

Face to Face Bible Bits

The book of Genesis
chapter 27 verses 41 -45;
chapter 28 verses 10-16;
chapter 32 verses 3-7, 13-15,
21, 24-30
chapter 33 verses 1-4, 8-11

2 God meets a family of Fighters

The youngsters

Esau hated his brother Jacob because he had stolen the blessing that was supposed to be his. So he said to himself, “Just as soon as my father dies, I’ll kill Jacob.”

When their mother Rebekah found out what Esau planned to do, she sent for Jacob and told him, “Son, your brother Esau is just waiting for the time when he can kill you. Now listen carefully and do what I say. Go to the home of my brother Laban in Haran and stay with him for a while. When Esau stops being angry and forgets what you have done to him, I’ll send for you to come home.”



The runaway

Jacob left his home in Beersheba and started out for Haran.

At sunset he stopped for the night and went to sleep, resting his head on a large rock. 12 In a dream he saw a ladder that reached from earth to heaven, and God’s angels were going up and down on it.

The LORD was standing beside the ladder and said:

“I am the LORD God who was worshiped by Abraham and Isaac. Wherever you go, I will watch over you, then later I will bring you back to this land. I won’t leave you—I promise.”

Jacob woke up suddenly and thought, “The LORD is in this place, and I didn’t even know it.”

Twenty years, four wives and over a dozen children later...Jacob decides to go home and face his brother.

Jacob sent messengers on ahead to Esau, who lived in the land of Seir, also known as Edom. Jacob told them to say to Esau, “Master, I am your servant! I have lived with Uncle Laban all this time, and now I own cattle, donkeys, and sheep, as well as many slaves. Master, I am sending these messengers in the hope that you will be kind to me.”

When the messengers returned, they told Jacob, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is heading this way with four hundred men.”

Jacob was so frightened that he divided his people, sheep, cattle, and camels into two groups. 8 He thought, “If Esau attacks one group, perhaps the other can escape.”

After Jacob had spent the night there, he chose some animals as gifts for Esau: dozens of goats, sheep, camels with their young, cows and bulls, and donkeys.

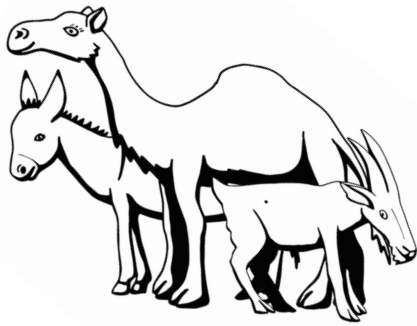
Jacob hoped the gifts would make Esau friendly, so Esau would be glad to see him when they met. Jacob’s men took the gifts on ahead of him, but Jacob spent the night in camp alone. A man came and fought with Jacob until just before daybreak. When the man saw that he could not win, he struck Jacob on the hip and threw it out of joint. They kept on wrestling until the man said, “Let go of me! It’s almost daylight.” “You can’t go until you bless me,” Jacob replied. Then he asked, “What is your name?”

“Jacob,” he answered.

Then he said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob. You have been able to wrestle with God and with humans. That’s why your name will be Israel – meaning God-wrestler.”

Jacob said, “Now tell me your name.”

“Why do you ask my name?” he asked. And he blessed Jacob.



Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, and I am still alive." So he named the place Peniel.

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Later that day Jacob met Esau coming with his four hundred men. So Jacob had his children walk with their mothers. Jacob himself walked in front of them all, bowing his face to the ground seven times as he came near his brother. But Esau ran toward Jacob and hugged and kissed him. Then the two brothers started crying.

Esau asked Jacob, "What did you mean by these herds of animals I met along the road?" Jacob answered, "I sent them so that you would be friendly to me."

"But, brother, I already have plenty," Esau replied. "Keep them for yourself."

"No!" Jacob said. "Please accept these gifts as a sign of your friendship for me. When you welcomed me and I saw your face, it was like seeing the face of God. Please accept these gifts I brought to you. God has been good to me, and I have everything I need."

Jacob kept insisting until Esau accepted the gifts.

Bonus Story!

Jesus was born into the people of Israel, the culture that traces its ancestry back to the Jacob in Genesis who is renamed 'Israel' – wrestler!

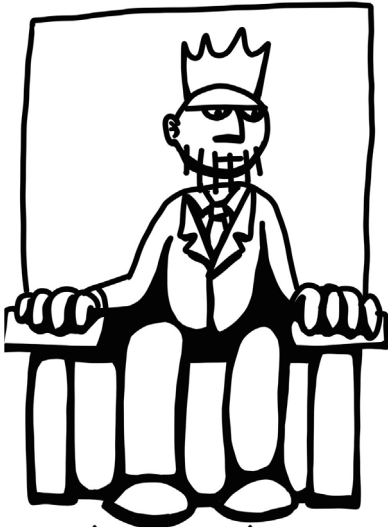
It seems that even after thousands of years these people still needed stories about how fighting brothers can forgive each other and put things right. Jesus told a story to remind us all that we have a great reason to forgive.

Peter came up to the Lord and asked, "How many times should I forgive a brother who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?"

Jesus answered:

Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times! This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like:

One day a king decided to call in his officials and ask them to give an account of what they owed him. As he was doing this, one official was brought in who owed him fifty million silver coins. But he didn't have any money to pay what he owed. The king ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all he owned, in order to pay the debt.



The official got down on his knees and began begging, "Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!" The king felt sorry for him and let him go free. He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money.

As the official was leaving, he happened to meet another official, who owed him a hundred silver coins. So he grabbed the man by the throat. He started choking him and said, "Pay me what you owe!"

The man got down on his knees and began begging, "Have pity on me, and I will pay you back." But the first official refused to have pity. Instead, he went and had the other official put in jail until he could pay what he owed.

When some other officials found out what had happened, they felt sorry for the man who had been put in jail. Then they told the king what had happened. The king called the first official back in and said, "You're an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?" The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed. That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all

your heart. (from Matthew 18: