
WEEK 8 SCRIPTURE READING

5779 / 2018-19

A person wearing a white, textured robe is shown from the chest down, holding a large, reddish-brown clay jug. The jug has a wide, flared opening and a handle. A stream of water is being poured from the jug's opening. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white. The overall tone is serene and spiritual.

by Roly Buys

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Parashah Vayishlach | “and he sent” | ותשלח

Week 8

DID HE CHANGE HIS WARFARE STRATEGY?

The verse that stands out for me this week is:

Genesis 32.7 “Ya‘akov became greatly afraid and distressed. He **divided the people, flocks, cattle and camels with him into two camps,**”

Consider This ...

- ◆ If we think about this verse, we see that Jacob had a strategy ... presents, prayer and then warfare.
- ◆ a strategy to divide his family into two camps is an age old battle plan.
- ◆ a strategy to lead with one group and then use the second as a pincer movement, or get them to circle around to the rear and attack on both sides.
- ◆ a strategy that asks would the presents have changed Esau’s views - we cannot be sure - but we can guess that these things tend to distract one from the job at hand.
- ◆ a strategy to have Esau running around looking after the gifts that Jacobs gives him (camels / goats / sheep and donkeys) - this could give Jacob the chance to start charging down at him with a surprise attack?

But is this what really transpired?

I have read this portion often and heard many teaching on this point - mainly coming from the point of view that Jacob was still devious and did not trust YHVH at all.

What happens when we read a little further on?

a. Jacob divides the people into two camps:

Genesis 32:8-11 saying, “If ‘Esav comes to **the one camp** and attacks it, at **least the camp that is left will escape.**” Then Ya‘akov said, “God of my father Avraham and God of my father Yitz’chak, ADONAI, who told me, ‘Return to your country and your kinsmen, and I will do you good’: I’m not worthy of all the love and faithfulness you have shown your servant, since I crossed the Yarden with only my staff. But now I have become **two camps**. Please! Rescue me from my brother ‘Esav! I’m afraid of him, afraid he’ll come and attack me, without regard for mothers or children.”

- b. That same evening He chooses the presents that he will give to Jacob, and sets them up in an order, each group separated from the next.

Genesis 32:14-16 *“two hundred female goats and twenty males, two hundred female sheep and twenty males, thirty milk-camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten colts. He turned them over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, “Cross over in front of me, and keep a space between each drove and the next one.”*”

- c. That same night He cross the Yabok river with his two wives, two slave girls and 11 children.

Genesis 32:23 *“He took them and sent them across the stream, then sent his possessions across.”*

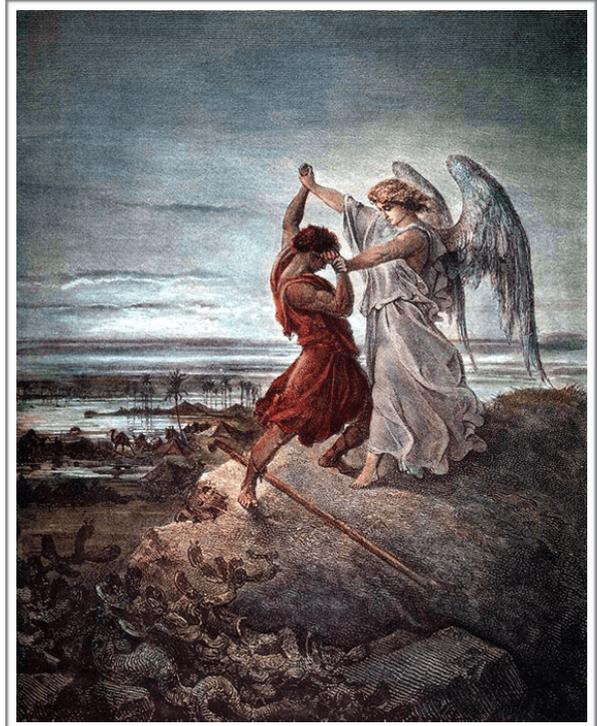
- d. And then it says Jacob was left alone ... it looks as if he crossed back over to the other side again.

Genesis 32:24 *“and Ya‘akov was left alone ...”*

- ◆ And then he starts to wrestle with YHVH.
- ◆ A man who has done his own thing.
- ◆ A man who has been blessed to have some significant GOD-encounters that have given him vital direction.
- ◆ But a man whose character does still not match up to that of a **renewed man** with a **circumcised heart**.

Genesis 32:24-25 *“...then some man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he did not defeat Ya‘akov, he struck Ya‘akov’s hip socket, so that his hip was dislocated while wrestling with him.”*

- ◆ Now there is something else to think about.
- ◆ Esau and Jacob have been apart for 20 odd years.
- ◆ If Esau is really angry, would he not have done something about that years ago?
- ◆ What causes Esau, at this time, to come out with an army to meet Jacob?



There is an interesting story - that Laban sent his son Beor to tell Esau that Jacob had become very rich - if there is truth in this, then we can understand that Esau wanted a “part of the blessing”.

Jacob wrestles with YHVH.

In the end, he walks away with a **LIMP** and a **NEW NAME!**

Genesis 32:30-32 *“Ya’akov called the place P’ni-El (Face of God), “Because I have seen God Face to face, yet my life is spared.” As the sun rose upon him he went on past P’ni-El, limping at the hip. This is why, to this day, the people of Isra’el do not eat the thigh muscle that passes along the hip socket - because the man struck Ya’akov’s hip at its socket.”*

A NEW STRATEGY

- ◆ Old-man / un-renewed man thinking relies on our own strength and power.
- ◆ Old-man thinking relies on the element of surprise and diversion.
- ◆ Old-man thinking relies on hiding behind the army / gifts.

But a renewed mindset sees things differently.

1. All he asked YHVH for when he left was clothes on his back and food - now he has great possessions, giving these away is not that difficult for a renewed mind ... after all YHVH can do it all again.
2. Jacob cannot really go to battle - he now walks with a limp ... therefore he has to trust YHVH for a miracle deliverance - so he changes the order around.

He goes first, followed by the slave girls and their children, then by Leah and her children, with Rachael and Joseph taking up the rear.

Genesis 33:1-3 *“Ya’akov raised his eyes and looked out; and there was ‘Esav coming, and four hundred men with him. So Ya’akov divided the children between Le’ah, Rachel and the two slave-girls, putting the slave-girls and their children first, Le’ah and her children second, and Rachel and Yosef last. Then he himself passed on ahead of them and prostrated himself on the ground seven times before approaching his brother.”*

What should we think about this week?

1. Do we face trials and tribulations with an Old-man mindset - are we trying to solve problems in the flesh?
2. Do we value possessions more than we value people – would we send others into battle ahead of ourselves and expect them to face/handle our problems?



3. Do you value every family member equally ... is it fair to distinguish children based on your perceived love for their mother? What image / role-model do you think is being left behind for the 'other' children?

A FINAL THOUGHT

Jacob / Israel will re-enter the Land

- ❖ However, his problems within the family will continue - from the rape of Dinah and the vengeance by Levi and Simon, to the rebellion from Reuben - we just observe family divisions – divisions left by the values attributed to each child by Jacob in his final blessing - as well as each child's perception of the value of their own contribution to the father / family.
- ❖ Parents have a major role to play in the emotional health of their children ... are you modeling justice, compassion and humbleness?

BLESSING

Numbers 6:24-27

“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.
May YHVH bless you and keep you.

Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.
May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.

Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.
May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.

In this way they are to put **My Name** on the people of Israel, so that I will BLESS them.

