



Parasha Vayishlach

December 5, 2020

Genesis 32:3-36:43

Hosea 11:7-12:12; Obadiah 1:1-21

Hebrews 11:8-16; 21

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha!* We do have *shalom*. Even though the world is in turmoil around us, we can have *shalom*. And, the world is in turmoil. Here in our nation, we have at least two major concerns right now, the possible negative actions of the incoming government against our Republic and the coronavirus. And, there are also world concerns. Israel has their own governmental problems along with increasing anti-semitism and pressure from the left in our country. Iran is trying to build a nuclear bomb, North Korea has one and China is flexing its military muscles. If that is not enough, a group called the World Economic Forum and their spokesman, Prince Charles, is planning what they call the “Great Reset.” Here is a quote from their website: “To achieve a better outcome, the world must act jointly and swiftly to revamp all aspects of our societies and economies, from education to social contracts and working conditions. Every country, from the United States to China, must participate, and every industry, from oil and gas to tech, must be transformed. In short, we need a “Great Reset” of capitalism.” What is a great reset of capitalism? It certainly sounds like something that we don’t want. If we were not followers of Yeshua, all these things would be enough to create fear. But, we have a spirit of faith, not fear. *Sha’ul* said to Timothy: 7 “*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity but of power and love and self-discipline*” (1Timothy 1:7 TLV). The Greek word *deilia* (di-lee'-ah) means cowardice or timidity. Because we have the Spirit of G-d living in us, we face these national and world problems without being afraid. Especially in these last few months, we have moved in unity with Yeshua’s greater body through prayer and fasting. We discipline ourselves to do what is necessary and we keep uppermost in our prayers that we love our neighbor as ourselves. We must also be witnesses to our families, friends and acquaintances. In all this confusion, we have *shalom*, a *shalom* which comes from above! It comes through faith, trusting in ADONAI and in Messiah Yeshua.

Our *parasha* today is *Vayishlach* meaning “he sent.” It begins with Jacob being fearful of meeting his brother Esau. Because he had sought to kill him some twenty-one years earlier before he went to Haran, Jacob now fears for his life and for his family. He separated his caravan into two groups and sent one ahead to meet Esau with gifts. The second, the one with his wives, he also sent across the Jabbok River. But, he spent the night alone on the east bank of the river. *Torah* tells us that “a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.” When the man couldn’t overcome him, He struck Jacob in his hip and dislocated it from its socket. When the sun had come up, the man said: “Let me go,” but Jacob said not unless you bless me. He asked Jacob his name and he replied, Jacob. The man then said: “Your name will no longer be Jacob because you have wrestled with both God and men and you have overcome.” Jacob asked the man to tell him his name, but the man said “Why are you

asking my name and then He blessed him.” Jacob named the place *Peniel*, for he said: “I have seen G-d face to face and lived.”

Who was the “man” who wrestled with Jacob? *Torah* says that it was *Elohim*, G-d. It couldn't have been ADONAI himself, because Jacob was able to wrestle him to a draw. Whomever it was, it is obvious that He limited his supernatural powers to those equal to a man. Neither could overcome the other. There is the possibility that the “man” was a *malach*, an angel, using the authority of ADONAI's name. They are sometimes called “the sons of G-d.” We don't know who it was, but in our *haftarah* reading today, the Prophet *Hoshea* said he was an angel. And, by wrestling to a draw, Jacob actually won. When Jacob said he would not let him go unless he blessed him, the “man” said: 29 ..., “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but rather Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men, and you have overcome” (Genesis 32:29b TLV). The fact that *Ya'acov's* name was changed to *Yisra'el* is important. There are several possible definitions for this word, “triumphant with G-d” or “wrestles with G-d.” Jacob wrestled with G-d, or at least with His representative, and won. His name still proclaims that today and is proclaimed over the restored nation that bears his name. Jacob was somehow equal in strength to the “man” or the man was caused to match his strength to Jacob's. But, as Rabbi Herb pointed out last *Shabbat*, Jacob was a very strong man. The well in field where he met Rachel had a very heavy stone covering it and Scripture says that “they,” referring to the other shepherds, would remove it. But, Jacob removed it by himself.

