

Jacob Wrestles

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] Now we have in the opening part of this chapter here, Jacob having parted from Laban, who remember had perskewed him with all his family and all his retainers, seeking to no doubt try to bring Jacob back again into Paddan Aram, where Laban had done very nicely, thank you, out of all Jacob's labours.

But Jacob has gone, he has left at the instruction of the Lord, and we saw that in chapter 31. The Lord told him, verse 3 of chapter 31, to return to the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee.

So here now we have Jacob going from a confrontation in which he was innocent, in other words with Laban, to whom he had done no harm, now to a confrontation in which he knows himself to be guilty, because he is coming infallibly into contact with his not long lost brother, but the brother from whom he had fled.

Esau is not only his brother, but he is his only brother, his twin brother, his elder brother, and he is a brother offended. And Jacob notes that there will be no peace for him in the land of Canaan until he has made peace first with Esau.

Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. Here we have the angels meeting with Jacob, and he said, this is God's host. He called the name of that place Mahanaim.

[1 : 3 2] Now, in the Hebrew, this Mahanaim or Mahanaim is, to me, my Hebrew is not good. It just looks like a plural. The im at the end implies a plural, but according to Hebrew commentators and so on, it actually is a dual rather than a plural.

So in other words, it means two hosts or two armies or two camps. Now, elsewhere where Jacob makes reference to verse 10, 7 or verse 10, to two bands into which he divides his people.

The Hebrew number two is in there. So the two bands, there's the numerical two, and there's the word for bands or armies or hosts, but here there isn't. There's just the word Mahanaim or Mahanaim as we have it in English, and according to scholars, it means two hosts.

To me, it just looks like a plural, but it may be a situation where the plural is a dual. For example, if somebody has like four wives on the go at once and he's charged by the police with the crime of bigamy.

Bigamy means literally two wives. So it doesn't mean that he gets off with, you know, the other two. It means that he's charged with the whole lot, even though the bigamist is, he's guilty of multiple wives, but it means literally two wives.

[2 : 4 9] Likewise, bi-cycle, two wheels, bifocal, two lenses in the one glass. So it may be that that which means multiple, literally, technically, means dual here with Mahanaim.

Two hosts is what Mahanaim means. We have an instance of it elsewhere, two armies, two camps. At the end of chapter six of the Song of Solomon, where we have this verse, return, return, O Shulamite, that we may look upon thee.

What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies. And again, in the Hebrew, it's this word Mahanaim, Mahanaim, as we have here, two armies, two hosts. Now, people speculated, why two hosts?

Why two? Does he specify if it's just God's host, one host of angels that he sees? Some have suggested that it's God's host on the one hand and all the people that are with him, on the other hand, is the second host.

So it's like there's the heavenly angels and there's his earthly band, two hosts. The fact that there are two that he sees, whether it's in a vision, whether it's in sleep, or whether he physically sees them with his eyes, we don't read that the rest of everybody else in his company sees them or not, but this may also be a reason why he divides his people later on in chapter seven and in verse seven and verse 10 into two companies, two bands, to division, to protect them in that sense.

[4 : 15] Now we read, of course, in scripture that when God meets with his people, with the angels, it is to protect them. Psalm 91, verse 11, he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in thy ways.

And we might think, well, that's very nice, but, you know, Jacob could actually have done with this angelic visitation while he was afraid of Laban. When Laban was catching up with them, when Laban was trying to threaten him, he could perhaps do with the angelic army interposing between him and Esau.

So when the next confrontation comes, be pretty nice to have an angelic army then. Thank you very much. But why now in this interlude? Why is it here between one confrontation and another?

this is how the Lord seems to work with his angels? We could speculate as to whether or not each one of us has an individual guardian angel or not.

Some people think we do, others we don't. There is, of course, that phrase, that verse where Jesus says, you know, take heed that you offend not one of these little ones for I say to you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.

[5 : 28] Now, it doesn't say they're individual angel, that they each one have a personal guardian angel, but we don't really need to worry about speculating whether or not each believer has an individual or personal guardian angel when certainly we know for sure from Scripture that they have a guard of angels around them.

He shall give his angels charge over these. I might want to love in the red there. And also in Hebrews, of course, it says that the angels, are they not all ministering spirits?

