

Ninety-Nine And A Half Won't Do! : Part 2 – Jacob

Description

23 After he had sent them across, he also sent across all that he owned, 24 but
Then a man came and wrestled with him until just before daybreak. 25 When the man
said, "I won't, unless you bless me," Jacob answered.
27 "What is your name?" the man asked.
"Jacob," he answered.
28 The man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have struggled with
29 Jacob said, "Now tell me your name."
But he answered, "Why do you want to know my name?" Then he blessed Jacob.

Genesis 32:23-29 GNT

Jacob, later known as Israel is a very complex individual in scripture. His name, Jacob, means supplanter. At birth, he was grabbing the heel of his twin brother Esau, possibly in an attempt to be first (Genesis 25). Later, Jacob takes advantage of Esau's hunger and vulnerability, and gives him a bowl of, only in exchange for Esau's birthright as the first born son (Genesis 25). Finally, Jacob deceived his old, nearly blind father, Isaac, into blessing him as he posed as Esau in order to receive the blessing intended for firstborn sons (Genesis 27). After all of this, could Jacob be a person that God would look favorably upon? For the next 20 years, Jacob would work for his uncle Laban in order to receive Laban's daughter, Rachel, as his wife. In addition to marrying Rachel, Jacob married Leah, Laban's firstborn daughter, and accumulated much wealth in the form of sheep, and other cattle.

In the text above, Jacob is just leaving Laban, and on his way to meet his brother Esau whom he hasn't seen since he left home 20 years ago after obtaining the firstborn blessing through deception. Esau had declared that he would kill Jacob, just not while their father Isaac was alive (Genesis 27). Can you imagine the emotions that Jacob was experiencing in this moment? You were running from Esau 20 years ago, you were running from Laban a few days ago, and now you're confronted with the reality of facing your brother again.

Ninety-Nine And A Half

Jacob has sent everyone and everything he loves across the river ahead of him and is left alone. It's worth noting that God visits Jacob at the time and moment that he has stripped himself of everything. I believe that it is here that Jacob's confronted with the fact that he is and has nothing apart from God. I believe that God was observing Jacob the whole time. God had heard Jacob's prayers, cries, petitions, and troubles, but had waited until Jacob was humble in spirit to present himself. I believe the wrestling match mentioned in the scripture above was a physical manifestation of what had been occurring in the spiritual realm for over 20 years, as Jacob had been on a personal journey with the God. Jacob struggled with God in the text all night until daybreak, but I believe this was symbolic for the spiritual night that Jacob had been experiencing for 20 years and the spiritual sunrise that he was about to walk into. The old folks love this scripture that I believe applies to this situation

For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favour *is* life:

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

Psalm 30:5 KJV

Jacob's encounter with God was the moment that he prayed for. We all desire an encounter with God, an opportunity to confront him with our questions, concerns, doubts, and confirmation that he's real. This fight between Jacob and God was not a test of true physical strength because that would not have been a fair competition due to God's power. However this encounter between Jacob and God was a test of Jacob's faith, endurance, resolve, and willingness to forsake what he had previously believed in and relied on to obtain the blessings of God. God says to Jacob, "Let me go, daylight is coming." That has to be the greatest tease and test of all time. It's as though God is saying let me go because I'll have to bless you if you continue to hold onto me in true faith and confidence. Jacob's blessing, like yours, was literally within his grasp, all he had to do was hold on in true faith. **NINETY-NINE AND A HALF WON'T DO** = "I won't let go until you bless me." Each story in this series in essence is summed up in this encounter between Jacob and God. When God presents himself to you, and crosses your path, what do you do? Do you act as the older brother of the prodigal son (see series on this site), and settle for a life of close proximity to God, but never experiencing the FULLNESS of his glory and calling for your life. Or do you act as Israel did in the main text and "wrestle," endure, struggle with, and exercise faith in the ONE is able to do exceedingly AND abundantly above all that you may dare or ask according to the power that is at work within us (Ephesians 3:20). I need you to accept this blessing and proclamation over your life; it is the same one that God gave Israel in the main text

You have struggled with God and with men, and you have won

genesis 32:28 GNT

Reflection Time

What would you ask for if God stood before you right now? How is your faith endurance? What are of your spiritual life do you need to improve upon? Is there anything or anyone that you are still holding onto that is getting in the way of your relationship with God? Do you feel that you have settled for a partial experience with God? Are there things that you have stopped believing for, or praying about because daybreak seems so far away? I challenge you to enter a time of reflection, prayer, and reading of scripture, so that when God visits you, you are prepared to not let go until he blesses you.

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