

Introduction

- Jacob is finally heading home to reconcile with his family, particularly Esau.
- He is filled with fear over how their conversation is going to go.
- He physically wrestles with God.
- This section is the transformation and renaming of Jacob.

God's Camp (32:1-2)

- Jacob meets a great number of angels.
- The camps appears to mean that Jacob is surrounded by armies of angels.
- Reference to Psalms 34:7, "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."
- This revelation should fill Jacob with encouragement and faith.
- There is an entire army of angels to protect him. What could Esau do to him?
- But instead he remains afraid.

Jacob's Fear (32:3-8)

- Jacob sends messengers to his brother that he is coming.
- Jacob calls Esau lord and refers to himself as a servant.
- The messengers return to say Esau is coming with 400 men.
- Jacob is afraid so he divides his people and camps so that not everyone will die.
- Apparently Esau's 400 are greater than angel armies.

Jacob's Prayer (32:9-12)

- Jacob does make the right decision by praying.
- He begins by acknowledging who God is.
- He recounts God's commands to him.
- He acknowledges that he is unworthy of the love and loyalty God has already shown.
- He asks that God would protect him from Esau because he is afraid.
- He reminds God of the promises he made to Jacob.
- This is a good model of prayer to follow.
- Our requests to God should ask God to keep the promises He has made to us.

Jacob's Attempt (32:13-21)

- When Jacob wakes in the morning he continues take things into his own hands.
- Jacob prepares a significant gift of hundreds goats, lambs, a significant amount of camels, cows, and donkeys.
- There is a sense in which this is not only a present but reparations for Jacob's theft.
- Jacob stole the blessing from Esau and now repays him in interest because of how God has blessed him.

- But Jacob spreads these gifts out one at a time so that Esau will continue to be presented with presents.
- It seems like the gifts will come in six different waves before Jacob himself will appear.
- Jacob appears to be trusting in the gifts and his own wisdom to appease Esau.
- None of this is necessary because God commanded Jacob to return.

Jacob Wrestles With God (32:22-32)

- Jacob takes his family and crosses the river towards Esau.
- Jacob appears to stay behind and wants to be the very last person in the caravan.
- He wrestles with God all night long until dawn.
- Jacob has been wrestling with God spiritually throughout his entire life.
- The idea of Jacob "prevailing" over God is describing this even in human terms.
- Jacob defeated God in a wrestling match the same way my children defeat me.
- Jacob wins but is wounded and now walks with a limp.
- But Jacob refuses to let go of God until he is blessed.
- This is the right attitude and what Jacob should have been doing all along.
- Because Jacob is now becoming dependent on God and unable to wrestle with him in the future, he is renamed.
- Jacob is now known as Israel.
- The unnamed man is clearly God.
- This must be a pre-incarnate appliance of Christ because God the father has no body.

Application

- Jacob's prayer is a model for us to follow.
- We should pray based on the promises of God. Our requests should line up with what God has promised.
- Our wounds/limps remind us to depend on God's strength instead of our home.