



Parasha Vayishlach

December 10, 2022

Torah: Genesis 32:3-36:43
Haftarah: Hosea 11:7-12:12; Obadiah 1:1-21
Ketuvim Shlichim: Revelation 7:1-12

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *parasha* this week, *Vayishlach*, continues with the interaction of the twins Jacob and Esau. Their encounters after reaching adulthood include conflict and stress. At one point, Esau even planned to kill Jacob. This sort of thing happens all too frequently in our modern families. In modern society our families many times are spread across our huge nation and the physical separation resulting can be the beginning of spiritual and emotional separation. The element of money is sometimes added in when a parent dies and the estate is to be divided and siblings can easily become enemies. Abby, in “Dear Abby,” frequently writes about letters from a sibling who tells that he or she has broken off all relationship with a sibling or a parent. This sort of thing is commonplace today. This is essentially what happened with Jacob and Esau. They lived widely separated and as far as we know, their only contact after separating was to bury their father Isaac.

Now back in Canaan from Haran, Jacob is preparing to meet his brother Esau and is afraid. But before they met, Jacob had a very unusual night. *25 So Jacob remained all by himself. Then a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. 26 When He saw that He had not overcome him, He struck the socket of his hip, so He dislocated the socket of Jacob’s hip when He wrestled with him. 27 Then He said, “Let Me go, for the dawn has broken.” But he said, “I won’t let You go unless You bless me.” 28 Then He said to him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he said. 29 Then He said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but rather Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men, and you have overcome.” 30 Then Jacob asked and said, “Please tell me Your name.” But He said, “What’s this—you are asking My name?” Then He blessed him there. 31 So Jacob named the place Peniel, “for I’ve seen God face to face, and my life has been spared.”* (Genesis 32:25-31 TLV).

What do we know from reading these six verses? 1. Jacob wrestled with a man until the sun came up. Man is translated from the Hebrew *ish*,

אִישׁ, which itself comes from the Hebrew *enosh*, אִנוּשׁ, meaning: man or mankind. 2. For some reason, the man did not overcome Jacob, so he wounded him in his hip. The text leads us to believe that Jacob was equal to him in strength. 3. Jacob would not let him go unless the man blessed him. 4. The man asked Jacob his name and then told him that his name would no longer be Jacob, but Israel because he had struggled with God and men and overcome. Israel, *Yisra'el*, יִשְׂרָאֵל, is defined here by Strong's as "strives with God." Also suggested is "wrestles with God. As mentioned in our message last week when Yeshua called Nathanael "a true Israelite," it was suggested that it may have meant, "a man seeing G-d." There are also other suggestions for the meaning of Israel. Prince of G-d is another, a derived meaning. It comes from *sar*, prince, and the root *sarah*, meaning to rule. The word G-d is translated from אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*. 5. The man blessed him. 6. Jacob said that he had seen G-d אֶל־פָּנִים וּפָנִים, *panim el panim*, face to face, and his life was spared.

Before we draw any conclusions, it is important that we think about our approach :
 10 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. Upon arrival, they made their way to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, because they received the message with goodwill, searching the Scriptures each day to see whether these things were true. (Acts 17:10-11 TLV). This is to suggest that our approach to anything which we read or hear should be like that of the Jews in this synagogue. We should search the Scriptures. Our answers are there. in the Scriptures, and that is the approach that we should take. The written Word is our only authority. But, that doesn't mean that we can answer all our questions by studying the Scriptures. Some things are left unexplained. There are mysteries which we will not understand until Yeshua's kingdom is on the earth and we shouldn't make assumptions based on circumstantial evidence. When we read about Jacob's wrestling with "a man," we are left with questions that we can't answer. There are several why's. From what we read, Jacob wrestled with someone who looked like a man, but was he? He was certainly not a mortal man. Many believe that this man was an angel, a *malakh*, a messenger of G-d. That is how I understand it. But, why?

