

14471

GLENLOCK BIBLE CAMP

PREVAILING WITH GOD - A STUDY OF JACOB

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Study #5

Power over the Angels

Reading: Genesis 32

My beloved brethren and sisters and young people

We followed Jacob, b&s and young people, we followed him to Padan-aram into the country of Syria, to the country of his mother's brother, Laban the Syrian. You'll remember with me that when he came there with a flush of enthusiasm that rolled the stone off the well's mouth, that 3 times in that verse it tells us that he performed that feat alone, and the inspiration to do that was the fact that he was among his mother's relations, and he was going to meet his mother's brother! You can enter into Jacob's feelings, b&s, as he broke down on that occasion and wept, overcome as he must have been by the long journey, the anxiety of the things that lay before him, by the fact that the providence of God had guided him to this place, and as the record would suggest above all, by the fact that he was here among people that would remind him of his mother! And little did Jacob realize, b&s, that God had brought him there for the very reason to meet his mother's brother! and to teach him once and for all, that all that was good in Rebekah, didn't come from Syria. And I believe, when Jacob at the end of those 40 years, tedious as they must have been to him, with all the domestic unhappiness, the storms of life with which he was continually confronted, and particularly with the meanness of the attitude of Laban, he would have come away from that country with a great sense of relief, a deep sense of relief, and it wasn't long, b&s, after that he came out of the land of Padan-aram, that he was caused to come to a stop where there was buried, a woman who was known as Rebekah's nurse, and the very last remnants in Jacob's life of the old country of Syria was gone, and he built an altar right over the remains of that woman and called it 'the power of the house of God'; and no longer was Jacob enthused by the phrase, his mother's brother! but to Jacob, it was nothing more now than 'the power of the house of God'.

And so those 40 years had rolled by and we come to the 31st chapter of Genesis, and the voice of Almighty God comes to him with this message, verse 3, 'And Yahweh said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee'. And that is exactly, of course, what He had told him right back on the first instance

that he came to Beth-el, 'I will be with thee in all places whither thou goest', and now the voice of Almighty God, b&s, comes forward to call him out of that place, and you can rest assured, that God would not have called him until the time had come, when Jacob was going on his last pilgrimage as it were, to Beth-el before God, (and this is quite remarkable) before God was to go up from him, and to lead him as it were, not alone! but because He had accomplished with him, the thing that He had spoken to him of. And now in the wisdom of the eternal God, He looked down upon that man and He saw that he had sufficient experience now, be it that his heart may have been true because of that experience. But he was a wiser man, he was a better man, and now God says, you've had enough of that; 40 years, b&s, is the number of probation, isn't it? that's the number of probation in the scripture. It's all over now, the probation in that place is gone! now Jacob you make your way back to the land of your fathers.

So the time came for him and Laban to part, and of course, he went away secretly as we know, and Laban pursued him and overtook him in that region which the scripture calls, Galeed. Galeed is a term, b&s, is a geographical term which covers the whole eastern bank of the river Jordan, but in this particular instance, Galeed was understood, of course, as this region up here, on the north-eastern side of the Lake of Galilee, which today is known as the Golan Heights. And I believe that Laban met him somewhere up there, between the Golan Heights and perhaps Damascus, and from that place there are advantage points, b&s, where the whole land might be surveyed. One of the most beautiful sights in all the Middle-East is up in that region which looks over the great gulf of the river Jordan, stretches right down over the plain of Jezreel and clear down over the hills of Samaria, and one gets a magnificent vista of the country that God promised Abraham. No doubt, that's where the man Laban caught up with Jacob at that place in Galeed; and then they parted. There would have been before Jacob, the Land that God promised to his father, and it was on that occasion, b&s, that the marked difference between the old life in Syria and the new one which laid before him, was made. We read in verse 48 of Genesis 31, that Laban said, 'This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed or Gileed (Strongs-1567) which means 'a hill of witness'; and they called it a watch tower as no doubt it was, a high place overlooking the Land, and from that place they parted. And we know, b&s, from our previous consideration, that they both swore an oath there that they would never pass that point towards each other for harm.

And in verse 53, Laban swore by the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, he said, judge betwixt us. And Jacob swore by the reverence of his father Isaac', making it crystal clear to Laban that when they parted, he wanted Laban to clearly understand, clearly understand that they parted on a difference on the truth! They agreed as it were, from the call of Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, but Abraham was not at that stage, he was not at that stage ready to come into the land of promise, as our bro. Jim this morning has reminded us, surely he had left his country but he hadn't left his kindred and at Haran the call came to him, 'go for yourself' and that precise phrase by the way, is used when Rebekah told Jacob to go into Syria to 'go for yourself'. Little did she realize that that should have been told him, now, coming out of Syria. And he came out such as his father came out, and he went for himself, and he left the house of

his kindred, and so from Haran onwards, they diverged; they might have all come out as the God of Abraham but Laban went to Nahor, but Jacob wanted it clearly understood, that he wasn't going to swear but by the God of Isaac! In order that there be no misunderstanding whatever, he changed the name, he said, 'by the fear of Isaac'. Because it means to say that the God of Isaac, Laban could have perhaps been justified in thinking of the God of Isaac and the God of Abraham in his mind as being the same, Jacob wanted to make sure that difference was plain to him. And when they parted, b&s, it was on the basis of the revealed manifestation of God to Jacob of the truth in its absolute purity! And he turned his back for the last time on Laban, and b&s, as we sung in our opening hymn about Jacob's flock of old, and bringing the wanderers back, surely our hearts went into those words, I hope they did, because as we sung that hymn I had in my mind, the picture of Jacob returning with all these people that he's got together, but I couldn't help but think this, that as you read this record, there we have in the prophecy of Jeremiah, a lengthy prophecy, in chapters 30 and 31, which you can go home and read, (and there's a good spiritual exercise for you) go home and read those chapters with a magnifying glass and make a note of every allusion that Jeremiah makes to the return of Jacob back to that Land, and you'll be amazed, absolutely amazed, to find the allusions that Jeremiah has there to the return of Jacob to that Land (and they're all out of chronological order, as the prophets did that!) They didn't put things in chronological order, but you readjust them and you've got a complete picture, b&s, of the return of Jacob to the Land.

Listen, I'll read them all out to you (we can't turn them up, we'd be here for the rest of the afternoon), this is the voice of Jeremiah, as he picks up this passage of history.

1. Jacob from the land of Syria, back to the Promised Land. He says, 'I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents'.
2. He will return to the Land of his fathers, which we've just read.
3. Strangers shall no more make servants of him, that's exactly what Laban did.
4. He said he will set up way marks.
5. He will make high heaps and turn again to his cities.
6. Galeed, I will correct thee in measure, bring even the north country, directly north it was.
7. The blind, the lame (Jacob himself)
8. The women with the children (the very words of Jacob)
9. Her that travaileth with child together (Rachel)
10. They will come with weeping and supplication (Hosea 12:4 uses those very words)

11. He said he'd come with the voice of trembling and fear and not of peace.

12. Jacob was greatly distressed and afraid, we read.

13. It's a time of Jacob's trouble such as never was, says Jeremiah.

14. And Jacob called it 'the day of my distress'

15. Jeremiah say, I will bring his yoke from off thy neck (this was the time when Jacob was getting the ascendancy over Esau.