Hebrews chapter 1 verse 14, are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister, to serve, for them who shall be heirs of salvation? That's what the angels are there to do, to serve the Lord's people, to be messengers, to them.

They are not there to fight the battles for us. That's something perhaps we need to recognize. The angels are not there to fight the battles for us any more than they are for Jacob.

They don't appear in his confrontation with Laban. They don't appear in his confrontation with Esau. And here they are in the intimate meeting with them almost as it were to strengthen him, to let him know that they are there.

[6 : 39] Now, we can think of other instances. If you think of, you know, when Jesus is tempted by the devil in the wilderness, Matthew 4 and verse 11, it's after he has seen the devil off by quoting scripture right, left, and center at him.

And the devil leaves him for a time. And then we read, angels came and ministered unto him. You might think, well, he could have done with the angels when the devil was busily having a go at this day. It wouldn't have been better for their support.

And they are not going to fight the battles for you. Not for Jesus. Not for us. The only exception we might find is in Luke's account of the gospel in chapter 22.

If you remember the instance where it says, such was his agony that as he prayed he sweated great drops of blood. And just the preceding verse before that, we read that there appeared an angel to him strengthening him.

But even there, it's not in the midst of his agony so much the angel comes to Israel, beef him up and strengthen him. There, an angel can't give any strength to the son of God. He's more powerful than the angel.

[7 : 41] But, but even there, the angel only comes to minister to him once he has already said, wrestling and prayer, not my will but thine be done.

You can look it up for yourself in Luke 22 there and see how it's after Jesus has said, you know, that if this cup can pass for me then please let it do so. But if not, not my will but thine be done.

And then there appeared the angel strengthening him. If you think of it almost like a boxing match, you know, what we'll see excerpts of boxing matches on TV or whatever there's two fighters slugging it out, you know.

And then the bell rings and they go off into their respective corners and this little group of people came with buckets of water and splashed them down and if they got cut then they slice the cut and get all the blood and goo out and they take the gum shield out and they dab them down with a towel and they're doing everything possible to look after them and encourage them and help them.

Then the bell rings again and they all have to come out and the guy has to go back up into the ring again. They can serve, they can help, they can dry him down, they can do whatever he needs, whatever he needs to be served with during that break but they will not be able to get into the ring with him and fight the battle for him.

[8 : 48] When Jesus says, remember in Gethsemane, he says to his disciples, look, don't you think I could call for 12 legions of angels now and they could see off these people who have come to arrest me but this is not God's way.

This is your hour, he says to the crowds in the power of darkness. The angels are not there to fight our battles for us but they are, they are. They are ever watching, they are ever attending upon the Lord's people and he will support, sustain, minister to his people through these ministering spirits but not as an instead of.

He gives us sufficient with which to fight our battles and then he expects us to do it. He expects us to get into the ring and slug it out.

He expects us to take what he has given us and use it to fight the battles we are called upon to fight. He has promised us the strength if we are faithful.

He has promised that he will be there with us, his ministering spirits are there, the angels are waiting as it were in the wings but they are not going to get in front of you and take a hit for you. The battles have to be fought by the Lord's people and I will suggest to you this is one reason why Jacob sees the angels of God meeting with him, God's host and he called the place Mahanaim, Mahanaim, two hosts, his host, probably this is the reason for it, his host and the angelic host because they are there meeting him between these two confrontations, one in which he is innocent but a greater confrontation coming now wherein he knows himself guilty but for all that he is guilty he is still the Lord's chosen vessel, he is still God's covenant vessel to continue the covenant line for the blessing to be upon him not for his worth, he's been the twister, he's been the supplanter, the chancer but he has seen his ways, he has turned, he has turned to the Lord, he has changed and God has blessed him and accepted him but now, now he is on the verge of the promised land and he will not, cannot seek to enter this promised land or make peace with his aged father without first making peace with his brother, he will not bypass

[11 : 11] Esau who is now based about a hundred miles to the south, if he's, if Jacob is on the Jabbok River there, which is on the eastern sort of edge of the east of the Jordan of the Holy Land now, if you've got maps in the back of your Bible it might help to look at them, you see where the Jabbok River is, probably up from the way down the Jordan between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea and there it is moving out to the right, it's running from east to west into flowing into the Jordan and south of the Jabbok River about a hundred miles from the south is Mount Seir to the bottom end, the south eastern end of the Dead Sea and that is where Esau now was based with all his clan, all his men, no doubt Jacob had had word sent to him, word had travelled to him from Canaan to let him know that Esau had left the camp of his father, that he was setting up base now at Mount Seir for himself, wherever he is Jacob needs to make peace with him and there will be no peace until he is first put to death the old enmity and making friends with his brother or taking the consequence for here to the south is this elder brother, only brother, twin brother and a brother offended and Jacob has offended against him, he has in one sense cheated him out of his birthright, he has lied to his aged father seeking his blessing but God has overruled all these things, all these things despite the way in which Jacob went about it, just like the way in which Laban went about foisting his two daughters onto Jacob,

God overruled that for good and produced from it the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel, God is always one step ahead of us and even Jacob's methods reprehensible as they were in previous chapters are used of God, this is God's outcome which it may be one reason why we do not find for all Jacob's protestations of peace and of humility before his brother, we do not find, you'll notice, any word of repentance per se, no retraction, oh I'm really sorry I cheated you out with your birthright, no repentance, I'm sorry I took your blessing from old Isaac there, no regrets, just humility, he speaks of thy servant Jacob, my Lord Esau, there's real humility there, he's making himself low and Esau big, he is speaking the truth, I've so joined with Laban all these years, which he has, and I've stayed there and I've got oxen and asses and flocks and herds and men's servants and women's servants, in other words what he's saying is, look,

I'm not coming to you in need, I'm not a beggar here, I don't need sustaining, I don't need help, I've got flocks and herds, I've got plenty of wealth myself, I'm not here asking for charity, I'm just here to pay my respects, I'm here to greet my brother whom I know I've offended and he's making a plea for peace that I may find grace in thy sight.

Now this is what Jacob is seeking to do and the messengers go ahead of him and he say, we came to thy brother Esau also he cometh to meet thee and four hundred men with him.

I used to read this when I was younger, I thought, okay, that's Esau just getting together on a big welcoming party because look how nice he is to him when you come to chapter 33 and they follow each other's necks and kiss each other and they say how friendly they are.

[14 : 42] Esau's so nice to him, so friendly, so obviously Jacob had nothing to worry about. Yes, he did. This is not a caravan full of wives and children and camels and all presents of gold.

He's not coming to meet up with him for a great big party. He's not coming to sit down and have a feast of welcome together four hundred men. That means a little army.

That means Esau's intentions are hostile. Angry men have good memories as one commentator has put it. And Esau, we can say without a shadow of a doubt, setting out with four hundred men means to wreak revenge on Jacob.

This is not a mixed gathering. It's not a sort of moving camp like Jacob's got here. It's not civilians, women and children mixed in. Four hundred men.

Now, even a tenth of that. Forty men. We don't know how many Laban had. Laban was enough of a threat and he maybe only had a tenth of that. And he had no reason to be angry with Jacob.

[15 : 47] Esau has caused. He has been, you know, nursing his wrath to keep it warm all these twenty years and more. And here now is his chance to smite Jacob and all his gathering, all his flocks and herds.

Four hundred men. Jacob notes that humanly speaking he will not stand a chance. But we should not be under any illusions that despite how things subsequently work out in the Lord's providence, Esau sets off meaning to wreak revenge.

There is no other explanation for why he is coming to meet his brother with four hundred men. That is an army. A small army, admittedly, but an army whom Esau will have gathered around him in the hills of Mount Seir.

Men like him. Hunters. Raiders. Strong men. Probably cruel men. Men who will take multiple wives as he himself did from the Hittites, from the Canaanites, from the peoples round about who are not concerned with the God of Abraham and Isaac.

Yes, yes, nominal but service to them and loving this father Isaac but Esau is a wild man. he's a powerful man, a leader of men who attracts others of like-mindedness around him.

[17 : 07] This is an army with one purpose to destroy Jacob and to take his spoils and to satisfy Esau's revenge. We may say that without too much fear of contradiction.

And then we read Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. No wonder. And divided the people that was with them or the flocks and herds and the camels into two bands.