Here is some background on *malakhim*, angels. In Genesis 6:2, there is reference to individuals who married the daughters of men and produced giants. They are called sons of G-d, בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, *benei haElohim*. These are angels, *malakhim*, possibly fallen *malakhim* who were thrown out of heaven with *HaSatan*. We find the same term in the Book of Job (1:6, 2:1, 38:7) referring to ordinary angels. The great probability is that this individual was an

angel, a *malakh*, a messenger, sent by ADONAI to do this job. He had the authority to bless Jacob and to change his name. We shouldn't go any further with supposition. Being Berean also means that we do not inflate circumstances beyond what the words can support.

The breakup of Abraham's family which was caused by the separation of these two brothers has worsened through the centuries to the point that many of their descendants are now enemies. Not that Jacob's Jewish descendants want it to be so. They want to live in peace and in most cases seek to do good to their distant cousins the Arabs. They frequently save the lives of even their attackers, those who sought to kill them. How did these distant cousins become enemies? Our *parasha* gives us some good clues as to how the descendants of Abraham's other children became the enemies of Jacob's children. It began with Esau, Isaac's own son. He rebelled against his father by marrying wives that he objected to. (Genesis 26:8-9). Genesis 36 tells us that in addition to taking wives from the Hittites and Hivites, Esau also married the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son through Hagar, Sarah's servant girl. Esau separated himself from his family. Genesis 36:6 says: *6 Now Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters and all the people of his household, as well as his livestock, all his cattle, and all his possessions that he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to a land away from his brother Jacob.* (Genesis 36:6 TLV). The reason given for leaving Canaan is that they had too many flocks and herds and the land of Canaan could not support them. But, *Torah* tells us that there was more to it than that. There was some animosity. When Isaac died, the twin brothers buried him in *Hevron*. That was the last peaceful contact reported in the Scriptures. Esau moved to Mount Seir, a place hundreds of miles away and the physical separation of distance began the process of spiritual separation which ultimately ended in their descendants becoming enemies. Esau's grandson, Amalek, carried the hatred so much that his descendants attacked Israel as they came out of Egypt. And, the Amalekites continued to be a thorn in the side of Israel through the years. The last Amalekite that we read about was Haman, who tried to exterminate the Jews living in Media-Persia about 1200 years after the time of Jacob and Esau.

There is a present conflict today between some of the descendants of these two brothers. Why is that true? Today's immediate enemy of Israel is some people from a group of peoples composed of a mixture of the children of Lot's sons Moab and Ben-Ammi, the children of Abraham's son Ishmael, Abraham's children with his second wife Keturah, the children of Isaac's son Esau, and the inhabitants of Arabia who were the Bedouins and other

desert tribes. Also enemies are some from Iran, the descendants of the ancient Persians. In that case, it is mostly the government which is the enemy while many of the people are kindly disposed to Israel. Iran supposedly has the fastest growing churches, underground churches. The earliest enemy of Israel was the descendants of Esau's grandson Amalek, the Amalekites. The Amalekites attacked Israel soon after they escaped from Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. We can only speculate as to why, but one very good possibility is that it was likely anger toward Jacob because they felt that Esau was the rightful descendant of Abraham and Isaac. Another real possibility is jealousy.

The ancient rabbis called this type of jealousy "the evil eye." One who has an evil eye looks askance at others. Rather than being happy with others' good fortune and accomplishments, he begrudges them what is theirs. This is something which we as followers of Yeshua can also succumb to if we are not careful. This type of person spends his time wishing he were someone else, that he had the others talents, success, popularity, or prestige. And many times a person who wishes he were someone else will fail to live up to his own talents. I would suggest to you that the radical Muslim enemies of Israel are victims of "the evil eye," a people which have allowed their jealousy and anger to lead to an even stronger emotion.

That stronger emotion is the hatred of others. One who hates others is focused on the other person rather than himself. Rather than focusing on his own abilities and living his own life, he eats himself up with his dislike of others. He's more interested in his foe's failure than his own success and his hatred is of a more destructive nature. It's very difficult to understand the rationale behind this kind of hatred and from where it comes. *Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki*, tells us that hatred of others is what the ancient rabbis called *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred. They hate others for no real reason. Because they are different, they hate them. They find fault in every action they make. And the ancient Jews were not without sin in this area. The *Talmud* tells us that the destruction of the Second Temple occurred because the Jews hated each other without reason, that is *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred between the factions of the Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots and the other splinter groups of that day. Isn't that a picture of our nation today?

When we look at the events perpetrated by the Arab extremists of Islam today, we see hatred in their writings and in their chants and in their willingness to destroy themselves if they can kill their enemies, particularly the Jews. Suicide bombers have been emboldened

by the supposed promise of seventy-two virgins awaiting them in Paradise. Is their hatred an outgrowth of a great jealousy? If we examine the life and teachings of Mohammed we certainly have a suspicion of jealousy. The G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was known throughout the Middle East since 1,800 years BCE and suddenly through Mohammed became the god of Abraham and Ishmael 2,400 years later in the year 610 CE. That jealousy has turned into a hatred which continues today, a hatred which is directed mainly against Christians and Jews. In the Middle East, Africa and Asia, followers of the Bible are being killed, driven from their land or forced to renounce their faith at an unprecedented pace. In most cases, this persecution is being perpetrated by radical followers of Islam, those who follow the Koran's command for *jihad*. The radical Islamists have no tolerance for those who do not practice Islam.

In the Book of Daniel, as the conclusion of the book was reached, the Angel Gabriel said to Daniel: *4 But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will run back and forth and knowledge will increase.* (Daniel 12:4 TLV). The words, "the time of the end," have always been there, but their meaning has been sealed up to us until recently. The author of the book, *Daniel Unsealed*, has been shown its meaning and reveals that there is an exact date for the time of the end, that is, "the beginning" of the time of the end. It is June 7, 1967, the day that Israel recaptured Jerusalem from the Gentiles. The fact that we are now becoming able to understand these things points to our being in "the time of the end." Pew Research recently conducted a survey which shows that 39% of the general U.S. population believes we are in the last days. 62% of Evangelicals believe it is the last days. There was no category for Messianic Judaism, but we should approach 100%. But many followers of Yeshua are not able to understand some of these things because they have a distorted understanding of the end times. Many stand fast in the hope that they will be raptured out of this earth and will not have to face torment or death. This is a false hope by some of Yeshua's followers, who ignore the millions of Christian deaths through murder in the rest of the world today. According to David Barrett and Todd Johnson in *World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200*, the total number of Christians martyred by Islam is 9 million. Additionally, a rough estimate by Raphael Moore in *History of Asia Minor* is that another 50 million died in wars by jihad. When you count the million African Christians killed in the 20th century the total killed by Islam is 60 million. What is the most persecuted religion in the world. Any ideas? Open Doors, USA confirms that Christianity is the most

persecuted religion in the world and gives details as to where Christians are being persecuted around the world. The link for the full article is found at the end of this message. Please read it. Is it reasonable to think that G-d will rapture out American Christians before tribulation comes here when 60 million Christians have already been killed for their faith? More importantly, is this a Scriptural belief? Wake up American Christians! Face reality! Even though we don't know what life will bring, we must remain faithful to the commitment we made to Yeshua. What we are seeing in our own nation today makes it likely that we, as followers of Yeshua, may soon face persecution here in our own nation.