16. I have redeemed Jacob from the hand of him that was stronger than he (and Esau came with 400 men) Listen to the prophet!

17. He says, I have wounded Jacob with a wound of an enemy (and God did wound him) and on top of that Jeremiah says

18. I hear Rachel weeping for her children (as she died in the birth of Benoni), but he says,

19. Their congregation shall be established (I will make you a multitude of people. And the prophet says this finally,

20. After I was instructed, I was smote upon my thigh (when I woke up to myself, I hit my thigh). And there's the magnificent sweep of Jeremiah's prophecy as he picks up those incidences and puts them all out of chronological order, but readjust them and you have a complete story or the return of natural Israel, in the latter days, b&s, when under similar conditions, they will turn their back upon the nations; they'll turn their face toward the Land of their fathers. It will be the time of Jacob's trouble such as never was, but he shall be saved out of it, and Jacob's flock of old shall return and God will establish them, as the first dominion. What a magnificent sweep of a prophecy that is, b&s.

Now we come to the opening verses of chapter 32, and we take up our story with the background of Jeremiah with us; we can appreciate, b&s, the experiences of Jacob as an individual, and you can write in your mind as we go through, you can write against that, the national experiences of these people, and the spiritual experiences of yourself and myself. And so we read that 'Jacob went on his way' and truly, b&s, it was his way! If you will come with me (with your hand in Genesis) back to Jeremiah 31, just to one of those quotations which I've already raised and have another close look at it; here God speaks of His longing for the children of Israel, in verse 20, He uses the great tribe of Ephraim here as it were a representative of the whole nation, 'Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith Yahweh. Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way that thou wentest, turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to

these thy cities'. You know, b&s, it is wonderful, it's rather remarkable that when they came to Galeed and Laban caught him and they made a great heap of witness there, and they swore to each other that they'd never pass again one to the other for harm, and Laban when away back to Syria. Jacob turned his back on him, and there was the voice of Jeremiah, he made a heap of witness, turn again to your own cities, never mind what's behind you, go back from the land of your fathers', and no sooner had Jacob done that, immediately, immediately, b&s, God's host appeared to him! not before but immediately he turned his back upon Haran, they appeared unto him and there they were, and he saw God's host. He saw God's host and I believe, it was absolutely fitting that they should appear at that time, they were with him all the way through Syria. 'I will never leave thee in all places whither thou goest; I will be with thee' saith God, they were there all the time; they were there when Jacob was scheming, they were working behind the scenes to do things that he thought perhaps he was having a hand in! And all the time he was being taught that the providence of God was overruling him, but they never appeared to him until he turned his back upon that land and set his heart towards his own city, and then God's host appeared. And there's a tremendous significance in that; but they didn't only appear, b&s, they didn't only appear, because he's now set his heart toward the city, they appeared because he needed them; and I want you to notice how they appeared.

When we met them before, we saw a staircase, didn't we? and we saw angels climbing that staircase and descending that staircase; when it comes up in Genesis 32 which we are going to consider in a moment, he's got one angel and he's grappling with him. And there are three great manifestations of angels to Jacob and every one of them, everyone of those manifestations, is carefully set out to impress us with the main lesson. What was the lesson of angels going up and down? The lesson was that God's providence would be with him; the lesson of him grappling with the angel which we'll consider in a moment, is a lesson of Jacob's personal association with God in working out the providence of God in his life. Why did they appear as a host on this occasion? because what he needed more than anything else at this crisis of history, was an army! because Esau's on his way with 400 men! And they appeared in that way for that reason, and he saw them, God's army! And that's precisely what he needed. And do you think, b&s, there's a parallel in that to the return of natural Israel? Listen to these words! 'There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation upon the earth, says the prophet Daniel, and at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince, which standeth for the children of thy people' and there's the book of Daniel telling us that at the return of natural Israel there will be an enormous crisis in the Middle-East that will call forth on behalf of Israel, an army headed by Michael, (he who is like God)! So that Jeremiah's prophecy picking up out of this history, expanding it to the return of Jacob, Daniel doing likewise, both telling us, Jeremiah says that at the time of Jacob's troubles such as never was, or there's none like it is the term he uses. Daniel says, 'such as never was' and both of them telling us that Jacob needs an army. And he'll get an army, and Michael, b&s, I believe, I believe this is beyond all dispute, of the angel that God gave the children of Israel in the wilderness and has never left them, and Michael today, is as active as he ever was! and he is that great prince that will stand for the children of His people. True it is, that he's a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and true it

is that that fact is applicable to the prophecy of Daniel, but equally true, there is such an angel as Michael, that he is captain of Yahweh's army; I believe he was the one that met Joshua, he's never altered, it's been the same angel all the time, he's never given up fighting for Israel, he never will, and at the time of the great crisis, he'll appear to Israel with God's host, and when the great mighty Gentile, Esau, comes with a hand stronger, he will rise up and Israel will see God's host and he'll be conducted to that Land in peace. That's what happened to Jacob.

This is God's host! The word for 'host' is a word which means 'God's encampment' or an encampment of soldiers (Strong's-6635) 'tsaba' it's used in that sense. It's an encampment of soldiers, and the Psalms tell us, b&s, that when a man's in trouble he needs God, and how does he need Him? He needs God to fight for him! so we're told 'that the angel of Yahweh encampeth around about those that fear Him' (Psalms 34:6,7) the same word, encampeth around about him, and that's what they were doing. And Jacob saw the point, so we read in verse 2, 'And when Jacob saw them he said, 'this is God's encampment': and he called the name of that place Mahanaim (Strong's-4266), which means, of course, 'the two camps'. The two camps, to what was he referring? No doubt about what he's referring to, he's referring to the camp of God (the angels) and his own camp. Verse 8 says this, 'And he said, If Esau comes to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape', and the word 'company' there is the same word. And those two companies belong to Jacob, but b&s, here's the tragedy of the situation; you know, I've been saying this all along and you're going to see this again and again, it's not going to finish till we get up to chapter 35, despite the fact that the revelation of the angels to Jacob was one of the final manifestations to him, he still was not a perfect man! He'd come a long way, no man has ever reached the stage of perfection and never will; and here's a case in point! Because no sooner had Jacob seen two camps, that is, God's army and my army he said, that when he got the message that Esau was coming with 400 men, he split his own camp into two! He split his own camp into two as a stratagem to overcome Esau, and he had 3 camps! And he didn't need them, he didn't need 3 camps, he already had two, and Mahanaim, which he himself named, was a memorial to the fact that he did not need to split that army into two. And there he had three! and that's the incredible way in which Jacob, faithful man though he was, he was loathed at all times to accept that in its totality, and that's why the angel wrestled with him, b&s, this man is wrestling here now! He's wrestling with God and he's with himself, he's successful with God but he's unsuccessful with himself, and it's a fight the whole time.