And he said if Esau come to the one company and smite it then the other company which is left shall escape. You see the hopelessness of this situation. Despite however large his gathering may be however many servants he's got and women servants and men servants and maybe some armed retainers they're largely herdsmen flock keepers shepherds they are civilians they are pastoralists they are not men of war they will not stand a chance their only hope will be flight.

So if one band is smitten the other might have a chance to get away though they wouldn't get far before they were overtaken by men of war. So having divided them in the hope that one might escape Jacob then goes to the only place he can go he goes to the Lord.

Now this is light this is good this is a demonstration here of Jacob's changed life. This is not now an attempt to get what he wants by subterfuge or by cheating his aged father this is Jacob going to the only place he can go going to the Lord.

[18 : 39] We don't read that he built an altar and offered sacrifices this is just pure prayer on its own which is comparatively rare actually at this early in the Old Testament. usually we read you know they built an altar they offered a sacrifice they called in the name of the Lord or they entreated the Lord you know it's all part of the cultic kind of ritual there that here's Jacob with nothing but the prayer that he has to the Lord.

Oh God of my father Abraham and the God of my father Isaac although God has made promises to him too he doesn't say God is my God too the God of Jacob here's his humility again.

the Lord which says to me return unto thy country you said it Lord I'm here because you told me to come I'm only back on the borders of Canaan because you said to me leave Laban and come home and I will deal well with thee I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercy said of all the truth which thou hast shown unto thy servant and here's humility again recognizing that for all our need may be great God doesn't owe us a thing God doesn't owe Jacob anything he has already appealed to that which will be most potent with the Lord he has cited to him his own word Lord you said this and I'm doing what you said you don't owe me anything Lord because I don't deserve any of your mercies with my staff I passed over this Jordan not a single servant worth of not much in the way of luggage or baggage or movable goods just his staff yes he had a little perhaps for survival we know that he had a little bit of oil to anoint the stone at Bethel but he had nothing else and now

I am become two bands even his adversity whereby he has to divide his people into two groups he uses this as a means of praise you made me two companies two bands deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother from the hand of Esau for I fear him lest he will come and smite me and the mother and the children now this is again evidence of Jacob's concern he doesn't just think oh I'm afraid for my life but if I am killed what will happen to the women and children what will happen to my wives to my sons my daughters what will happen to the men servants and maid servants they will just be a prey to these men of war if I die they who are hundreds of miles away from the only man they have ever known they have come here they have come here to the borders of Canaan for one person only me and I'm only here because I obeyed you Lord to come home if anything happens to me what will happen to them if I am smitten then what will happen to the mother and the children thou saidst that I will surely do thee good and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude or if we look back to chapter 28 we see it says the dust of the earth this is how numerous

God promised to make his seed and he has begun to do it but he has gone to the one source of help he has gone to the Lord who alone can change hearts and change circumstances you see this wrestling in prayer and he does it again later on at the Jabba River but this wrestling in prayer is to seek God's blessing the present that he subsequently sends to Esau is to seek Esau's blessing he knows that Esau is not a man moved by any spiritual concerns but he might well be impressed by flocks and herds and sheep and oxen and goats and so on so he is sending he is appealing to that which will appeal to Esau he is giving him his present now we say well come on he'd already prayed to the Lord why is he to do that how do we trust the Lord or he doesn't the Lord expects us to make full use of what he has given us if you think of the miracles that Jesus did when he said you know the feeding of the five thousand he didn't say just see them it's okay boys

[22 : 41] I've got this covered come on I'll just pray to my father and he's going to rain down manna from heaven just like they did with Moses and the Israelites in the desert just watch this no he didn't he said what have you got he said we've got nothing we've got not nothing we've got five loaves and two fish but what use is that and he said well bring them here to me and he blessed them and he broke them and he distributed them they used what they had and God blessed it and likewise in the Old Testament when Elijah was sent to the widow of Zarephath and he said well what have you got she said look I've got nothing but I'm gathering a few sticks there's a wee pot of oil there's a wee handful of meal flour I'm going to bake some bread cakes on the hearth I'm going to feed my son and myself that's all we've got then we're going to die and he said well that's fine you go and do that but bring me a little I'll go for the bread first and she did it you know if you're already starving to death what have you got to lose and the barrel of meal wasted lot and the cruise of oil didn't run out likewise with the widow that helped Elijah came to him

