?

- F. What is the value in vulnerability before God?

- G. Is it wise to have an unrelenting attitude? Do you think God is looking for people who refuse to give up?

XXXIX. FURTHER STUDY

- A. Why is it important to make amends when we have offended someone? See Proverbs 18:19 and Matthew 5:21-24.

- B. Read about the name changes given to Abram and Sarai (Genesis 17:4-5, 15) and Peter (John 1:40-42). What changed in their lives as a result of the name change?

- C. What is the result of the name change given to those who are victorious in Revelation 2:12-17?

- D. Read the story of the Canaanite woman's faith in Matthew 15:21-28 and compare it to the story in Genesis 32. What do the Jacob and the Canaanite woman have in common? Why do you think God honors their persistence in prayer?

- E. What is the tension the biblical authors present around seeing God face to face? In light of this story in Genesis 32, what do you think the message is here? See Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 5:24; Judges 6:22-32; Isaiah 6:5; 2 Corinthians 3:18.