So he's given a vision of two camps, he's faithful to that, he sees it, he recognizes them as God's host, he would recognize them, no doubt, as the angels at Beth-el; he would see them as the same angels, it would impress upon him that God was right, 'I will be with thee', there's proof of that! And immediately that they tell him that Esau's coming with 400 men, he splits his camp! And the old Syrian way comes back to him, and I know what you're thinking and I know what a lot of people are thinking, we're going to redress the bounds in a minute, b&s; I know some people think that 'well, don't we have to act? we can't just sit back and do nothing', that's true! If we do nothing, God will do nothing! faith without works is dead, this is true, and we will see in a moment what

Jacob had to do, but he didn't have to do this! nor did he have to adopt all the other stratagems which he adopted; there was another thing he could have done, there were a multitude of things he could have done and he had to do them in the way in which God revealed to him, what God would do for him. If God said, 'you've got an army and I've got an army, and so you've got two armies and another army is coming to oppose you, you're a fool if you make it three! because you've got more than sufficient to handle the situation', and Jacob should have realized that. And as the situation proved, he had no need whatever, to divide his own camp, no need whatever! What the angel was trying to do, what God's host was trying to do, what God was trying to do, was to reduce him to tears, and then he would find he had strength. And gradually, step by step, that's how God was going to reduce him; but he would find, b&s, what he had to do and where the real strength lay!

But for the moment, in times of crisis it's the old Jacob! so he divides his camp. Before he did that, we read in verse 3, 'That Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom', and you know, even in that verse, b&s, there's a clear indication that Jacob recognized his host as God's host; he saw the unity between the two camps because the very word 'messenger' is the word 'malak' (Strong's-4397) it's the word for 'angels'. So Jacob sent angels to Edom, he knew and not only there, that's not the only occurrence of a word in which he unifies the two camps. There are other words which he chooses throughout this chapter which he himself uses, which indicate that he saw his camp as being in unity with the camp of God; whenever did God need to divide his angels for the sake of safety? And if there was absolute unity between God's army and Jacob's army, what was the need of that stratagem? There was clearly none, and Jacob recognized there was a unity because he sent 'malakeim', he sent angels, he sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, into the country of Edom, what for? Bear this in mind too, b&s, he sent them to the country of Edom, but Esau didn't live in Edom at this stage; it wasn't until Jacob arrived at Beer-sheba and they settled down together there, that Esau finally parted from him to go to the land of Edom, obviously Esau was down there on some marauding expedition, some exploratory expedition, I suppose, to see the lay of the land for a future invasion of the place. But he obviously did not hold that area, but he was down there probably on a holiday hunting or something, but Jacob had to send a messenger down there to him. And I say, what for? well, I'll tell you what for! and you might contest this, but I believe it's beyond dispute. He sent down there to confess, blandly and openly and sincerely confess, that he was wrong and Esau was right, in one matter! and in that, I believe, we are learning that Jacob himself had learnt a lesson; because what he did was to tell Esau in as many words, as clear as crystal, that I was wrong, I took the birthright when I had no right to, that you are the eldest. I am the youngest, you have the right of firstborn, and I acknowledge that point, and I will not interfere in the matter. That's what he told him! Now make no mistake, that's what he told him, but let's be careful, what Jacob did in effect, b&s, was to blandly and openly confess in all sincerity that he had done wrong, that Esau was the firstborn and was entitled to all the provisions for the firstborn according to this world's goods. But you would not have got Jacob to confess that Esau had the spiritual birthright or the promises, if you had burned him at the stake! He would have no more confessed that

than he could fly, but as far as this world's goods are concerned, as far as the birthright in accordance with human condition was concerned, he gave it all back to Esau and confessed that he'd done wrong and that Esau could have lock, stock and barrel! How do we know that? you read with me verse 4, 'And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob' (there's the confession), 'my lord' (Strong's-113) by the way, the word 'lord' is the proper word which the firstborn is entitled to, 'adon'. Isaac, when he blessed the wrong boy, thinking he was blessing Esau, blessed him with the word 'gebiyr' (Strong's-1376) a mighty man, but the true title of the firstborn was 'the adon' 'the ruler' and Jacob gave it to him. And he gave it to him on no less than 6 occasions and later on repeated it again, because not only did he send that message down there, b&s, before he came to Peniel, but when he did come there, remember? he sent 5 droves of animals with a man with each drove and they were all to repeat exactly the same thing. 'My lord, Esau', your servant, Jacob' and they were confessing one after the other and there were 5 droves, and he said, 'that I might find grace in thy sight'. There was a confession, 5 is the number of 'grace', the Law of Moses teaches us that, and he sent 5 droves all confessing, 'my lord, Esau, your servant, Jacob, to find grace in thy sight'.

And then you read on with me in verse 5, and you'll see how that he gave back to Esau, those material blessings that his father had given him. He says, verse 4, 'Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau: Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight'. Now you've just got to underline the word 'have', that's the word of emphasis, 'I've got them; I have oxen and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants', in other words, 'Esau, I will not interfere in the matter of the material prosperity due to the firstborn! I've got all I want and I've sent to tell my lord that fact'. Is that right? well, you come to chapter 36, b&s, and you'll see what happened when Jacob and Esau finally parted, in verse 6 of Genesis 36 and we read verse 7 as well, 'And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle'. Now there are two things which I want you to notice there, one is that all of Esau's wealth was gotten in the land of Canaan, whereas Jacob made a confession that 'I have all sufficient for myself and he got none of it in the land of Canaan; in other words, Esau went away with a double portion of his father's inheritance, and Jacob acquiesced in that matter and never interfered. And then the comment is made by the writer of Genesis, that they both dwelt in the land as strangers; and you know, b&s, you think to yourself, you know Isaac said to Jacob that you're a stranger in this land, and we made the point, did we not? at that stage, that he was acknowledging Jacob as being a pilgrim. Well, Esau's said to be a stranger here, but look at the difference; why were they strangers? look at the difference, just contrast the two men. Here's a man that owns the land by divine right, God says you can have it, you and your seed, but he's got to go out of that land to get all his material substance; he comes back to the land and he lives like a pilgrim in the land although he owns the

place by divine right, but he lives there! And he lives there as if he's saying to everybody, as our bro. Jim said this morning by the very use of his tent, that whilst God had given him that land, he was not prepared to take possession of it, until in God's own good time, He would give it to him. But you try and move him from that land, oh, no, never again! but Esau was a stranger in the land because he was a stranger in the land. What I mean by that is this, it was strange to him, he didn't want to live there because it was a fertile land and you had to work there, and wild animals were being pushed further and further out by agricultural prosperity, he would fancy to go down to the desert where, of course, there was none of that going on, and he'd race out with his bow and arrow and have the time of his life, he was a stranger in the land because it was a strange land to him, he didn't want it because he had no affinity with it and he volunteered to get out of it. And yet all he had, b&s, every mortal thing he had, the land had given him. What an incredible thing, what an incredible anomaly that is, and that how the two boys finally parted. But it's proof I believe, that what Jacob was saying to him, was what I said, 'my lord, Esau, thy servant, Jacob; I've got all I need, I will not interfere', and neither did he! and so there was a confession, and that confession, b&s, I believe, went a long, long, way in the providence of God, in turning away, the fierceness of Esau's wrath. It'd been represented you know, 'that Esau's wrath was turned away and he became a friend of Jacob's; don't you believe that! He was placated for the time being, but Ezekiel pointed out, b&s, that one of the reasons why God had indicted Edom was because of his perpetual hatred of his brother. And Genesis says, 'he went into the land of Edom from the face of his brother Jacob, he couldn't face up to him; he couldn't look him in the face and they couldn't live together, there was perpetual animosity until finally that animosity was so strong, that Esau volunteered to get out of that Land, from the face of his brother! That's not a loose expression, and Esau went from the face of his brother, and yet when Esau came to Jacob and greeted him, b&s, and asked him about his family, Jacob took him by hand and said, 'I look at your face as if it were the face of God'. That's how he addressed him, Jacob was a man that could have forgiven any animosity that he himself had incurred, and would have taken his share of the blame for the animosity, and would have confessed and did confess; what he had done, in a sense, was wrong. His method was wrong, his whole approach was wrong, he was not prepared to deny the fact that he was the true seed. He would never deny that! he would cling to that through all history, but as far as the material rights of firstborn were concerned, as far as the deception was concerned, he confessed his sin, and I believe, that that, of course, was one of the great things of Jacob's life, and he was prepared to look at Esau and say, that as far as I'm concerned brother Esau, your face is the face of God if I can find grace in your sight. And Esau couldn't stand the sight of his brother's face and went from it into the country of Edom. And there was the difference between those two. It was an implacable hatred that Esau had for him.

