



CONFRONTING THE PAST

December 27, 2009

A BIBLICAL STUDY of Genesis 32-33



STRONG'S HEBREW/GREEK DEFINITIONS



- 1 ANGELS of God (H4397) "Malik" - to dispatch as a messenger, specifically an angel
- 2 CREATURE (G2937) "Ktisis" - original formation; creation, ordinance.



THE PAST

Facing the past is a very uncomfortable experience. After realizing that you are no longer in bondage to it, you can face the past with the peace of a new creature in Christ. The only way Jacob could have asked for forgiveness from Esau would be if he were a changed person. No excuses, no pride...just recognition that he was "not worthy of the least of all God's mercies and of all the truth" showed him. Can you face your past?

TEXT OF THE WEEK

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

-2 Cor. 5:17

"I Am Not Worthy of the Least of All Thy Mercies"

Have you ever felt that you've left your past behind only to find someday you are forced to turn around and face that someone or something in it? The past is a great recognition of the place and the person you used to be *before* you became a new creature in Christ. It is also an ugly reminder of the stones left unturned, the forgiveness that was never granted to another... or to yourself. This study will recognize the past that Jacob had to face and how the new creature in him reacted to it.

JACOB'S LIFE AFTER HE LEFT

1. What kind of environment did Jacob leave? (Gen. 27:41-45). How long would Jacob actually stay in Haran? (see handout) Is the length of time significant?
2. Summarize what happened to Jacob during the time he was gone:
 - A. "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not" - (Gen. 28:10-22) - The Awareness
 - B. "...the man (Jacob) increased exceedingly" - (Gen. 30:26,30,43) - The Blessing
 - C. "Return to the land of thy fathers" - (Gen. 31:3) - The Urging

FACING THE PAST (ESAU)

3. Who came to meet Jacob after his final departure from Laban? Gen. 32:1-2
 - Why was Jacob so distressed? 31:3-8
4. Notice Jacob's response as he faced his great fear (Gen. 32:9-12). What did Jacob recognize about himself? vs. 10 Why is this a significant recognition?
 - COMPARE Ezekiel 36:24-32. How do these aspects compare to you facing your past?
5. What arrangements did Jacob make to meet Esau? 32:13-23
 - A. Notice the specifics of the event (Gen. 32:24-30) that took place directly *before* Jacob was allowed to face his past:
 - 1) Alone: "And Jacob was left alone" (Gen. 32:24); Dan. 10:8,17
 - 2) Broken: "the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint" (Gen. 32:25); Ps. 51:17; 34:17-22
 - 3) Changed: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob" (Gen. 32:28); 2 Cor. 5:17
 - B. Recall the significance of these steps as you have faced your past.
 - C. Does each child of God have to become broken before he can become saved? Or does this change only take place in the hearts of the "wild" ones?

THE NEW CREATURE

6. Read about the reunion between Jacob and Esau (Gen. 33:1-16). Is this only made possible through the forgiving hearts of the brothers, or by the changed hearts granted by the grace of God? Did Jacob "choose" to forgive or did the change in him cause him to forgive? (Matt 6:15; Eph. 4:30-32)
 - If God has changed you into a new creature in Christ, you **cannot, not be changed** (II Cor. 5:17). DISCUSS: Is it possible for you to return to the "old man"?
 - When we look at our past, does it seem that we need to either forgive someone or to forgive ourselves? Is forgiveness an option? Col. 3:12-14