



The Beginning

Lesson 15: Jacob And Esau Meet

(Genesis 31:1-36:43)

As Jacob became a very wealthy man, Laban and Laban's sons became angry with Jacob. They thought Jacob had become wealthy by taking Laban's things. Then, the Lord told Jacob to return to the land of his fathers (the Canaan land, which he had fled to get away from Esau).

So, he called his wives, Rachel and Leah (the daughters of Laban), to him and said that their father had deceived him and changed his pay ten times. Yet, God had not allowed this to hurt him. Instead, God had taken away the animals from Laban and given them to Jacob. Then, he said that God told him to return to the land of his family. They agreed. So, Jacob left Padan Aram with all the animals and family he had gained while he was there. Eventually, Laban caught up with them and let them go peacefully (because God had spoken to him).

As Jacob went on his way, he thought about his brother, Esau, and wanted to make peace with him. So, he sent messengers to go before him and speak to Esau. They were to tell Esau that Jacob had been living with Laban until now and that he has oxen, donkeys, flocks, and servants. And, Jacob wanted Esau to be pleased with him.

When the messengers returned to Jacob, they told him that Esau was coming to meet him and 400 men were with him. This made Jacob very afraid. Remember that the last time Jacob had seen Esau, Esau wanted to kill him. So, Jacob separated all the people, flocks, herds, and camels who were with him into two groups in order that Esau would not kill both groups.

Then, Jacob prayed to God to be saved from Esau. He prayed that Esau would not come and attack him and his family. And, Jacob remembered the promise God had made to him to make a large nation from his descendants. After praying, Jacob prepared a gift to offer Esau consisting of 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels and their colts, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and

10 male donkeys. Then, he gave them to his servants and told them to go ahead of him and give these gifts to Esau so that Esau would not be angry by the time he saw Jacob.

Later that night, when Jacob was alone, a Man wrestled with him until dawn. Now, this was no ordinary man. Instead, the Bible calls Him God and an Angel (see Genesis 32:28, 30 and Hosea 12:3-4). When the Angel saw He did not win, He touched the socket of Jacob's hip and caused it to go out of joint. When the Angel told Jacob to let go of Him, Jacob said he would not unless the Angel would bless him. Then, the Angel changed Jacob's name to "Israel," because Jacob had struggled with God and with men and have prevailed. From that time on, Jacob walked with a limp in his hip and his name was Israel.

Later, Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming toward him with 400 men. He divided his children among their mothers. Bilhah and Zilpah were put in front with their children. Then came Leah and her children. Rachel and Joseph were last. Then, Jacob went before them and bowed himself seven times and came near his brother. Esau ran to meet him, hugged him, fell on his neck, kissed him, and cried! He was not angry with Jacob anymore. He did not even want to accept the gifts from Jacob because he had all that he needed (though Jacob insisted and Esau eventually agreed).

When they left each other, Jacob came to Shechem (in the land of Canaan). From there, God called him to go to Bethel (where Jacob had dreamed about the ladder from Heaven earlier). There, God appeared to Jacob and blessed him again with all the promises he had made to Abraham and Isaac. However, as they journeyed from Bethel, Rachel died in childbirth. Her son's name was Benjamin. Now, Jacob had 12 sons. Then, after Jacob came home to his father (Isaac), he also died when he was 180 years old, and Jacob and Esau buried him.

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Study Questions:

- 1) Why did Jacob want to leave Laban?
- 2) Where did God tell him to go?
- 3) Why did Jacob send messengers to Esau?
- 4) What gift did Jacob prepare for Esau?
- 5) What happened when Jacob wrestled with an Angel?
- 6) What name was given to Jacob?
- 7) What happened when Esau saw Jacob?
- 8) Who was Jacob's youngest son?

Memory Verse:

“And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.” So, He called his name Israel.” (Genesis 35:10).

Draw a picture of the lesson you learned about: