

JACOB'S WRESTLING MATCH

Our lesson text introduces us to one of the greatest wrestling matches recorded in human history.

Wrestling is one of the oldest recorded sports of the world (3000 BC/ Egypt and Babylon).

Jacob began wrestling with what appeared to him as a man, (Hosea 12:4) referred to him as an angel. Towards the end of the wrestling match, Jacob was aware that it was God or the Pre-Incarnate Christ (Gen.32:28-30); (Jn.1:18;6:46; **12:45**); (Col.1:15).

This is 1 of 3 popular things Jacob is known for in the Scriptures:

- Jacob's Ladder (Gen.28)
- Jacob's Wrestling (Gen.32)
- Jacob's well (Gen.33; John 4)

After 20 years in Haran, Jacob was returning home with his new family and wealth (Gen.28-32). As he neared his homeland, he stopped to camp and to devise a plan to deal with the wrath of Esau. Two angels met him and said, "This is God's camp." So, Jacob named the place Mahanaim [two companies or representing two military escort groups] (Gen.32:1-2).

These two angels could very well have been the two sent to Abraham and Lot on their way to destroy Sodom (Gen.19:1, 11-24). At Gethsemane, Jesus said that He had authority to dispatch 12 legions of angels. (Matt.26:51-54)

You might ask, "Why Jacob and why now? Remember Jacob is the Patriarchal heir of the Messianic Seed of the Abraham Covenant (land, **seed**, and blessings).

<p style="text-align: center;">This lesson will study <u>four aspects</u> of Jacob's Wrestling Match.</p>
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1. This wrestling match did not occur as a dream, trance or vision. According to the Scriptures, it was literal (Gen.32:24).

In this wrestling match, Jacob was injured (Gen.32:25). This injury became famous in Israel's history (Gen.32:32).

Why did Jacob think he needed to face this big problem alone? (Gen.32:3-8) "In great fear and distress" (Gen.32:7-8, 11).

These two angels represented two encampments to Jacob which became part of Jacob's plan (Gen.32:7-8, 22). But what did they represent as part of God's plan? God will protect both groups.

2. After devising a plan, Jacob prays regarding his fears and distress about facing Esau (Gen.32:9-12).

So, he sent gifts ahead in peace negotiation to Esau (Gen.32:13-23).

His prayer:

- Began with awareness of the Directive Will of God (Gen.32:9)
- Thanksgiving (Gen.32:10)
- Petition (Gen.32:11)

- Awareness of the **divine promise** – “**For you said, ‘I will surely prosper** (yatab/ hiphil infin. plus hiphil impf) you and make your descendants as the sands of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.’” (Gen.32:12;.22:17) [Abraham Covenant]

Jacob is probably repeating his Bethel experience with God which took place twenty years earlier at Bethel (Gen.28:10-22) [Jacob’s ladder].

- **Prophetic Will:** “Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen.28:14)
- **Directive Will:** “Behold, I am with you and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (Gen.28:15)

3. Since Jacob knows all this doctrinally, why is he filled with fear and distress and panic state of mind?

Why is Jacob making a mountain out of a mole hill?

Jacob is walking by sight and NOT by faith (2 Cor.5:7).

Mental attitude sin (fear) shuts down the Faith Cycle.

In the Parable of Sower (Matt.13:1-9; 13:18-23), Jesus warn about the **thorny ground hearers,**

(Matt.13:22) “And he one on whom the seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke out the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

The content of Jacob’s emergency prayer is lost to faith because of fear and panic in a spiritually mature believer [walking by sight, not faith] (2 Cor.10:4-6).

(Heb.11:6) “And **without faith** it is impossible to please Him, **for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**”

4. This shows Jacob has unresolved Old Man Cosmos Diabolicus (worldly thinking) baggage.

In fact, it is twenty years old. baggage! It has been brought back to the surface by his returning home. Now it is time to deal with it. He has made good choices externally by his offering of peace, prayer, and presents, but bad choices internally.

- **False assumptions** (the “what ifs”, rather than “what does Bible say”)
 - Lead to **false interpretations** - which
 - Lead to **false expectations** - which
 - lead to **false applications.**
- **He is honest about his fear,**
 - but not about his faith.
- **He is focused on his inadequacies,**
 - but NOT on God’s adequacies.
- **He has chosen the grasshopper (victim approach)** (Num.13:30-33)
 - rather than victor approach (1 John 5:4) to his fear.

The Divine solution to the Old Man Cosmos Diabolicus (worldly thinking) baggage of a spiritually mature believer can be found in: (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:20-24, 27, 30).