

Genesis 32:28

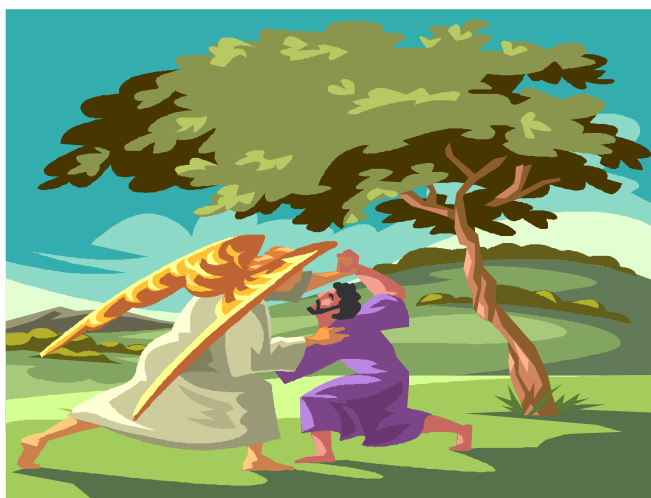
"Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob. Your name will now be Israel,' because you have wrestled with God and with men. And you have won"

Jacob is now returning to his home, for he had been away twenty year. He had with him two wives, Leah and Rachel, a daughter, eleven sons, and many servants, and large flocks and herds. He was wondering if it were safe to return, as Esau had wanted to kill him because Jacob had stolen his birthright.

God sent angels to strengthen him on his trip, but he decided to send messengers to announce to Esau that he was coming. Now Esau was living in a land southeast of Canaan. The messenger found Esau and returned to tell Jacob that Esau was coming to meet him and bringing four hundred men with him.



This frightened Jacob for he thought Esau was coming to kill him. He divided his family and possessions into two groups with the hope that if one were destroyed, the other might be saved. Jacob prayed that God might save him for the sake of the mothers and children. Finally, he decided to choose a hundred animals to send ahead as a present to Esau. The servants leading the droves of animals were to tell Esau that these gifts were from Jacob.



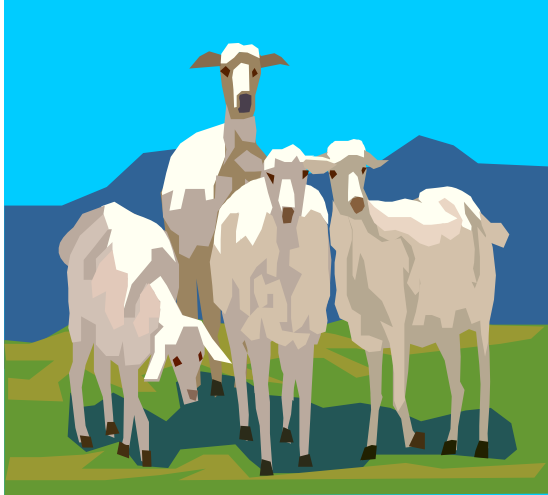
Having sent the servants away, Jacob moved his family across the brook that night, but he stayed on the other side to pray. As he prayed, a strange man came and took hold of him. All the night they fought. Finally, at daybreak Jacob realized it was an angel of the Lord. The angel begged to go, but Jacob would not let him until he had blessed him.

The angel said, "What is your name?" "Jacob", he answered. Then the angel replied, "From now on your name will not be Jacob, but Israel, because you have wrestled with God." Israel means a "Prince of God".

Jacob was no longer afraid, but rushed out to meet Esau. When he reached him, he bowed down in a very humble way seven times. Esau rushed to welcome him with joy and a loving embrace.

Esau asked about the groves of cattle and herds that had come to meet him. Jacob said

they were gifts for him, but he refused to take them. Finally, Jacob insisted he take them, and he accepted.



Esau wanted Jacob to return with him, but Jacob wanted to continue his journey toward Canaan.

Jacob took his family to Shechem, and later as God commanded him, they moved to Bethel.

From Bethel Israel returned to his old home. His father Isaac was still living. Isaac was glad to see his son return, but he did not live much longer. Jacob's wife Rachel died when their son Benjamin was born, as they returned to Canaan.



Jacob and Esau buried their father in the same cave where Rebekah, and their grandparents, Abraham and Sarah, were buried. The many years of fighting for Jacob and Esau were over and finally ended in love.

God repeated his promise to him at Bethel, and called him by the name "Israel".



Quiz Time

1. Why was Jacob afraid to go home?

2. What message did Jacob send to Esau?

3. Who wrestled with Jacob during the night?

4. What was Jacob's name changed to?

5. Was Esau still angry?

6. Did Isaac welcome Jacob?

7. Who buried Isaac?

8. Whom do we call Israelites?

Answers:

- 1 Esau wanted to kill him 2 gifts 3 an angel of the Lord 4 Israel
5 no 6 yes 7 Jacob and Esau 8 Jacob's descendants