

Week 29, Wed Sept 16, 2026 Gen 32 Jacob Wrestles With God

Genesis 32:1-8 Preparation Because Esau is Coming to Meet Jacob (Jacob's Fear of Esau)

Gen 32:1 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him (**most likely to encourage and reaffirm God's presence and protection**).

Before Jacob ever faces his terrifying human problem (Esau), God reminds him that he is surrounded by a supernatural army.

Psalms 34:7: "The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them."

Hebrews 1:14: Angels are ministering spirits sent to serve believers.

Gen 32:2 When Jacob saw them(**angels**), he said, "This is God's camp." And he(**Jacob**) called the name of that place Mahanaim (**Literally means double camp**).

Jacob may have been referring to the angels as another camp, along with his own, and viewing their presence as confirmation of what God told him. This was Jacob's second encounter with the "angels of God" earlier vision of the ladder at Bethel (Gen 28:12).

Some angels that are normally unseen were now made visible to Jacob, probably to encourage him.

Gen 32:3 Then Jacob sent messengers before him (**ahead of him**) to Esau his brother (**who had threatened to kill him and was now living**) in the land of Seir, the country of Edom (**lies east of Canaan in Transjordan**).

Jacob, now must reconcile with his brother, 20 years earlier Esau swore that he would kill Jacob his brother.

Jacob will start making preparations, intended to promote a peaceful reconciliation.

Gen 32:4 And he(**Jacob**) commanded (**instructed**) them(**messengers to be sent**), saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau (**say this**), 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt (**lived temporarily**) with Laban and stayed there until now."

Gen 32:5 "I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent (**these messengers to inform and**) to tell my lord (**I am returning home to live**), that I may find favor (**kindness and graciousness**) in your sight (**so that you will be friendly to me**)."

Pro 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Pro 15:2a The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly ...

Gen 32:6 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he, also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him(**Esau**)."

400 men seems like Esau is expecting a battle

Gen 14:14 Now when Abram heard that his brother (Lot and others) was taken captive, he armed his 318 trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

Gen 32:7 So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed (**at the news, Esau is coming with 400 men**); and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies (**two camps**).

Jacob had the promise of God, that He would protect him, he need not fear!

2Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

1. Power: This is divine strength (dunamis in Greek, where we get the word dynamite) to endure hardships and stand firm, rather than running away in panic. [1] (

2. Love: A focus on sacrificing for others. True love pushes out fear (1 John 4:18) because your focus shifts from self-preservation to serving God and loving people. [1]

3. A Sound Mind: This means self-control, discipline, and a calm, clear-headed perspective. Fear makes our thoughts spiral into chaos; God's Spirit brings stability and [From www.gotquestions.org/spirit-of-fear.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/spirit-of-fear.html))

Gen 32:8 And he(**Jacob**) said, "If Esau comes to the one company (**camp**) and attacks it, then the other company (**camp**) which is left will escape."

Even after encountering angels, Jacob slips back into human manipulation. This warns us against using human reasoning

Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Pro 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Psa 50:15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

Genesis 32:9-21 Jacobs Prayer (Jacob Sends Gifts to Esau)

Gen 32:9 Then Jacob said (**prayed**), "O God of my father(**actually grandfather**) Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you (**make you prosper, as you promised**)':

Jacob has finally come to realize the importance of praying to God for help.

Gen 28:13 (**Jacobs dream**) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.

Gen 28:14 "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Gen 28:15 "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

Gen 32:10 "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies (**lovingkindness**), and of all the truth (**faithfulness**) which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with (**only**) my staff, and now I have become two companies (**one large family which we divided at this time into two groups of people**).

Gen 32:11 "Deliver me (**O LORD save me**), I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, and the mothers with the children.

Psa 59:1 A Michtam of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him(David' prayer). Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; defend me from those who rise up against me.

Psa 59:2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, And save me from bloodthirsty men.

Gen 32:12 "For You (**LORD**) said, 'I will surely treat you well (**make you prosper**), and make your descendants (**offspring**) as (**numerous as**) the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered, for (**because, of the great**) multitude.' "

Gen 22:17 (**Abraham's blessing continues**) "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Gen 32:13 So he(**Jacob**) lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand (**selected gifts, from his possessions**) as a present for Esau his brother:

Gen 32:14 two hundred female goats, and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes (**adult female sheep**), and twenty rams (**Jacob gave 10:1 ratio, females to males, perfect for breeding. Jacob wasn't just giving Esau random livestock; he was giving his brother an immediate, self-multiplying source of long-term wealth**)

Gen 32:15 thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals (**male donkey**). (**Jacob sends animals to Esau as a massive peace offering/gift**)

Gen 32:16 Then he(**Jacob**) delivered them (**into herds and gave them**) to the hand of his servants, every drove (**herd**) by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance (**intervals of space, and time**) between successive droves (**herds**)."