Now then, b&s, when we come down to verse 6 of chapter 32, the messengers return to Jacob saying, 'We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him', and we read, 'Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed', and this, b&s, was the crisis of his life. In chapter 35 and verse 3, when he referred to the providence of God, Jacob said this, 'And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, Who answered me in the day of my distress, and was

with me in the way which I went'. In other words, b&s, the last phrase, 'was with me in the way which I went' talked about the whole life of Jacob. God was with me everywhere I went, but he takes an event out of chronological order to impress upon us that the crisis of his life, was a day which he called, a day of my distress, and that day is called that when Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, and Jeremiah's says 'it is the time of Jacob's troubles and there is none like it', and Daniel says, 'there shall be a time of trouble such as never was'; there it is! Jacob waiting for Esau with 400 men, with a history behind him of an implacable hatred, an inveterate hatred of a man who knew nothing, b&s, about religion, cared nothing for religion, and who had avowed and declared that if he would do anything else, he would kill that man! and that was his fear and of Israel's fear! And it's been there down through the centuries, b&s, and Israel have incurred the wrath of Gentiles, they have done so because of their own stupidity, their own deceit, their own ingenuity, their very own superiority as a nation has incurred the wrath of the Gentiles, and they have lived in fear and trembling all their lives. They've never had the power nor the force behind them to combat Gentilism in all its force; they've always been on the run, they've lived as Moses said, 'in fear of their lives'. And yet all of those circumstances will be overshadowed, b&s, when Israel like Jacob will limp back into that Land like a cripple, one that God has crippled for their own sake, will limp into the Land and the great Russian horde will come down. Russia who has a long history of anti-Semitism, they hate the Jewish people; and no doubt, b&s, the Arab countries will join in, and Edom, the name which, of course, applies to all the Gentile names, will be standing back to laugh Jerusalem to scorn, and it will be a time of trouble such as never was; it will be the day of Jacob's distress!

And we can picture that scene, can't we? when we look at this man's individual life, and in that frightening circumstance, one that he never forgot, he broke his camp into two! But even though he did that, b&s, he was still a man of God! No doubt about that at all, and so from verse 9 to 11, we have recorded for us, his prayer to God. A moving prayer, and I want you to notice some of its terminology, very, very interesting; notice his opening words, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac'. Now he didn't attach his own name there, notice that? he didn't say, 'and God of myself, or my God', no, he didn't do that! The man was in fear and trepidation, and if we can't see by the omission there, b&s, a man grappling with God in his heart and in his mind, then I can't see anything! He says, I know you're the God of Abraham, I know you're the God of Isaac, but I want to be absolutely assured that you're my God, because Yahweh, you said to me, and he brings before Almighty God the promises that He made, 'return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal with thee', that's what you said. So instead of attaching his own name to the other two great worthies of old, he reminded God of what He said. He's saying in effect, am I worthy of that? Is there anything in me that would cause you to fulfil that promise? because he says, I'm not worthy of it; 'I'm too little as the word means, I'm far too small as 'worthy' meant. And this was the man's humility, b&s, you know, that's not the only time in the bible when great of God have stood up and reminded God of His promises. You know, some of the prayers of the fathers, if we were to make them in this day and generation, people would accuse us of audacity; but there were not audacious prayers, they were faithful prayers, wrung from the heart by the voice of God. I remember on one occasion, b&s, when a great man of

God was attacked by the Edomites and he looked out into the field and there was a tremendous number of them, and he looked at his army and he thought 'I'm hopeless here', what was he going to do? and he prayed to God. And do you know what he told God? He said to God, 'Out there are the children of Edom of Ammon and Moab and all of them were the descendants of Abraham or descendants of his relations'. And he reminded God, he said, 'They're out there God because you told us to leave them alone, and we left them alone, and there they are'. And God answered him, do you know what God said to him? 'Stand still, this battle belongs to Me!' because God delighted in that prayer, b&s, it was a sheer delight to Him, because there was a man who had the courage to face his God, and the reverence to face his God, not in the spirit of audacity, but in the spirit of absolute trust in God's Word. That God said, 'you're not to touch those people when you come out of Egypt; they didn't touch them, that's why they're there, and God says, I believe you're right, I know that's right, it's my responsibility, it's not your responsibility, you stand still and I'll handle the issue' and He did! And that man was Jehoshaphat. And that's all that Jacob did, b&s, he said, 'I know you're the God of Abraham, I know you're the God of Isaac, and my father; I want to know, O God, whether at this time in my history, with all my failings and how little I am, that did you really mean when you said, I will be with thee, will you be with me? That's what he prayed to God, that's a moving prayer, b&s, a moving prayer.

And then he said to God, verse 10, 'I am too small for all the mercies and all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant: for with this staff I passed over Jordan: and now I am become two bands'. Now you take that verse, take now first of all, the word 'mercy' (Strong's 'cheched'-2617), the word really in the Hebrew means 'steadfast love'. Now you take that now, b&s, you take a look at that in the concordance, steadfast love. Now you take Jacob's life, you take your life, I'll take mine because I know it pretty well, now you take our lives, our lives are like this; it's up and down, we love God today and we don't love Him tomorrow; you say you do, well, if you love Him, keep His commandments. You don't keep His commandments? well, you don't love Him, it's as simple as that! Love is not a profession of words, b&s, it's action. Now we can love God with our lips, but if we do not walk in His commandments, we cannot claim to love Him, it's just as simple as that. So our love is spasmodic. Jacob's love was spasmodic, he sees Mahanaim, two camps, fear comes upon him and he probably divides his own camp. And he says to God, 'I came over this Jordan with only my staff in my hand, and now I am two camps'. And there was a confession really, that he didn't know what to do; he had divided his camp and he said, 'I've become two bands'. It's not actually a contrast with himself being there as an individual and suddenly becoming a great multitude; that would be incongruous in this context. What he's saying is, he had a great multitude, he only had a staff, he only had himself to look after in the first place, he can handle the responsibility of one man easier than all this company, and now I've got to divide them. And now's God's love, b&s, like that; Jacob when he was up in the heights of Galeed building that pillar and having superlative faith in God. God loved him, and Jacob when he was in the land of Syria, b&s, with all his faults there, with all the things that he did wrong, right down there, and God loved him still! Steadfast love through all the circumstances of his life, incredible! incomprehensible, b&s. Incomprehensible to believe that, difficult to believe that, I find it so, but Jacob was impressed with that! I'm

too small for that sort of love; and that was the type of prayer he made.