Did Jacob have the faith of his grandfather Abraham? Scripture doesn't tell us that in so many words. In fact, the word “faith” is used in connection with Jacob only one time in all of the Bible; and it's not in *Torah*. But, it's obvious that he had faith. It was by faith that he called for the “man” to bless him. It was by faith that he sent his sons to Egypt to buy food for his family. But, the only place where faith is mentioned is in our *Ketuvim Shli'chim* reading for today: 21 “By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and he bowed in worship while leaning on the top of his staff” (Hebrews 11:21 TLV). Not only did Jacob bless *Ephrayim* and *Mana'she*, but he prophesied about each one's future in Genesis 48. We spoke about that a few weeks ago. And, he also prophesied about the future of each of his twelve sons in Genesis 49. To do that, he had to have been a man of faith. Overall, it is obvious that Jacob lived a life of faith as he fulfilled ADONAI's calling on his life and lived to a ripe old age. Maybe he didn't have the faith of his grandfather Abraham, but he did have the honor of being named in Hebrews chapter 11, what we know as the “hall of faith.”

We all have faith, but do we have enough for these last days? Is it enough to sustain us in a increasingly frightening world? As you know, I believe that we are in the last days. The last days were prophesied to begin at a certain time and then began on June 9, 1967, the day that Israel recaptured Jerusalem. That day also fulfilled Yeshua's prophecy: 24 “They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 22:24 TLV). Daniel Bruce unlocked the words of Daniel 8, verses 13 and 14 and the beginning of the last days was identified. It was the recapture of Jerusalem which initiated the “last days.” Here is how Bruce determined it. In Daniel 12:4, the angel told Daniel to seal up the book until the time of the end. And, it had been sealed since Daniel's time until recently when Bruce found the key to unseal it. The key to unlocking the time of the end is found in Daniel 8:14. Dan Bruce discovered how to count the 2300 evenings and mornings described in that verse and found that they ended exactly on June 9, 1967, an exact hit on that day. And, we are

told in Daniel that what was done by the Israeli army “vindicated the sanctuary.” (*Daniel Unsealed*. Daniel Bruce, Prophecy Society of Atlanta). The “last days” began some fifty-three years ago, but how far we are into them, no one knows. But, regardless of how many years remain before Yeshua returns, we, as His body are now in one of the most important periods of history. We are the generation called upon to be His witnesses to the world.

I am now putting on my “exhorter” *kippah*. I am exhorting us all. I need to be exhorted too. The times are short and we all must be about our Father’s business. We can make a *midrash*, a parallel commentary based on a Scripture, from the account of Jacob wrestling with G-d. Just as Jacob was called, each of us is called to serve ADONAI. In our message several weeks ago about Jacob receiving the birthright, we likened our trusting and salvation in Yeshua to our spiritual birthright. Each of us has that birthright. We were born again. But, as we saw with Jacob, a birthright brings responsibilities. And, whether we have ever thought about it before, each one of us has also wrestled with G-d. Our spiritual responsibilities are very clearly laid out in the Scriptures and the *Ruach* has clearly spoken to us about them. But, have we responded and accepted our full calling from Yeshua? This is where our situation is like Jacob’s. Each of us has wrestled with G-d about what He has called us to do. Many times we have put our will before His. If we haven’t fully embraced the duties of our birthright, we need to wrestle Him again now. Wrestle with G-d again and see who wins. He will allow you to win, but it’s much better if you submit and He wins. If we win the spiritual wrestling match, we essentially tell ADONAI that our will takes precedence over His. We must honor our birthright and accept our spiritual responsibilities.

We’ve all prayed for revival. We all want revival. But, are we willing to do what it takes to bring revival? Rather than waiting for revival to happen somewhere else, we must be willing to bring revival here. It can happen right here. But, what will it take? It will take the full commitment of each of us. I don’t want to offend by suggesting that we are not doing enough, but I am willing to take the chance because of the times and the stakes at hand. Every one of us can do more.

