

Genesis 32

A Battle you Cannot Afford to Win

- I. Background
 - A. We saw earlier how God saved Jacob in Chapter 28 when Jacob declared: *then the LORD shall be my God*, (Gen 28:21)
 - B. This chapter describes Jacob's sanctification
 - C. Even his name change signifies this for Jacob (meaning grasper, deceiver, shyster, guile etc) will be called Israel (He who wrestles or strives with God)
 - D. All this strife-filled background of Chapters 29-32a sets the background. Jacob has been through the school of hard knocks has prepared Jacob for this sanctifying moment. Now Jacob is going back into the jaws of the lion as he knows he must face Esau.
 - E. Let us therefore go on to see some things about Jacob.

- II. He is a DEFENDED man
 - A. ***32:1 Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him; 2 and when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's army!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.***
 - B. He is taught that God is with him and that Angels defend him round about
 - C. Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?*
 - D. Psam 34:7 *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.*

- III. Yet he is DISTRESSED man
 - A. ***3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, 4 instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; 5 and I have oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and maidservants; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.'" 6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him." 7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed;***
 - B. Notice his changed tone: "my lord Esau" ... "your servant Jacob"
 - C. In spite of the fact that God has shown him a defending army of angels, despite the fact that God has promised to be with him, Jacob is distressed and trembles
 - D. So his old clever mind starts a working, He then decides that half of something is better than all of nothing: ***7 and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies, 8 thinking, "If Esau comes to the one company and destroys it, then the company which is left will escape."*** At least Esau wouldn't get it all!
 - E. He schemes first then, he prays!: ***9 And Jacob said, "O God of my father***

Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who didst say to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good,' 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. 11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and slay us all, the mothers with the children. 12 But thou didst say, 'I will do you good, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

1. But notice, prayer with him is not the first thought it is the last resort.
 2. Notice too instead of asking God what to do he asks God to bless his own plan
- F. But still he is not certain God will bless him so he goes back to scheming: *13 So he lodged there that night, and took from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau, 14 two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten he-asses. 16 These he delivered into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between drove and drove." 17 He instructed the foremost, "When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these before you?' 18 then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us.'" 19 He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him, 20 and you shall say, 'Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me."*
- G. Thus all this distress attacks his trust. In effect he says, God I trust you but....
1. Just in case you don't come through, I've got a plan, my own plan
- IV. He is a DEFEATED man
- A. *21 So the present passed on before him; and he himself lodged that night in the camp. 22 The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. 24 And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day.*
- B. So God goes to work on Jacob to purify him and test him.
- C. Jacob finds himself alone and afraid
- D. **God brought him to a place of isolation -**
1. this is difficult for God to do!
 2. Oh how we love distraction, noise and company
- E. **That He might bring Jacob to a place of confrontation - v. 24**

1. The “man” wrestles with Jacob. Who is this man? The Book of Hosea answers and supplies other details of the event:
 - a. Hos 12:4 *He strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with him— the LORD the God of hosts, the LORD is his name: "So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God."*
 - b. It is the Lord, (a preincarnate
- F. That he might bring him to a place of desperation -
1. ***25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.***
 2. Jacob is a hard case so God disables him
- V. He becomes a DEPENDANT man -
- A. ***26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."***
 - B. The angel really doesn't want to go - but tests Jacob. God sometimes tests us with provocative statements.
 - C. Examples:
 1. The Syrophonecian woman
 2. The disciples on the road to Emmaus
 - D. So the angel says let me go! But God wants us to come to the place where we say, “I will not let you go!”
 - E. In saying I will not let you go, Jacob is finally saying, “Don't go, I need your blessing! Lord you're my only hope. I need you, without you I am sunk”
 - F. God needs to get all of us to this place.
- VI. He becomes a DIFFERENT Man -
- A. ***27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then he said, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."***
 - B. He lied when asked this before by his father Isaac. He said my name is Esau. But now he tells the truth, My name is Jacob, my name is deceiver, con artist, shyter!. My name is grabber.
 - C. Thus Jacob makes a confession

- D. In being renamed he becomes a new man. And he wins by losing! God had to break him to bless him and cripple him to crown him.
- E. Jacob would never be the same again, he would limp for life and always remember how God blessed him in his brokenness.
1. Ps 51:17 *a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
 2. From Jesus broken body came salvation
 3. Jesus took bread and broke it and said, this is my body.
- F. Haughty unbent unbroken people are not pleasing to God
1. Prov 6:16 *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look....,*
- G. Postscript -
1. Heb 11:21 *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*
 2. Why did he lean? He limped the rest of his life. He needed a staff to support. He learned to lean
 - a. Learning to lean, learning to lean, I'm learning to lean on Jesus.
 - b. Leaning on the everlasting arms....
- H. Have you learned to lean? There is a battle you can't afford to win.