Elisha came to him for help the pot of oil that she had it didn't run out what have you got what has God given into your hand and it won't be nothing say oh well I haven't got anything yes you do what have you got that you can actually use that you can put in the Lord's this folks and while Jacob could say I've got no strength against each I don't have an army to fight him with no you don't but you've got flocks and herds and sheep and oxen and cattle you've got something which might placate him and I've given this much abundance into your hands the Lord expects us to use that which he has given us to make full use of what he has given us otherwise instead of trusting God we are effectively tempting him you know if the Lord has made you brilliant at say physics or mathematics or whatever you've got a big exam coming up it's no use to say well Lord I know you're giving me brains so I'm really going to spend ages and ages praying and praying and praying about this exam and I hope you'll inspire me for it but there's your textbooks and there's all your notes and everything just lying there on the desk and you're not going to them you're going to pray yes but then you're going to go and study use fill your brain with the knowledge the ability the power the Lord has given you and then go into your exam knowing that you've done everything you can the Lord expects us to make use of what he has put into our hand otherwise we are not trusting God so much as tempting him and so he sends off these droves now in total there are nine droves if you separate out the ewes from the rams and the he goats from the she goats and so on which you would have to do because you couldn't just mix them all in together for obvious reasons they would have to be kept slightly apart at least and even if the he goats and the she goats were kept a little bit apart and then there was a bigger gap before the ewes and the rams and so on there is at the very least five groupings there's the goats the he goats and the she goats 220 then there's the ewes and the rams another 220 then you've got the 30 milk camels which depending how you count you might just count them on their own or you might count their goats if each one has a goat that's still suckling from its mother then you've got another 30 on top of that so it's either 470 or 500 so far then you've got the 40 kind that'd be strong cloud pooling oxen 10 bulls so now we're up to 520 or 550 then you've got 20 she asses good for work good for burden bearing and 10 foals and why would you want the young ones because they've got more years ahead of them you've got a future with these foals they can be trained up they've got an increase in strength you've got 550 beasts there or 580 if you count the colts or the milk camels and they're coming in 5 droves at the very least unless they're all separated out completely in which case you've got 9 droves 9 sets of beasts coming towards

Esau's 400 men and the first lord come you know with the 200 she goats or the 20 he goats they say well who are you guys oh well we are Jacob's these are Jacob's flocks and herds they're a present for my lord Esau and when Jacob's coming he's just behind us okay fair enough you get behind and then the next lord come as they get a bit nearer they say well these are a present from your servant Jacob and he's a present for my lord Esau and Jacob is behind us and this goes on 5 times at least perhaps it goes on 9 times and all the time this generosity is being shown to Esau this pleading with him to accept to receive this present he could easily just have sent it back and say no I'm not accepting your present I don't care I don't want your beasts I don't want your flocks and herds I want blood I want my revenge but he doesn't do that he is being softened tempered as he receives drove after drove each one valuable each one worth quite a lot so there coming is a present for Esau perhaps 5 droves at least 5 droves perhaps 9 droves and each time there is this respectful sense my lord Esau thy servant Jacob but also there is this other subtle statement behold he is behind us now that is saying well the master is coming after his servants but also it means he is coming in other words

Esau he's not running he's not heading off into the sunset in the opposite direction Jacob is coming he's behind us we are part of the present part of the flocks of herds but for you my lord Esau thy servant Jacob is behind us he's not afraid of you he's not running he's on his way and he's coming yes he's respectful yes he's full of humility yes he wants to be friends but he is confident enough to look you in the eye and to seek to make peace he is not afraid of you that's the subtle subtext that is going on here so went the present over before him and himself lodged that night in the company he rose up that night and took his two wives his two women servants his eleven sons passed over the poor Jabba he took them and sent them over the brook sent over that he had and Jacob was left alone now where he wrestles with the angel the man it's described as here at Penuel this is about five miles to the west of Mahanaim where the angels