Then he goes on and he says this, verse 11, 'Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear lest he come and smite me, and the mother with the children'. The idea of the words 'the mother with the children' is the mother on top of the children, (the horrible picture which is perverted), and by the way, if you want confirmation of this, it's put more expressly in Hosea 10 verse 14, the same expression, when the mothers fall on top of the children; the idea is that Jacob sees his family being slaughtered with the sword. He sees Esau coming with those 400 men, full of blood-lust; this carnal man of the flesh, carving his 12 boys asunder and Rachel and Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, throwing their bodies across the children having been cut to ribbons. This was in Jacob's mind, he was a very human man, b&s, I'm going to show you another incident like this a little later on, but you see, God had said to him, 'thy seed shall be as the sand on the seashore' and that's the next thing he said! 'And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea'. Now can't you see the picture, can't you see that picture? haven't you been in that situation? can't you see the two minds the man had? Now you put yourself in that situation, b&s; here's wrestling with the angel, look, here's the struggle! Esau's coming, and we already know what Esau looks like, (we'll see him tonight in all his glory), but we know what he looked like, we know what sort of a character he was. Now he's coming and he's got 400 men, that's ominous, that's dreadfully ominous! Jacob looks around, he's a sensitive man, he loves those women and children, Rachel especially, and he's got a picture in his mind. Oh, he sees those children crashing to the ground and Esau sticking his sword in them; then cutting Rachel in halves and throwing her body across...ah, and he sees the blood running... but God has said, God said, thy seed shall be as the sand oh, but it can't happen, but oh, look at that picture! But God said and it's wrestle, wrestle, wrestle, and so he says to God, he paints that weird picture so God would see the horror of it all, and then turns to God and says, 'it really can't happen, can't it?' Now, b&s, that's not a man that's faithless, it's just a man that's human! He's got blood in his veins, these people weren't robots, we don't talk about the fathers of Israel like they couldn't go wrong; they were men of feelings, haven't you been in that situation? haven't you seen tragedy, if not in your own life with your own family? what about ecclesial circumstances? don't you toss on your bed at night thinking of the problems that are running through your ecclesia or other ecclesias that you're associated with? Don't you worry about your loved ones that today you're with them but tomorrow you might not be? Don't you see the world coming into the ecclesia and worry about it and get up and take tablets like I do some times, because you can't get to sleep? Of course you do, you do worry about those things and yet the promise of God ringing in your ears, 'I will be with thee in all places whether thou goest'. And we don't rest in God and we scheme and we worry and we fret and we conjure up (I do) horrible pictures in my mind, of Christadelphians smashed up, all the brotherhood gone, living on our own as families, mad pictures in your mind! They haunt you, day by day, night by night until you learn what Jacob learnt; 'but you said, I will surely do thee good and make thy seed as the sand of the sea'. There's a wrestling match! That's a wrestling match! one, b&s, of great anguish! and if ever there was a picture of a man wrestling, there it is!

And so we come after that prayer to more schemes and more of Jacob's ingenuity. And you know, even the record suggests that that's the case, verse 13, 'And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand', the words in the Hebrew would indicate 'that which he had control over'. That which was under his hand, the expression meaning that which he had control over; now you see, the point is this, what Jacob was doing was in effect that having made that prayer in such extremity (no wonder Jeremiah calls it the times of Jacob's trouble; look at the turmoil of mind the record's presented). In that prayer he's got two minds, a horrible picture of children and mothers dead, a wonderful picture of God's promise, but he comes from that prayer and thinks, 'well, I've got control over this, I can do this'; when in reality, b&s, he had control over nothing! And that's what God's trying to bring him to, He's trying to bring him to that point, step by step he's coming to the brink of that precipice where God is going to get him to look down and say, 'Look, Jacob, you've got control over nothing! That's what He's bringing him to, and I've got a psalm that's going to clinch this; look, it's a magnificent phrase and it'll come at the end of this study, and it's absolutely a classic, and it's the one I'm holding in my hand, there's my authority in that psalm, just one little phrase needed, and it's the authority for all I'm telling you, because this is the spirit of what's here.

And so he starts this stratagem. Takes these animals 580 of them north, divides them into 5 groups, 116 in each and puts a space between drove and drove', the word 'space' means 'a breathing space'. See the anxiety that's in that word, that between each drove there's a (a long breath in and out) breathing space. So the first one comes and Esau's face is red and steam coming out of his ears, and the first one comes and he's placated a bit, and he breathes in and out slowly; then the next one arrives and he breathes again and so on until 5 arrive and they're all saying the same thing, 'Jacob was wrong, you are lord and he is servant, and he won't interfere with the birthright'. And he says in verse 18, 'Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau', how do we know, b&s, because I said before, this is a confession of faith? That word 'present' tells us, that word 'present' (Strong's-4503) in the Hebrew is 'minchah' and the minchah, of course, was the meal offering, and the meal offering without a shadow of a doubt what the meal offering said, under the Law of Moses when it was adopted later on, I believe, on this patriarchal history, the meal offering was the offering of acknowledgement, acknowledging to God, God's rightful position, and that's exactly what Jacob was doing. And so he sent a 'minchah', 5 of them, acknowledging this man's rightful position, as far as this world's goods were concerned.

And then when we come to verse 20, and he was sending the message, 'Say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, (now this is not what's being told to Esau) when that word says 'for he said' this is what Jacob thought he would get out of sending those 5 droves, this is how his mind works, and I want to read it to you from the AV and then we'll read it from the Hebrew and you'll see what Jacob is thinking. 'For he said, I will appease him, with the minchah that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me'. So he's sent the 5 droves and then we see a little insight into Jacob's mind, and you'll see, b&s, that the ... is correct because it all fits into place! Now here's what he's thinking, let me read it to