Gen 32:17 And he(**Jacob**) commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these (**animals**) in front of you?'

Gen 32:18 "then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present (**a gift**) sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he (**Jacob**) also is behind us (**he is coming**).' "

Jacob's is expressing words of humility, God blesses humility, a humble heart

Jas 4:6 But He(God) gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Gen 32:19 So he(**Jacob**) commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves (**herds**), saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find (**or meet**) him;

Gen 32:20 "and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him(**Esau**) with the present (**in separate stages, gifts**) that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept (**be kind and forgive**) me."

Gen 32:21 So the present (**herds**) went on over before him but he(**Jacob**) himself lodged that night in the camp.

Jacob's strategy was to continually overwhelm Esau with generosity wearing down his anger with five distinct groups, spaced-out herds, which Esau will see, before he would eventually meet Jacob face to face.

Pro 21:14 A gift in secret pacifies anger, And a bribe behind the back, strong wrath.

Pro 17:8 A present (**or bribe**) is a precious stone (**literally a stone of favor**) in the eyes of its possessor; Wherever he turns, he prospers.

While the Bible condemns dishonest bribes to twist justice and to do wrong, the Book of Proverbs frequently observes the practical reality of how human nature responds to generosity and gifts.

Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob Wrestles with God

Gen 32:22 And he(**Jacob**) arose (**during**) that night and (**quickly**) took his two wives, his two female servants (**wives**), and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok (**Jabbok River**).

Quote from Pastor Chuck Smith 3,000 series

God is wanting to work in Jacob's life. God has chosen Jacob to be one of the patriarchs. God has chosen that Jacob should be the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. God has chosen that from Jacob and one of the tribes, one day the Messiah would come. God has chosen this man for special privileges, but he is still not usable. He is not fully surrendered to God. God can't really do, all He desires to do for you, until your life is fully surrendered to Him.

As long as you can get by with your wit, your scheming, your cunning and your devices, God is apt to let you go, but God will put the squeeze on you. God put the squeeze on him when Laban came. He was fearful, but he got out of it and ended up telling Laban off and putting the pile of stones up and we've got a nonaggression pact. Now word that Esau is coming and it squeezes on and he prays. He is brought to his knees. But now he turns right back around and he is devising and scheming again. He hasn't yet fully surrendered his life and situations of his life to God, and thus, God cannot yet do the full work He is desiring to do through this man. It takes complete surrender, and so God has to deal further with him.

Luk 9:23 Then He(Jesus) said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Gen 32:23 He(Jacob) took them, sent them over (across) the brook, and sent over what he had (all his possessions).

Gen 32:24 Then Jacob was left alone (in the camp); and a Man (came and) wrestled with him, until the breaking of day (very first light of dawn, just before the sun physically rises over the horizon). (This was God Himself as Jacob eventually realizes in Gen 32:30; see also v 29 and Hosea 12:4), in the form of an Angel, OT "Angel of the Lord").

Getting alone with God, letting Him break our pride, and choosing to cling to Him above all else. Hearing His voice is so important

In theology, this is called a Christophany—a visible manifestation of Jesus Christ before He was officially born as a baby in Bethlehem.

Correlation passage:

Hos 12:3 He(Jacob) took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength (human ability) he(Jacob) struggled (wrestled, contended or strove) with God.

Hos 12:4 Yes, he(Jacob) struggled with "the Angel" and prevailed; He(Jacob won) wept, and sought favor from Him. He found Him in Bethel, And there He spoke to us--

Hosea clarifies this by explicitly calling the opponent "the Angel"—specifically a manifestation of the “Angel of the Lord”, which many identify as a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.

To prevailed" does not mean Jacob pinned God to the ground and won a physical fight. In this context, to "prevail" means Jacob successfully held on in a state of brokenness desperate until he received the blessing from God he needed.

Jacob "won" after his hip was dislocated. At that moment, he was completely disabled and unable to physically fight any longer, he shifted from fighting to clinging. In a sense He won the blessing through broken submission, tears, and desperate prayer, refusing to let go of God.

