



Message 12-5-09
VaYishlach-And He Sent
Genesis 32:4-36:43
Obadiah 1:1-21
Hosea 11:7-12:12
Hebrews 11:35-12:2

Introduction

The title of this week's portion comes from its opening verse, "Yaakov sent [*vayishlach*]," and refers to his sending messengers to his brother Esav, as the sibling drama draws to a close.¹

Genesis 32:4-7

5 with these instructions: "Here is what you are to say to my lord 'Esav: 'Your servant Ya'akov says, "I have been living with Lavan and have stayed until now. **6** I have cattle, donkeys and flocks, and male and female servants. I am sending to tell this news to my lord, in order to win your favor." "' **7** The messengers returned to Ya'akov saying, "We went to your brother 'Esav, and he is coming to meet you; with him are four hundred men."

I am sure that Jacob was not too thrilled to hear that his brother Esau was on his way to meet him with 400 men. I know how I would feel if my brother was coming to meet me and he was bringing along a small army of 400 men. Yet the night before Jacob had his encounter with, what many commentators believe, was the Lord Himself. Then there is this opinion:

The identity of the man is as unclear as his reason for attacking Jacob. In the Tanakh, God and angels can appear in human form. Jacob's mysterious adversary is surely supernatural and most traditional Jewish commentators have taken him to be angelic. A well-known Midrash sees him as the "patron angel of Esau" and thus interprets this episode as a warning to all future enemies of the Jewish people: "Your patron angel could not withstand him [Jacob] and you seek to attack his descendants?"²

I have read some commentaries that say the adversary was Satan or that Jacob wrestled with himself. No matter who the adversary was Jacob wrestled him to a draw or we can assume that Jacob had won because the *man* asked to be released as daybreak was upon them. No matter whom it was it is evident that this was turning point in Jacob's life. He was permanently injured

¹ From Torah with a Twist of Humor

² From The Jewish Study Bible

and would walk with a limp the rest of his life. Would God do something like this to one of His special ones? God can do anything He chooses to and does not have to explain His actions to us but He does so. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would become the Patriarchs of the Children of Israel. In their lives we see the struggle of God's creation in following Him. These men of God matured over a long period of time to become the servants of God that He required. There were others who preceded them that could have also served as the Patriarchs of Israel. We have Abel, but he was killed by his brother. We have Seth but obviously he was not the one. We read about Enoch who walked with God but God took him. Noah was righteous in his generation and this could be interpreted in a couple of different ways. One way was that he was only righteous in his generation rather than for all the ages or he was the best God could call upon out of that generation.

Whatever the reason God settled on Abraham, his only son with Sarah Isaac, and Isaac's younger son Jacob whose name means *"one who takes by the heel or supplanted."* He certainly lived up to his name because when he was born he had grabbed onto the heel of his brother Esau when they were born. He had received the first-born's birthright by trading his brother a bowl of lentil stew for it. He received the blessing of the first-born by deceiving his father by instructions given to him by his mother. Esau was the favorite of his father and Jacob was the favorite of his mother. It is always in the best interests of the parents to try to love all their children equally. It is difficult at times to do this and we see this throughout the Bible but it never turns out well. Perhaps this is why the Father only had one begotten son? He invested all of His love in His one Son and poured out all of heaven's blessings upon Him but this was because the Father asked for a very large price which Yeshua was willing to pay.

Abraham set the tone by being willing to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering when God asked him to. Isaac and Rebecca set up the conflict between their two sons by showing one or the other personal preference and Jacob almost lost his beloved son Joseph because of his love for Rachel and his love for Joseph. In many ways we see this carried on down to our day by God's calling out of Israel and in our time – the Jewish people. They have been thrown into the furnace of affliction by those professing faith in Yeshua down through the ages. Even in our day the Jewish people are front and center on the world's stage as God and Satan move into position for the next stage of the unfolding plan of the Creator – God. Notice that I only address God as the Creator, not Satan, because Satan cannot create on his own he can only imitate God to his own end.

Satan is a very powerful being created by the Holy One of Israel through His Son Yeshua. There are some who say that Satan and Yeshua are brothers having both been created by God. The problem with this reasoning is that we are told that it was through Yeshua and for Yeshua that everything – everything that exists was created. Yeshua was not created by God He was part of God, His living Word who was spoken forth in the beginning to bring all things that are into existence. The power of God is revealed in the pages of the Bible. The existence of Yeshua, prior to the Apostolic Scriptures, is found in the Tanach or Jewish Bible. He walks through the pages of the Bible revealing Himself to us so we can see the plan of God.

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.

This passage is referring to Yeshua, the living Word of God the Father. He has always been with the Father because He is part of the Father. I have heard some who say there is no one at the right hand of God because Yeshua and the Father are one and that Yeshua is the Father and the Father is Yeshua. This is sad because if it is true then why does Scripture refer to Yeshua as the Son of God and God come in the flesh? Why are we told that Yeshua is at the right hand of the Father? We need to be careful of teachers who go around teaching against Yeshua. Yeshua is not some invention on the part of the Apostolic Scripture writers. He exists and has been with the Father forever. If Yeshua was only a created being like you and I or the angels then He could not have saved anyone. I say that in all honesty because only God can forgive sin and if we are to pray to Yeshua for forgiveness of our sins, if He is not God then why are we wasting our time?

Jacob had just battled with a messenger of God or Satan and had overcome the odds and won. If it was Satan he struggled with he had moved forward as his father and grandfather had done in their walk with God. If he had struggled with God then he overcame God by finally surrendering everything to Him. Then in the next breath he receives a report from his messengers about the impending arrival of his brother and the small army he had with him and he divides his camp. Even in his division of his camp he showed his preference. He sent his concubines out first with their children, then Leah and her children, and finally Rachel and Joseph. Stand fast in your walk because the times will only get worse. As they say *"It is always the darkest before the dawn."*

Obadiah 1:17-18

17 But on Mount Tziyon there will be a holy remnant who will escape, and the house of Ya'akov will repossess their rightful inheritance. **18** The house of Ya'akov will be a fire and the house of Yosef a flame, setting aflame and consuming the stubble which is the house of 'Esav. None of the house of 'Esav will remain, for *ADONAI* has spoken.

The day is coming when the house of Esau will be stubble meant to be consumed in the fire that comes from the house of Jacob from the flame of Joseph. Jacob is the physical representation of Israel while Joseph is not just Ephraim but all of the spiritual brethren of all twelve tribes of Israel plus those who have joined themselves to Israel. Whether you are Jewish or not, it makes no difference, we are one in Messiah, by Messiah and through Messiah. We are seen by God through the lens of His Son Yeshua. All of our imperfections are on display for God to see us but it makes no difference to Him because we are joined to His Son – His only Son who He loves more than anyone and anything in all of heaven and earth. Through that love we are loved as part of His beloved people Israel.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; **7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yeshua His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Jacob saw the light that night as he struggled with the man until dawn. Interestingly the man asked to be set free as dawn was approaching. Could it have been symbolic of the fact that Satan lives in the darkness of sin. He dwells in the shadows of man hiding from the light of God or the dawn which brings the sunlight. Only if we are joined with Messiah can we defeat the enemy who desires to pull us down with him. Only if we are joined with the Body of Messiah can we ever hope to be part of the army of the Holy One of Israel.

We are told we must walk a narrow road that the road leading to God is not a wide one though man has always tried to change that. We say that all roads lead to God, when in truth, they do not. I am not attempting to give a narrow definition to the road that leads to God but I cannot accept that we all worship a universal God. The only universal god I know of is the one whose name begins with "S" and god begins with a small "g". The God I worship is a great and awesome God who refuses to share His glory with any other god. They are gods made of wood, metal, and stone made by the hands of man. If their gods can be formed by their own hands how can they serve a god they brought into being? Our God was not created by us. He already existed before any other god was made by the hands of men seduced by Satan who desired their worship. God does not demand our worship He asks for it and in return He provides His covenants for us whereby He makes promises to us and in return we make promises to Him.

My friends are you Jacob or Esau? Which camp will you find yourself in when the time of testing comes? I can't answer that question for you – only you can.

Hebrews 12:15-17

15 See to it that no one misses out on God's grace that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble and thus contaminates many, **16** and that no one is sexually immoral, or godless like Esav, who in exchange for a single meal gave up his rights as the firstborn. **17** For you know that afterwards, when he wanted to obtain his father's blessing, he was rejected; indeed, even though he sought it with tears, his change of heart was to no avail.

Esau runs throughout this week's Torah, Haftarah, and Apostolic Scripture portions. He does not represent the people of God Jacob does. Esau will be the fodder for the fire that comes from Jacob and the flame from Joseph. Esau despised who he was and took wives from among the Canaanites and from Ishmael. Jacob went to the land of his mother to find a wife and to hide from Esau who wanted to kill him. Our Biblical parents are real people with good and bad traits within them.

I can feel a connection to them because I know I am an imperfect man in an imperfect world that was tainted by the sins of mankind. We brought creation down when we fell. Our parents Adam and Chava struggled with the burden of what they had done. It could not have been lost on them the enormity of their actions and what they caused. Evil was let loose in paradise and followed man on his exile from the Garden. The bigger picture of the Garden is it represents

what is to be because it was what once was. It is a circle that we are travelling on heading back to the Garden. It is said that after being exiled from the Garden Adam sat by one of the four rivers that flowed from the Garden trying to get back in. He knew then what he had done and what he had lost but did he realize what he had done to all mankind after him?

Romans 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Yeshua the Messiah.

The Shaliach Shaul (Paul) wrote these words in his letter to the congregation in Rome. He acknowledges that sin originated with Adam and that the solution is found in Yeshua. Yeshua is the second Adam who will bring us back to the Garden. For 3 ½ years Yeshua ministered to Israel. He was rejected by His people because unless that happened the gospel would never have gone to the nations. Yeshua gives us a hint to this when He speaks to the Samaritan woman and to the Centurion. He was reaching out beyond the borders of Israel trying to show us the way.

Esau has no redeeming qualities – God tells us so. Forgiveness could have been his but he followed the ways of Canaan and not the ways of the Holy One of Israel. Granted Israel was not going to happen for a long time but following God has always been an inherent built in quality of man. We know there is something greater than us out there. Some of us know this to be God and Yeshua, many do not. They seek after those things that God rejects. He sent His Son into the world so that the world could be redeemed.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

“I have to have a raise,” the man demands of his boss. “There are three other companies after me.” “Is that so?” asked his boss, “what other companies are after you?” “The electric company, the telephone company, and the gas company.”