you from the Hebrew, 'For he said, I will cover his face, with the minchah that goeth before my face, and afterwards I will see his face, peradventure he will accept my face'. Now the same Hebrew word is there in all those places, I will cover his face, is what the word 'appease' means, which goeth before my face, and afterwards I will see his face, peradventure he will accept my face' and then when he was left alone, b&s, a man grabbed him and looked straight into his face. And he said, 'ah, I've seen the face of God' and that's the place he had to cover not Esau's; and he memorialized that principle by calling it Peniel 'the faces of Elohim'. And my word, if ever you want to be impressed with a person's face, get in a wrestling match with him. Really, you grapple with a man, imagine two men locked in an embrace and they're staring at each other in the eyes, and here's Jacob and he says, I'll cover his whole face with a present that goes before my face, then, of course, he says, when he sees my face, my face will become acceptable to him'. Then he found himself locked in an embrace with God, looking God right in the eye! Who did he need to appease, b&s? and you know, that word 'appease' 'cover my face', the word 'appease' is made up of two words, 'kaphar' and the word for face 'paniyim' (Strong's-3722,6440). And the word 'kaphar' is the word, the very word and it's not a derivation of it, it's the very word used later on for the word 'atonement'. So he was going to cover Esau's face by making an atonement that Esau might accept his sacrifice. And the very thing that God was teaching him, that when he woke up to himself, forgot about Esau and remembered the mighty One in heaven that he had offended on certain occasions, by not trusting Him when he should have done, and giving God due praise due Him in the situation and calling down the army of heaven and having him put his trust in them, that's the face that won the atonement. So when Jacob had done all that, he had sent these droves off to cover Esau's face, we read in verse 22, 'he rose up that night and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok' (the word 'Jabbok' according to my concordances means 'to empty out' (Strong's-2999,1238) but by derivation and by the very sound of the Hebrew word it is almost the same word as the word 'wrestling' and some have rendered it, of course, 'to wrestle' as it does in its torturous course through the Gilead hills, may or may not have that significance, as I said, I can only find where it says 'to empty out', but the experts say, and I suppose they're right, it has that idea of wrestling. And of course, if you see the river Jabbok, it does, it winds its torturous way around the hills and gives that impression.

And we read that after he crossed them over, he himself remained alone. What he evidently did, there are two suggestions here as to what Jacob did, and it's very, very difficult to determine exactly what he did. It would seem, b&s, that he sent over the present across the river Jabbok toward Esau; then it would seem that at night he crossed his family. Some suggest that what he did was to cross his family back to the other side where they would be safer from Esau, and that would seem to me, to be reasonable, but except it doesn't read that way. So I would accept this fact or this theory if you like, that what he did, he crossed his family at night from the northern side to the southern side, for reasons of safety, that is, in the darkness of night, because it's very awkward to be caught in the middle of the river, isn't it? especially if you're carrying all your furniture? At night he crossed them over, then he himself was the last man left on the northern bank. Many people have said, if this is right, it would seem rather cowardly

on Jacob's part, wouldn't it? but I don't think so, b&s, I think he sought that solitude. I think it was quite a deliberate attempt on his part, to seek that solitude, and he was left alone.

And all we read in the record was, 'there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day'. And this was the last and final impression that God was going to give him, that the angels are with him. You know, I can come up to you and say, 'look, brother, I might live in Adelaide and you might live in Sydney, but I'm with you in spirit!' And you might say, 'oh, yeah, thanks brother', indicating to me that you don't believe it. So you might get on a roof, and I get on the ladder, and go up and down and up and down again to impress you that while you're on that roof, I'm with you. And you might say, 'yeah, oh, thanks brother for your comfort and help', but I grab hold of you and say, LISTEN, I'LL BE WITH YOU! and that's about the sum total of what God did! Look, He had angels going up and down that ladder, He had God's host and the man believed, he didn't disbelieve, b&s, but he's like you and I, we all profess, don't we? a profession of faith, but what if the authorities clamped down tomorrow and put us unto duress how many would be left in this hall if they said for example, 'you're religion is illegal'. Would I be talking to all you people? would I be talking? Let's face it, we believe it in theory but when the acid test comes, what's the issue? until God got him down on that issue where He grabbed him and squeezed him like mad, and said, 'I'm with you!' and that's about, I believe, in all its simplicity, I mean, I know the significance of that and I know the lessons of that, I do believe, b&s, in all its simplicity, that God was going to finally bring him to the point where he couldn't do anything else but confess that the angel was there!

So what happened? I believe that the angel first grabbed him, because we read, 'there wrestled a man with him', but what happened was this, the angel first grabbed Jacob, that's my idea of it, but Jacob, I believe, immediately recognizing that it was an angel, hung onto him. And the angel having first made the approach grabbing Jacob and then tried to get away, then commenced that tremendous struggle through that long night, b&s, and the wrestle was not a fight! let's face it, it wasn't a fight. If it was a fight, it would have been a knockout in the first round, no doubt about that, it was not a fight, b&s. It was a struggle however, and the angel, I believe, exerted enough power, sufficient power to tax that man's physical ability to its very limit; and to the limit he went, until the angel had taxed him to his limit and perhaps beyond his limit, to where Jacob wouldn't realize that he had strength. And then the angel confessed that he won, not that he won the fight because the angel put it all over him by just touching his thigh, which he could have done from the beginning. Jacob didn't have power over the angel in that sense, b&s, he got power over the angel as Hosea says, 'when he broke down and cried', and then the angel gave him that power.

And there was the great struggle and so all through the long night of Gentilism; you take Israel! Look, you go to the Land today, now here's an illustration of Jacob's scene. When I went to the Land (I heard all about the Jews, I had my own impression, what they were and what they weren't; I was terribly impressed). You go to Israel and especially the younger generation, and they say, 'we don't want to be religious, we don't

want to be known as a religious nation; we are Jews, we are Israelites, we're proud of that, but don't associate us with all this parched old stuff, this old history! We're not interested in that', but you put on a festival, one of the Jewish national festivals or an anniversary, or get the urge to swim across the border, and they're remarkably religious! Here were these young people marching down the streets of Jerusalem, displaying all the instruments of agriculture, all their clubs and so on, their archeological exhibition, and you know, they try to impress you that we are here today with our own strength and with our own hands; and when they got to the wailing wall, they all just melted like a mass of jelly when they got to that wall! And you say it was an act! well, if it was an act it would win the academy award; I tell you, b&s, they're a nation struggling with God. **THEY WILL NOT LET GOD GO** despite the fact that they deny Him, and I know that God will destroy 2/3rds of them, they are a faithless generation and yet they're struggling in that nation which they derived from their fathers, they will not let Him go! And as far as I was concerned, I came away from that Land believing that the prophecy of Zechariah was the most likely prophecy to be fulfilled in all the Word of God, if I was a doubter; I don't doubt any prophecy will be fulfilled, but if I was a doubter of the bible, I would come away believing that the one prophecy that had the most likelihood of being fulfilled was Zechariah's prophecy when he said, 'that when they see the Messiah, they'll break into tears and accept Him', because I believe they will! I believe they're on the verge of it, I believe that all it wants is His appearing and the nation will collapse; and that's Jacob!

It's typical of him; and there wrestled that man with him, b&s, and he wrestled with him 'until the breaking of the day', in other words, the wrestle was a wrestle in the night. And you know, it's an anomaly isn't it? that his submission to God was in effect, in a sense, in a word, to have power over that angel and to prevail against him in a struggle. And it's just a plain anomaly, the anomaly is that he prevailed over the angel, but in so doing, he utterly submitted himself to God. And that's just a fact of the case, in other words, he was absolutely determined, b&s, absolutely determined not to let him go! And there (and this is what I want to bring out a little later) and there we have the balance that we've been looking for in all our studies; that Jacob had to work and work like mad, to hang onto that angel, God didn't ask him to do nothing. He never, He didn't ask him to do a little bit, He asked him to struggle like mad with God, but do it with God and not on His own, that's what God is trying to tell him all along, but he could never see it. God's not asking him to sit back and say, 'I got faith, go right ahead and perform all the miracles and solve all my problems; NO, God says, 'come on Jacob, be with Me, work and fight and struggle like mad, **BUT YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT WITH ME!** That's what He's telling him, whereas Jacob was visioning, 'look at the horrible sight of all the children dead', but God says, 'they won't be killed'; But Jacob says, 'oh, look at them!' but God says, they won't be killed! And there was the man, that's his mind, he was troubled all through his life; and you know, b&s, it's known as his struggle with God, but he's going to be in the kingdom of God. Jesus said that, didn't He? He said, 'the Law and the prophets were until John, but now, He says, the kingdom of God suffereth violence, and men take it by force'. Surely the Lord wasn't saying that until the Law and the prophets, people went peaceably to God and sought access to the kingdom, and then again they had an axe to bash the door down; He didn't mean that! what He meant

was, b&s, as the Pharisees were there (and this is the context of what the Lord said), the Pharisees came along and they taught the Law and the prophets; and they said that was the way unto the kingdom, and that alone was the way to the kingdom, by works of flesh. And they'd locked the door, until men woke up to them, as Jesus said, the prophets of My house came along, and they woke to the fact that it wasn't the key to the door at all. And the Pharisees saw them and said 'you're not going to get in!' So they said, 'you won't go to the kingdom and you forbid other men', and the other men just swept them aside and by sheer force, (not physical force), but by the force of their enthusiasm and dedication they pressed pass them into the kingdom. That's what Jacob was doing!

They took it by storm! because they could see the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, and they had learnt that you don't get it by works of Law at all, you get it by clinging to God. And when the Pharisees stood between them and God, they swept them aside and grabbed the Lord Jesus Christ and hung on Him for dear life! Jesus said, 'the Law and the prophets were till John; now every man presses into the kingdom, and men take it by force'. And you have to be enthusiastic, b&s, to get into the kingdom, and you've got to be zealous and you've got to grab every opportunity you can; but be careful what you grab! When you grab, let's hang onto God, and hang on to Him and follow Him through every circumstance of life; and when we see God moving, and we see our circumstance in life in which the providence of God is clear, grab Him and hang on and work with God to that end. That's what Jacob was being told, and you know, b&s, the angel was going to test him further, wasn't simply a wrestle; look at verse 25, which said, 'When he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him'. Now many people including myself during this weekend, have made statements which have been incorrect; they say that the battle finished when the angel touched his thigh, but it didn't! The angel went to further weaken Jacob to see just how much he would give, and he still didn't let go; he still refused to let go. The angel put his thigh out of joint and He would not let go!

Now I want to tell you something about this! The thigh, according to the bible, is the strongest part of the bullock; it's the heaviest muscle the biggest muscle and a lot of drive of everybody, comes from that thigh. We learn that, b&s, from the Law of Moses, when, of course, they offered a sacrifice the right thigh was always given to the priest as God's representative, as being the strongest part of the animal. So the angel took Jacob's thigh and he put it out of joint. So Jacob in effect, his power on God, his leverage is God, but he would not let go; and it was Jacob's thigh! (Note that, because you're going to see it again in a minute), Jacob's thigh and it was out of joint! The idea of the Hebrew word seems to indicate that his thigh became dislocated right up here at the top in the socket, where the thigh bone fits in, it became completely dislocated, rendered him to limp upon that leg, completely powerless! And you know, he's not the only man that had his bones out of joint, to test his endurance. Come with me to Psalm 22, b&s, and I repeat, Psalm 22, and you know what that psalm says!

I want you to notice something, this is the man on the cross, 'My God, my God, why

hast Thou forsaken Me?' In verse 14, among other things that happened to Him, b&s, which caused Him great anguish it said in verse 14, 'I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels', and here the Lord Jesus Christ is representative of the spirit of Christ in the psalms, talking about his bones; where is His power, b&s? 'My God, my God, (Strong's-410) 'Eli, Eli' power, power, why hast Thou forsaken Me? But it hadn't forsaken Him! it only forsook in one sense, in other senses it hadn't. And all His bones were out of joint but Jacob only had his thigh bone put out, and what was the strength that kept the Son of God going on the cross? Verse 4, 'Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them'. And there was some of the strength, b&s, that kept Him going and He would remember that Jacob's thigh was out of joint; His bones were not literally out of joint, but He felt Himself all dislocated, He felt utterly helpless upon that cross, He could do nothing. And He thought back to the time that Jacob's socket was shoved out of joint, and the man was in absolute agony, yet he hung to that angel, and he said, 'our fathers trusted in you', and He calls from that cross in verse 23 and He says, 'Ye that fear Yahweh, praise Him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him', and there's the triumph of Jacob, b&s, in Psalm 22, and he calls upon all the seed of Jacob to glorify Him, men and women who may feel at times that they're out of joint, in all their bones and powerless to help themselves, but God will never forsake them. And in that psalm also, note in verse 6, the One upon the cross is called 'a worm', and the only other man who's entitled that in the prophets of God, is Jacob! And we're going to turn to that, we're going to turn to that in our last study, 'O thou worm, Jacob' (Strong's-8438) 'towla' and it means a 'maggot'. And that was the strength of Jacob, as a maggot as a human being, and that's what the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ was according to the flesh, a maggot; according to the spirit, 'God, power'. And that's what they had to learn, b&s.

Now coming back to the life of Jacob in this chapter, let's move on quickly now and let's see what happens. And the angel says in verse 26, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh. And Jacob said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me'. Now here's that principle, b&s, the principle of works. Works are absolutely necessary if we're going to get into the kingdom of God! We've got to use our brains, we've got to work and we've got to do things in the service of God, and we've got to call upon God to help us; we are not to sit back and do nothing. And here's the proof of it! Jacob could have just as easily let the angel go and said, 'oh, well, I think the lesson is I've got to lay and have a rest and you're going to do all the work for me!' NO! he says, 'I cannot let you go until you bless me', and God was pleased with that, and he did that as a cripple (he was a cripple when he did that) in other words, b&s, he was a big enough man to be little enough to ask help of an angel that had just crippled him and left him in agony. And that was the lesson of his life; now that's what Rebekah, his mother, started off by not learning when she was in agony having the children. She went to God with these words 'if I'm suffering having these children what did I ask these children for?' That was a Syrian talking! here's Jacob and you can't tell me, he's there on a feather bed! he's rolling around hanging on to that fellow, hanging on to that angel like mad. And the angel's struggling to get away from him; and that halt side is out of joint, you imagine the excruciating agony, and he's hanging on! and that angel had just done that to him. God said, 'I smote him with the smiting of an enemy', in other words, if Jacob, if he'd been a fleshly man,

could have just let the angel go and said, 'clear out and the quicker you go the better' and then sighed, 'oh-o-o-o! But no, he hung on to that angel and he hung on like mad; can we find the principles in the New Testament that fit that? We can! You come to 2 Corinthians chapter 12, and here's the principle, b&s.

Here's the principle! here's the identical principle, the apostle Paul says in verse 7, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong', and there's the same principle! Now note this, b&s, look at the words 'messenger of Satan', do you know how the Diaglott renders those words? 'the angel adversary'. That's how the Diaglott renders those words, and that's a perfectly valid translation, whether that actually means that or not, (that translation there is valid) but it can mean an angel messenger, Satan adversary, and it was of God that Paul suffered! And just the same as God hit Jacob and crippled him, he crippled the apostle Paul, and Paul three times said to God, 'remove it', and God said, No! Why God? why should I suffer? I want you to learn, Paul, that My strength is made perfect in weakness, and Paul says, 'I see that infirmity as a glory'. I will never let it go! What a marvellous principle, b&s! A marvellous principle.

