**The God of Peniel**

(Jacob Wrestles with God) **Lesson 22**

Genesis 32:1-33:17

Key Verse: 32:28

The God of Peniel is God who made Jacob’s life climax. He is God who changed Jacob to Israel. He is God who made Jacob personally meet God.

After 21 years life in Paddan Aram, Jacob learned that all his family, wealth, success couldn’t solve his fear and anxiety problem. He learned that all these things became only burden to his life. Jacob needed peace, peace with God and with people and assurance of salvation. So, he struggled existential struggle at the Jabbok River.

God changed Jacob’s name, which means Jacob would become new creation.

God changed Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah. God began to work his redemptive plan in Jacob’s life.

1. **Read 32:1-8. What caused Jacob to fall into fear? What was the messengers’ report and how did Jacob interpret it? How did he prepare to meet Esau?**

**Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau**

**32**[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-930a)]Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. **2**When Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Mahanaim.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-931b" \o "See footnote b)]

**3**Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. **4**He instructed them: “This is what you are to say to my lord Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now. **5**I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female servants. Now I am sending this message to my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.’”

**6**When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”

**7**In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-936c)] and the flocks and herds and camels as well. **8**He thought, “If Esau comes and attacks one group,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-937d)] the group[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-937e)] that is left may escape.”

1. Jacob was in great fear when he heard that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men.
2. Jacob thought that Esau was coming with his army to kill Jacob.
3. Jacob used all his wits and skills to save his life. So he divided his family and cattle into two groups.
4. **Read 32:9-21. What was his prayer? What did he do to placate Esau? How does Jacob’s fear and anxiety show us existential dilemma despite his wealth and success?**

Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, Lord, you who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’ **10**I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps. **11Save me,** I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. **12**But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’” **13**He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: **14**two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, **15**thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. **16**He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, “Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds.”

**17**He instructed the one in the lead: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘Who do you belong to, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?’ **18**then you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.’”

**19**He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: “You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. **20**And be sure to say, ‘Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.’” For he thought, “I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.” **21**So Jacob’s gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

1. Jacob’s prayer is 1) he called the God of his fathers.

2) He gave thanks to God for his faithfulness and blessing

3) He asked God to save him

4) He reminded God of his covenant

1. In order to pacify (placate) Jacob sent gifts for Esau ahead of his family.

Gift opens the way… (Pro 18:16 )

1. Jacob’s wealth and success couldn’t save Jacob. He became rather a burden to him who was at the door of death.

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart… (Job 1:20)

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath ….(Pro 11:4)

The parable of the rich fool.. (Lk 12:13-21)

Before death, everybody becomes humble and sincere. Jacob was alone at the Jabok River. It was time for him to review his life and meet God newly and personally.

1. **Read 32:22-32. Describe Jacob’s struggle with God when he was alone. What further blessing did Jacob want? (26) What new name did God give Jacob and why? (28)**

**Jacob Wrestles With God**

**22**That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23**After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. **24**So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. **25**When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. **26**Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

**27**The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered. **28**Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-957f)] because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.” **29**Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.” But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there.

**30**So Jacob called the place Peniel,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-959g)] saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” **31**The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel,[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-960h)] and he was limping because of his hip. **32**Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob’s hip was touched near the tendon.

1. Jacob struggled with God for his blessing. God’s blessing was peace of God and assurance of his salvation.----It is the same dilemma which Nicodemus had.
2. God gave Jacob new name, “Israel” which means *he struggles with God*.

The name Israel became the name of a nation Israel.

Jacob’s life was one struggle after another….1) with his brother Esau, 2) with his uncle Laban. Jacob was exhausted and tired.

1. **What does it mean that the LORD struck the socket of his hip? (25) What did Jacob call that place? (30) Who is the God of Peniel in Jacob’s life?**

. **25**When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man.

**30**So Jacob called the place Peniel,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-959g)] saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.”

1. **The Lord humbled Jacob** by breaking his hip bone. Jacob was too strong to persuade. God used his physical force to stop Jacob.
2. Jacob saw God face to face. He did not realize that it was the LORD who wrestled with him. So, he called that place, “Peniel”, the face of God.
3. The God of Peniel is the God of long patience and grace. God waited until Jacob was changed, until Jacob became Israel, until a physical man to a spiritual man, until an earthly man to a heavenly man.
4. **Read 33:1-17. What is the evidence of Jacob’s change into a new man, especially his way of looking at Esau? (10) Why did Jacob continue to refuse Esau’s favor? After his meeting with Esau, where did Jacob settle and what did he do? (16-17)**

**Jacob Meets Esau**

**33**Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. **2**He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. **3**He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

**4**But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. **5**Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. “Who are these with you?” he asked. Jacob answered, “They are the children God has graciously given your servant.”

**6**Then the female servants and their children approached and bowed down. **7**Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down.

**8**Esau asked, “What’s the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?” “To find favor in your eyes, my lord,” he said. **9**But Esau said, “I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself.” **10**“No, please!” said Jacob. “If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. **For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably.** **11**Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need.” And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

**12**Then Esau said, “Let us be on our way; I’ll accompany you.” **13**But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children are tender and that I must care for the ewes and cows that are nursing their young. If they are driven hard just one day, all the animals will die. **14**So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly at the pace of the flocks and herds before me and the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir.” **15**Esau said, “Then let me leave some of my men with you.” “But why do that?” Jacob asked. “Just let me find favor in the eyes of my lord.” **16**So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir. **17**Jacob, however, went to **Sukkoth,** where he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Sukkoth.[[i](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+32-33&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-978i" \o "See footnote i)]

1. The eyes to see Esau was changed because Jacob himself was changed. When we become a new person, the whole world looks new. (2 Cor 5:17)

“*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here*!”

1. Even though Jacob was changed, his disbelief about Esau was not changed. Jacob didn’t trust Esau.
2. Sukkoth means ‘shelter’. Sukkoth is a shelter, a temporary place, not home in the promised land. Jacob compromised