God's hosts met him so they haven't made a huge amount of progress but still he has travelled a bit to the west from Mahanaim in the east to Penuel in the west and then they're going to cross over the Jabba heading south as Esau and his 400 men are coming north so then he is left alone and this wrestling now with what is almost always recognised to be an angel of the Lord he is wrestling in prayer whether it's a physical appearance of a man or whether it is seeking the Lord's blessing he will not let go he knows he's already been promised God's blessing but he needs to be sure he is not letting go now sometimes people take this and say well he wrestled till the break of day and when he that is the angel 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 we don't read that Jacob screamed in pain as this happened if somebody puts your thigh out of joint it's going to be pretty sore but because this is a divine touch it's almost like it wounds and it heals at the same moment this is going to be if you like a token of Jacob's wrestling with the Lord whereby he will be in a sense disfigured slightly disabled forever afterwards but he's not rolling about in agony he's not screaming in pain

[30 : 53] God has touched him in such a way that he will bear this mark always this mark of wrestling this mark of striving with the angel and just in case you think oh yeah I wrestled and I came out on top there is this disability which is going to follow him afterwards just as you know Paul says in 2nd Corinthians in chapter 12 verse and lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations that 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 but my strength is made perfect in weakness that he is Jacob in his weakness wrestling with the angel of the Jabba River now Hosea tells us effectively that it is an angel Hosea chapter 12 at verse 4 we read yea he had power over the angel and prevailed what form does this wrestling take again verse 4 of Hosea 12 he wept and made supplication unto him he found him that is God in Bethel there he spake with us just as he took his brother by the heel in the womb verse 3 by his strength he had power with God and this is one reason why the angel gives him a new name he says your name won't any longer be just

Jacob the supplanter the chancer the twister the crooked one your name will be Israel but as a prince with God a prince has thou power with God and with men and has prevailed and that's what Israel means as you probably a prince with God but notice what he says as a prince has thou power with God and with men and has prevailed where do you imagine the power came from to hold fast and wrestle with this angel all night in prayer where do you think Jacob's strength came from not from himself for we are told in Romans we know not what we should pray for as we ought Romans 8 verse 26 but the spirit intercedeth for us with groans which cannot be uttered the power to keep on wrestling came from God the power to hold fast and not let go came from God it is God who gives Jacob the strength to keep on wrestling to keep prevailing in prayer this is one reason why I would suggest to you it is in verse 28 cast out power with God and with men and has prevailed it doesn't mean you've had power over God it certainly does not mean you've had power against God there is no power against God but Jacob as the first

Israel is pronounced to have had power with God God gave him the power to wrestle and to prevail God gave him the power to keep on holding fast to God's promises to not let go and with the angel who yes injured him and yes put his thigh out of joint still he is enabled to keep on wrestling this is what we are taught in Exodus chapter 23 where you know Jacob then goes back and says well what's your name he says why are you asking my name why are you asking my name because it's not to be known you don't need to know my name all you need to know is that I am representing the Lord here Exodus 23 verse 20 behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared beware of him and obey his voice provoke him not for he will not pardon your transgressions for my name is in him never mind what the angel's name is never mind about the servant remember when in Revelation

John says he wants to fall down on his feet and pay homage to the angel who shows him these things he said see thou do it not for I am my fellow servant and of the prophets and of the children of God I am just a servant like you they are all ministering spirits they are there to serve and so likewise God says about this angel in Exodus 23 my name will be in him my name is in him again in Judges 13 remember when Samson's parents are visited by an angel Manoah Samson's father says to him in Judges 13 at verse 17 Manoah said unto the angel what is thy name that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour and the angel of the Lord said to him why askest thou thus after my name seeing it is secret we are not to do homage to angels we are not to make a special mention of them but rather we are to honour the Lord that is what Jacob is seeking to do here wrestling in prayer wrestling with the angel all the way through to the break of day now some would say oh the break of day the angel can't stay in daylight like some kind of vampire or something that's nonsense

I would suggest to you that the reason the angel departs from him is ready to depart from him at the break of day is you have been wrestling in prayer all night you have wrestled with this angel you have wrestled with the messenger of God enough now the day is breaking now you have got work to do now you have got to cross over the Jabba River now you have got to do the thing that you fear you have got to face your fear now in the strength of God the day is breaking until the breaking of the day when he saw that he prevailed not against him he said let me go for the day break it's time to stop and he touched the hollow of Jacob's I will not let thee go except thou bless me what is thy name Jacob thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed with God but never against him there is no power against God in so far as this angel is acting on God's authority and on God's behalf this is one reason why