And on the basis of that, God changed Jacob's name to Israel. 'What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And the angel said, It shall no more be called Jacob, it will now be called 'Israel', for as a prince hast thou power with God and (says the Septuagint) shall be mighty with men and hast prevailed'. So he had power with God, b&s, you know, we haven't got time now to turn up any more references! a pity, because some of the allusions to this verse are remarkable. But we'll just mention a couple of them: you know, God changed his name to Israel on what basis? On the basis of his determination to serve God, so he got the name of Israel on the basis of his absolute determination to serve God; now we will turn one up, Psalm 24, here's the principle. When a man is determined to serve God to the extent that he will not let God go even when God afflicts him with adversity, that man is Israel. Psalm 24 spells the principle out reading in verse 3, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of Yahweh? Or, who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from Yahweh, and righteousness from the God of his salvation'. (And that's what Jacob said, I will not let you go until you bless me!) Now the psalm says, who's going to get that blessing? The man who is determined to follow God, and verse 6 says, 'This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek thy face, O God of Jacob', now there's the man whose going to receive the blessing, the one that seeks the face of the God of Jacob, and Jacob found that face! And there was his blessing!

And so he called the place Peniel, that is, the faces of God; and Jesus made this

comment, b&s, 'blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God', in other words, Jesus was giving us the clue to Jacob's state of mind when he wrestled the angel, that's the clue. 'Blessed are the pure in heart' for it is that class of people that look God in the face. And Jacob said, 'I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved' (because now he is pure in heart) He has reached that stage, b&s, when he is Israel; and do you know, there are two occasions that I know of, when specifically in the bible, it is mentioned that God changed Jacob's name to Israel! It's mentioned specifically, He called him Jacob whom he named Israel; do you know where they are? We won't turn them up, but when Elijah was on top of Mt. Carmel he made that statement; he said, 'The God of Jacob whom he called Israel' and in 2 Kings 17 and verse 34, the identical statement is made; what's so marvellous about that? Well, the two chapters deal with Israel at a stage of most abject apostacy, in the days of Elijah when the people were following Baal, in 2 Kings 17 it's dealing with the history of the Samaritans when they served their own god and mixed it up with the worship of Yahweh. And on both occasions, the people were reminded that Jacob earned the name of Israel because he was determined to serve the true God! And they brought that before them to impress that lesson upon them, that's what Elijah said to them on Mt. Carmel which we missed at Youth camp, let's add that to the record of our bibles, that when he said that he was referring back to Genesis 32, and a man that was determined to cling to God when they were determined not to! And so he quoted that incident, b&s, as a proof of the fact that Jacob got that name because of his determination to serve God!

Now I promised you a sign, that would prove to you the ideas that I've been presenting of a man struggling with himself and with God, and finding out that he had to struggle with God alone, is what's being presented in this chapter! Well, it's based upon what Jacob said in verse 30, 'And Jacob called the name of the place, Peniel; for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved'. Now the word 'preserved' b&s is the same word rendered back in verse 11, the word 'deliver', when he asked to be delivered from the hand of his brother, Esau, 'I have seen God face to face and my life is delivered'. Now, I want you to turn with me to Psalm 44 and this is absolutely magnificent! because here's the clue to the whole story of Jacob wrestling with the angel, in just a few simple words. Now you listen to this and just take this on face value, it's absolutely beautiful; in verse 1 the Psalmist says, 'We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old'. Okay, the Psalmist says, I've heard in my ears and it's the fathers that told me. What did they tell him? Verse 3, 'For they got not the Land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them'. 'The light of thy countenance, 'thy face' (Strong's-6440), Peniel'; is that not proof that this refers to Jacob? NO! Have a look at the next verse, b&s, 'Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob' (and get a pen and underline that word 'command') 'command deliverances for Jacob'. And so this is the whole point of the psalm, the whole point of the story; so Jacob divides his army into camps. One over here and one over there, and if Esau attacks that one, you run! and if he attacks you, you charge off, we'll beat him, we'll get rid of him, he won't beat us! Now 580 animals, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, now you tell him word for word, you repeat this word for word, you repeat the same, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and off they go. Then he gets Leah, Rachel, Bilhah,

and Zilpah - you get in front and you're next, then you Leah, and Rachel last! And God says, 'Look, Jacob, unless I command deliverance Jacob, you'll get nowhere! 'Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob'. And that's the whole point of his life, b&s, and you can do all you like, but if Almighty God closes His ears to our prayers, if He sees us, b&s, working out our own salvation, as Paul tells us to do in Philippians, and then in the next verse it says, 'for it is God that worketh in you (if we do the first part of that verse without the second, well, we can have the most grandiose schemes in history, and the whole ecclesia can be behind us, unanimous decision of the arranging brethren, and we will crash! unless God commands that deliverance). And when Jacob wrestled with the angel, the angel struck his thigh, rendered him almost powerless, all he could do was cling to God, he couldn't fight anybody else, he just had his hands to hang onto God. God says, 'Jacob, I'm telling you now, we'll beat Esau, you and I! You and I, Israel (power with God). We'll beat him, you have prevailed with God (as the Septuagint has it) and shall prevail with men, and that man was Esau'.

And what happened? Jacob wakes up from the struggle, the angel's gone and the record says, the sun had risen upon him, it was late; he looks up at the sky, the sun's right up there, it's very late, he saw Esau coming; verse 1 of next chapter says, 'he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau was coming' and he's trying to walk! Where are all his schemes now, b&s? And Esau's rushing up with 400 men, there's his wives and children and he can't hurry and he's late! And he gets up and Esau says, 'My brother'; Ah-a-a-h! power with God! What a magnificent story! You know, you wouldn't get a more eloquent verse in the bible than, 'the sun had risen upon him and he halted upon his thigh'; I'm late and I can't hurry! B&S, that moved me, I can see that man, 'I will bring you back', says Micah and Zephaniah, 'I will gather her that is crippled (that halteth)' I can see God looking down upon that poor cripple, dragging that leg after him, lifting up his eyes and there he comes, 400 men with him, ah-a-a-h! and God looking down, 'I will gather her that halteth, her that I have afflicted, and I'll make him a remnant, a strong nation, the first dominion, the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Zion' all because he's learnt finally, to have power with God!

And then what do the scriptures do? That's the end of that story except for one little point! just added for your sake and my sake, because we are the sons of Jacob. Let's read the last verse together, 'Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank'. And there's an exhortation, b&s, one of the most powerful exhortations in the whole realm of scripture, because you see the sinew in Jacob's thigh shrank and made him a cripple, so the children of Israel don't eat it. If you want strength with God, b&s, forget about Jacob's thigh, because it's powerless! And so the children of the prince of God don't eat it, because it's Jacob's thigh that's weak, and the exhortation to us is, b&s, let's forget about Jacob and his schemes! but let's by all means, in our life, by works of righteousness, by work which is energized by love, grapple with our problems, but let's bring God into them! and let's hang grimly to God and work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to perform!