We here at *Beit Shalom* believe that *Torah* is for us today. But, are we being obedient to do what we know we should? We all know what we are to eat! We all know the day on which we are to rest and worship ADONAI! But, knowing is not always doing. We, the disciples, cannot decide which *mitzvot* we want to follow. We are to follow them all. This word is not for the rest of Yeshua’s body, just for *Beit Shalom*. What the others do is between them and ADONAI. But, for us, *Torah* is not gray. It’s black and white. We know what we are to do. For revival to come, we must commit ourselves to Yeshua 100%. *Ya’acov* said: 17 “So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself” (James 2:17 TLV). Loving our neighbor is works. Praying for our neighbor and for our nation is works. And, we’re doing that! But, assembling ourselves before ADONAI on *Shabbat* is also works. It is not our right as disciples to decide what and when we wish to obey ADONAI? And, this is not about a works righteousness. Our salvation comes by faith through grace and that only. We are not earning our salvation by being obedient. Once we became Yeshua’s *talmidim*, His disciples, He expected more of us; especially because of what we know. We know more! We are to be obedient to His commands and faithful to follow Him to the best of our ability. We have been commanded to attend a holy convocation before ADONAI each *Shabbat* and each of us should be here at service every time the doors open; and be on time! It’s important that we are all here together calling upon ADONAI. If liturgy is not your cup of tea, come on time anyway so that we can all call upon ADONAI in prayer together so that we may be spiritually unified in our worship.

Even followers of Yeshua sin. Not one of us is without sin. Yochanan, John, said: 4 *“Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness—indeed, sin is lawlessness”* (1John 3:4 TLV). Sin is Lawlessness, the violation of ADONAI’s laws. Even our governmentally derived laws are G-d’s laws because they are based on the laws He has laid out for us. Lawlessness is *Torahlessness*. If we believe *Torah* is for us and we don’t follow *Torah*, we are committing sin. John also said this: 8 *“If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1John 1:8-9 TLV). This is the good news. We can repent and be forgiven. Yeshua is waiting with open arms for us to run to Him for purification from our unrighteousness. I am exhorting you, my *mishpacha*, because we have a calling to fulfill.

As He sat on the Mount of Olives, Yeshua said: 29 *“But immediately after the trouble of those days, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken”* (Matthew 24:29 TLV). We are in the trouble of those days right now, the time of the end. How much longer they will last we don’t know. But, there will come a day when the time of trouble on this earth will end. And, it will also end for those who don’t know Yeshua, those who have the spirit of the anti-messiah. While we don’t believe that there will be a physical antichrist, the spirit of antichrist is already in the world. 3.. *“but every spirit that does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God. This is the spirit of the anti-messiah, which you have heard is coming and now is already in the world”* (1John 4:3 TLV). We are praying for those who are deceived and following the ways of the world that they might be saved. As Yeshua’s committed followers, there is a great difference between us and them. They are attempting to tear down while we are trying to build up. In the end, our goal is for these words to apply to us: 11 *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even in the face of death”* (Revelation 12:11 TLV). The “him” spoken of is the great dragon, the ancient serpent, *Hasatan*. He has deceived the world, but we are not of the world. For our faithfulness in this struggle, a wonderful reward awaits us. It is to spend eternity in the earthly kingdom of Messiah Yeshua, the Son of G-d. For us, it will be entering the heavenly promised land, the one which Rabbi Herb spoke about in Hebrews 11 during the *Torah* service, the heavenly city. It will be a time with no more hate, no more anger and no more war. It will be a time to fully experience the love of ADONAI. After He spoke about the trouble of those days, Yeshua’s next words were this: 30 *“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory. 31 He will send out His angels with a great shofar, and they will gather together His chosen from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Matthew 24:30-31TLV). That’s what we’re waiting and longing for. Am I being melodramatic? I don’t believe so. For hundreds of years, followers of Yeshua have waited for the coming of these days. They are here now and we are equal to the task which has been given to us! Wrestle with G-d again and this time, let Him win! *Shabbat shalom!*