[37 : 14] Jacob then says afterwards I have seen God face to face verse 30 now technically it's not God himself that he's seen it's only his messenger but you know this is this is standard practice every year when the general assembly meets the lord high commissioner visits and he is accorded the respect that would be accorded the queen herself if she were present because he is her representative and the honour that is done to his office to his place is because of who he represents there would be nothing to stop him turning up any other day of the week and sitting in the public gallery and observing the ongoings of the general assembly but he's not there as a private individual he is there to represent the queen and therefore it is effectively the queen's presence that visits the general assembly just as it is God's presence that wrestles with Jacob at the Jabba River I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved and as he passed over

Peniel the sun rose upon him and he halted upon his thigh and then you've got this tradition that the Jews they are they don't eat of any animal at the joint where the thigh bone joins the torso that sinew that was touched they take it out they remove it as a tradition so that their children say why don't you eat this bit say oh well because this is where remember how the angel touched Jacob's thigh he's going to be limping the rest of his life halting upon his thigh he is in a sense disabled and yet he is more strengthened than he has ever been we have here then his new name with his new name there is this new strength this new identity Paul writes to the Galatians in the New Testament at chapter six God forbid that I should glory not in an angel not in myself save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world but in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision but a new creature and as many as walk according to this rule peace be on them and mercy and upon the

Israel of God the people of God those who are as a prince with God have power with God not against them because they wrestle with the Lord in prayer because they struggle through this world in God's strength in God's power the Israel of God from henceforth let no man trouble me Paul writes for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus in other words Paul had not only his thorn in the flesh he had the scars of battle from following the Lord and friends so will each of us this world is always going to leave you scarred to an extent but the wounds of battle that come from being faithful to the Lord yes they will be painful to bear but they are for your honour and they are not for your shame the scars the stripes with which we are healed from the back of our saviour are part of his glory I suggest to you that one of it is no defect when we see in the risen crux he showed them his hands and his feet you would think the resurrection body that should be perfect there shouldn't be any wounds in it there shouldn't be any defects in it at all he should be all healed he shouldn't have any wounds in his hands and his feet because these are not defects these are scars of honour these are the demonstration of what he has endured for his people and the scars and the marks upon our body and in our life of our following of the

Lord Jesus are not defects not disfigurements they are honour for the Israel of God those who wrestle with the Lord in power and in prayer and prevail because there is power with God there is none against him and in Numbers 23 at verse 23 Baal the prophet who is sent to curse Israel and I remember this is the new name Jacob has been given it says surely there is no enchantment against Jacob neither is there any divination against Israel according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel what hath God wrought look at what God has done and we will see this in the subsequent chapters this man who was running from his vengeful brother who crossed the Jordan with nothing but his staff and all that he had was the Lord's presence with him and God turned him into two bands over the years

God blessed him he gave him his wives he gave him his children he gave him his flocks and herds think of how wealthy Jacob must have been here he is able to send over 580 beasts to his brother as a present and we must assume he has at least as much left to himself this is what the Lord has built up for him in six years of trading and looking after the flocks and the herds of Laban what hath God wrought we look at ourselves we look in the mirror and we see the insignificance of our appearance we see the weakness and frailty of our physical frame we look at what we may have achieved in our life and we think it doesn't amount to much we look at our disability as we hold upon our thigh as we are conscious of feigning eyesight or less healing than once we did or less physical strength than once we had the Lord's ability to deliver is not dependent on our physical weakness or strength it will be said rather of the Israel of God what hath God wrought and when we are brought into his presence and behold the face of God and live as Jacob does here and Peniel such scars as we may have are not disfigurement to be washed away they are honour to be a fire like the wounds of Christ they are that which honours the saviour and honours his servants this new name this new identity as a prince with God of the

[43 : 42] Israel of God that is what we are called to be part of to have power with God if we will wrestle in prayer with him and seek strength from him and put at his disposal that which he has already given to us to use it for his kingdom his hands his blessing his work men will not praise us up they will not see how great we were but if we have been faithful to the Lord they will say what have God wrought it it how can he loyal Sant