Hosea was telling the truth to the people: "Jacob your ancestor didn't find success by relying on his own strength, striving and mental ability, but found true blessing when he was heartbroken, weeping, relying on, abiding and submitted to God. We need to do learn the same truth.

Gen 32:25 Now when He (the Man, God in human form) saw that He did not prevail against him(Jacob), He touched the socket of his hip (thigh or hip joint); and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint (dislocated hip) as He(the Man, God in human form) wrestled with him(Jacob).

By disabling Jacob's hip, the Man (God in human form) shows Jacob: "I could have ended this match at any single moment. You didn't survive the night because you are stronger than Me (God in human form); you survived because I let you. "Even with a dislocated hip and in agonizing pain, Jacob still refuses to let go. He is stubborn. He won't give up. He just clings to the Man Man (God in human form) and cries for a blessing. That is why Jacob "prevailed"—not because he pinned God, but because his faith lasted all that night.

Gen 32:26 And He (the Man, God in human form) said, "Let Me(the Man, God in human form) go, for the day breaks." But he(Jacob) said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

Jacob basically tells God: "I don't care if my hip is broken, and I don't care if the sun is rising. I am not letting go of You, until You change my life." This is the exact moment Jacob "prevailed"—he won by completely surrendering and clinging to God.

Gen 32:27 So He (the Man) said to him(Jacob), "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob."

Gen 32:28 And He (the Man) said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel (Literally Prince with God; Lit he who strives with God); for you have struggled (striven) with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Quote from David Guzik on Blue Letter Bible

b. **Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel**: The name **Israel** is a compound of two words: **sarah** (meaning, **fight**, **struggle**, or **rule**) and **el** (meaning, **God**). Some take the name Israel to mean, **He who struggles with God** or **He who rules with God**. But in Hebrew names, sometimes God is not the object of the verb but the subject. **Daniel** means **God judges**, not **he judges God**. This principle shows us **Israel** likely means, **God rules**.

i. From this point on, this son of Isaac will be called Jacob twice as often as he is called Israel. Apparently, there was still plenty of the old man left in Jacob.

ii. "Dear friends, I am afraid that the lives of many of the Lord's chosen people alternate between 'Israel' and 'Jacob.' Sometimes we are 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' and at another time we cry, 'Who is sufficient for these things? (Spurgeon).

Gen 32:29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him(**Jacob**) there (**blessed Jacob with the covenant promises**).

Gen 32:30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (**Literally means "Face of God"**): "For I have seen God face to face, and my life (**soul**) is preserved (**survived, I am not dead**)."

Gen 35:9 Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him.

Gen 35:10 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.

Gen 35:11 Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.

Gen 35:12 "The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."

Gen 35:13 Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.

Gen 35:14 So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.

Gen 35:15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

Today as believers we have a new identity, we become new creations

2Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Gal 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Jhn 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jhn 3:7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

Jhn 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Gen 32:31 Just as he crossed over Penuel, the sun rose on him, and he(Jacob**) limped on his hip (**He had a dislocated hip**).**

Gen 32:32 Therefore to this day (even today**) the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank (**thigh by the tendon, sinew of the hip**).**

Quote from Pastor Chuck Smith, 3,000 series

Woe to him who strives with his maker, because you are only forestalling God's work and God's plan for your life. And holding back from you God's best, which is your best also. Believe me.

So, Jacob is crippled and is now defeated. He surrenders and he weeps and he prays, "Bless me. Bless me." The blessing, the change of character. You see the name expressed his character, "Supplanter." Oh that very well expressed the character of this sly and cunning guy, Jacob. That's exactly what he was, but you're going to have a change of character and what a blessing that change of character was.

That is exactly what God wants to do for you, the change of character from a carnal man to a spiritual man; from a life governed by your flesh to one governed by the Spirit. That's God's intention for you. But does God have to cripple you to do it? I hope not! I hope that we won't be so foolish as to wrestle with God until He has to cripple us in order to bring us into total submission to Him. But even if so, if God has to use that measure, then with Paul one day we will say, "I thank God for this infirmity. I rejoice in my infirmity, that the power of God might be manifested in my life" (II Corinthians 12:9). And I believe the day came when Jacob, not Jacob, but when Israel rejoiced in that hip out of socket. He rejoiced in the crippling, because of the work and the power of God that was then manifested in his life when he came to the place of surrender to God.

Your name shall be called "governed" or "ruled by God,"

End, Prayer

Extra Scriptures

In theology, this is called a Christophany—a visible manifestation of Jesus Christ before He was officially born as a baby in Bethlehem.

Num 22:31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD (a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ**) standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.**