



Growing Closer to God

Changing Lives

Trust My Strength



I Need to Get Closer to God: Jacob

The Nature of the Distance Between **Jacob** and God

- Am I going to trust that God will take care of me?
- I want to take control of my life myself

Jacob Wrestles an Angel



“Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

Gen 32:28

“He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor.” **Hos 12:4**

What does **Gen 32:25** suggest?

We need to back up and approach the event in context

The Character of Jacob

*“Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents.” **Gen 25:27***

Heb “tam”; elsewhere: perfect (9), undefiled (2), upright (1)

Jacob is a man who is godly at his core –
but has a significant character flaw



Jacob's Wrestling: Grabbing the Heel



After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.

Gen 25:26

“Jacob” = grasps the heel

Hebrew Idiom:

‘to deceive or take advantage of’

God declared that Jacob, the younger, would rule over the elder

“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.” **Gen 25:23**

To what extent is Jacob allowed to ‘facilitate’ this end?

Jacob's Wrestling: Birthright & Blessing



Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!”... Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.” **Gen 25:29-31**

“May God give you heaven’s dew and earth’s richness— an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.” **Gen 27:28-29**



What were the Birthright & the Blessing?



What were the consequences of Jacob's wrestling?

- He made his brother homicidally angry **Gen 27:34,41**
- He (probably) never saw his mother again

To Take or Not to Take?

It was God's will for David to be king in place of Saul

"Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands." ... But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him" **1 Sam 26:8-10**

"the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" **Mt 4:8-10**

& Jesus



Jacob's Wrestling: "Best" Wife; "Best" Flocks



How many years did Jacob work for Leah?

Jacob works 7 years for Rachel – gets Leah
Is given Rachel for another 7 years' work
How must Leah feel?

14 yrs for Rachel; 6 yrs for cattle

"Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife" Lev 18:18

Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees... So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. Gen 30:37-42



What were the consequences of Jacob's wrestling?

- Leah is unloved Gen 29:30
- Wives/Sisters now competing
- Uncle & cousins angry, cut him off Gen 31:1-2,52

Jacob Wrestles an Angel (Revisited)



“Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.” **Gen 32:28**

What does the wrestling reveal about Jacob’s opinion of God?

God isn’t kind enough to bless; the blessing must be wrestled from Him

Consequence? **He wasn’t able to walk properly again** **Gen 32:31**

*“He will punish Jacob according to his ways
and repay him according to his deeds. But doesn’t Hosea praise
In the womb he grasped his brother’s heel; Jacob’s wrestling?
as a man he struggled with God.”*

*He struggled with the angel and overcame him;
he wept and begged for his favor...*

*But you must return to your God.” **Hos 12:2-6***

**No. It’s an
indictment**

Jacob wrestles for

Consequence

Summary So Far



Birthright



Father's
Blessing



Rachel



Flocks



Angel's
Blessing

*"...you have
struggled with
God and with
men and have
overcome."*

**So what is God really
saying to Jacob?**

Recall **Gen 32:25**

**I suspect God has
given "the deceiver"
a deceptive (ironic)
name: "ISRAEL"**

What was the Angel unable to overcome?



*“When the [angel] 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.” **Gen 32:25***

So what is it the angel cannot overcome?

- Jacob’s stubbornness was unbreakable
- The angel crippled Jacob physically to help Jacob begin to realize this



Did Israel learn his lesson?

Not that day, his wrestling continued:

- Self-protection of Joseph **Gen 37:12-13**
- Self-protection of Benjamin **Gen 42:2-4**



Favour & Disfavour



Jacob

Esau

Sweep Angle: 82.105°

0.8279316813542

7 Years of Drought...



God Takes Everything Away



Finally, Israel stands before Pharaoh: old, homeless, lame, bereaved & hungry. He has nothing left to wrestle with, or for

“Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been...” **Gen 47:9**

Finally, “Israel” is weak

God Gives Everything Back

“...settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen.” **Gen 47:5**

Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food. **Gen 47:12**

So [the Egyptians] brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. **Gen 47:17**

So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. **Gen 47:20**

Israel said to Joseph, “Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive.” **Gen 46:30**



Has Israel Learned Israel's Lesson?

Israel is **STILL** wrestling

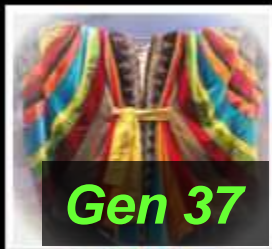


Timeline of Israel



Gen 25-32

**Israel
Wrestles**



Gen 37

**Israel believes the
Beloved Son is dead**

***Meanwhile, the Midianites
sold Joseph in Egypt to
Potiphar*** **Gen 37:36**

**The Beloved
Son is actually
alive**

Israel

"I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." ...He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command.

Gen 41:41-43



Son is 2nd-in-command in a mighty kingdom

Son is working, unrecognized, for the family he loves to feed all who come

God takes everything away to teach Israel his true strength

Israel finally sees his weakness

Israel



God restores everything...



...except the extra spouse



Israel finally sees the Beloved Son



Sons of Israel worship the Son

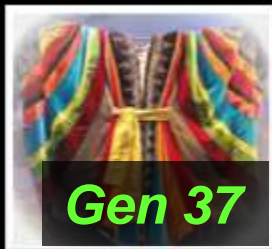
Israel: A Man

Timeline of Israel

Israel: A Nation



Gen 25-32



Gen 37

Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar **Gen 37:36**

Israel Wrestles

Israel believes the Beloved Son is dead

The Beloved Son is actually alive



Mt 27



Acts 17

Israel: A Man

"I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." ...He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command.

Son is 2nd-in-command in a mighty kingdom

Son is working, unrecognized, for the family he loves to feed all who come

Gen 41:41-43



Israel: A Nation

"I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."
Acts 7:56

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. **Heb 7:25**

2015

God takes everything away to teach Israel his true strength

I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. **Zech 14:2**



Israel finally sees his weakness



Israel: A Man



God restores everything...



...except the extra spouse



Israel finally sees the Beloved Son



Sons of Israel worship the Son

Israel: A Nation

Jerusalem will be raised up high... never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure. Zech 14:10-11

All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. Mic 4:5

They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him Zech 12:10

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord Phil 2:10-11

“If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.”

How Can I Learn from Israel's Experience?

I shouldn't wrestle with my brothers – what am I trying to win?

“People are often unreasonable and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do well anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.”

“For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”



Jacob/Israel: God's Chosen People

GOD CHOSE ISRAEL

- God chose those who loved Him, even though they struggled to trust Him and tried to achieve everything themselves
- He can and will work with this type of person



How Can I Learn from Israel's Experience?

Don't grab at God's blessings – don't I trust Him?

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom”



(No wrestling required)



Growing Closer to God

Changing Lives

Give to the Poor

