

Genesis 32-34

An Overview of Chapter 32

After a brief encounter with angels Jacob begins his journey home. Jacob sends a message to his brother Esau that he will be coming home. When Jacob hears that Esau is coming with 400 men to meet him, he gets a little scared (remember that Esau had threatened to kill him). Jacob divides his group into 2 companies, if the first company is attacked then Jacob and the rest will run away.

Jacob reminds God of His promised protection and prosperity.

Jacob prepares gifts to send ahead to his brother in hopes of appeasing him.

Jacob sent his wives, kids and maids across the stream ahead of him. While he was still on the other side, a man began to wrestle with him. They wrestled all night long, and the man dislocated Jacob's hip. Even after suffering a dislocated hip Jacob refused to let go of the man. It turns out that Jacob was wrestling with God (actually a Christophony - Christ appearing before his physical birth). God changes Jacob's name to Israel, but it doesn't seem to stick initially.

After his wrestling match Jacob limps across the stream and meets up with his family.

An Overview of Chapter 33

Jacob sees his brother Esau coming and quickly divides his family according to importance. He puts the Bilhah, Zilpah, and their boys first, then Leah and her kids, and lastly Rachel and her son Joseph. Then Jacob goes to the front and bows down to his brother. When he and Esau meet they hug, kiss, and cry.

After a little complimentary bickering Esau accepts the gifts that Jacob offers.

When Jacob finally arrives at Shechem he buys some land and builds an altar. It is here that he now sees God as his God and not just the God of his fathers (El-Elohe-Israel).

An Overview of Chapter 34

Leah's daughter Dinah decides to get to know her neighbors. Unfortunately, while she is out she gets raped by a prince. The prince's father tries to smooth things over by suggesting that the two get married, and he proposes that his people and Jacob's people should intermarry.

Jacob's sons are upset about what happened to Rachel so they work out a plan to get revenge. They convince all the men of the land to be circumcised. Three days later when all the men are in pain two of the brothers (Simeon and Levi) come in and kill all the men of the city while they cannot defend themselves. Besides killing the men they loot the city and steal the women and children.

Jacob is worried by this because he believes the neighbors will think this deal stinks.

Reflection

Is there anyone in your family you need to reconcile with? Is there anyone in the family of the Body of Christ? What gifts can you give to those whom you have offended. Do you often wrestle with God? Are you capable of as much forgiveness as Esau was?

For Further Study

Reconciliation: Matthew 5:23-24, Ephesians 2:14-16

Forgiveness: Matthew 6:14-15, 2Corinthians 2, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12-13