We do not serve the god of Abraham and Ishmael. We serve the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the G-d whose very nature, love, is the antithesis of Mohammed's god. The Scriptures have not changed. Abraham did not take Ishmael to Mount Moriah for sacrifice. He took his son Isaac. In our *parasha* today, after Jacob left Shechem and went to *Beit El* as ADONAI had directed him, He spoke to him: *10 ...: Your name was Jacob. No longer will your name be Jacob, for your name will be Israel. So He named him Israel. 11 God also said to him: I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and an assembly of nations will come from you. From your loins will come forth kings. 12 The land that I gave to Abraham and to Isaac I give it to you, and to your seed after you I will give the land* (Genesis 35:10b-12 TLV). Torah says that it was G-d, *Elohim*, who now spoke to Jacob, for *Elohim*, G-d, is ADONAI. Years later, He spoke to Moses and said: *3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, as El Shaddai. Yet by My Name, Adonai, I did not make Myself known to them.* (Exodus 6:3 TLV). It was ADONAI who now confirmed Jacob's name change. It was ADONAI who now confirmed Jacob's name change. But, the man with whom he wrestled earlier was not ADONAI, but an angel, a *malakh*, who had ADONAI's authority to change Jacob's name. If we are Berean, we may find the answer elsewhere. Our *haftarah*, speaking of Jacob, says: *4 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel, and in his vigor he strove with God. 5 Yes, he wrestled with the angel and won; he wept and sought his favor.* (Hosea 12:4-5 TLV). The angel gave Jacob advance notice of what was to happen, but now, ADONAI now officially changed Jacob's name. He changed it from Jacob meaning "supplanter," the one who grasped his brother's heel, to Israel meaning "struggles with G-d," one who did not let go until he received a blessing from G-d. And, ADONAI now gives the newly named Israel the covenant that He gave to Abraham: *11 God also said to him: I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and an assembly of nations will come from you. 12 The land that I gave to*

Abraham and to Isaac I give it to you, and to your seed after you I will give the land (Genesis 35:11-12 TLV). What is called an assembly of nations in these verses is the Commonwealth of Israel. In the *Olam Habah*, the world to come, the commonwealth will be Israel joined by the righteous nations of the earth, including many which are currently Islamic. And Abraham's descendants from Isaac and Jacob will inherit the land ADONAI promised them.

Led by *HaSatan*, radical Islam is currently causing much destruction and death, but they will succumb to God's love and His power. Even though they are our enemies now, Scripture tells us that in the end certain nations will return to ADONAI. Isaiah prophesied: *23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrians will come to Egypt, and the Egyptians to Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. 24 In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria a blessing in the midst of the earth. 25 For Adonai-Tzvaot has blessed, saying: Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance.* (Isaiah 19:23-25 TLV). Assyria is modern Syria and part of Iraq. What we need to understand today is that many who now profess to be Muslims and other religions will renounce their false beliefs and turn to the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and His Son Yeshua.

Rather than succumb to *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred against those who are now our enemies, we must love our enemies. Yeshua said: *44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven* (Matthew 5:44-45 TLV). Those who appear to be against us now are our neighbors and Yeshua has also told us that loving our neighbor is the second greatest commandment. We are to pray for them. All of the "ism's" of the world are false religions. And, many are motivated by hate against Christians and Jews. We are seeing more Christian persecution today from Hindus and Buddhists. But, they will be overcome by love, the supernatural love of God which He will pour out.

That love must first begin to grow in the household of faith. We must first love our fellow followers of Yeshua and allow His Spirit to heal the division which is in Yeshua's body now. This process begins with the individual follower of Yeshua. Each of us has been filled with the *Ruach HaKodesh* and the power of the Spirit is potentially ours. Just before He rose to the Father, Yeshua answered a question: *6 So when they gathered together, they asked Him, Lord, are You restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time? 7 He said to them, It is not your*

place to know the times or seasons which the Father has placed under His own control. 8 But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:6-8). We can have that power now. When Yeshua returns, the kingdom will have been restored to Israel. We are in preparation for that now. We have received His *Ruach HaKodesh* and we now have that power to be His witnesses here in “the end of the earth.” As Yeshua told us, we are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:11). Our citizenship is in Heaven. Those whom we now see as our enemies will one day be our friends because with God, nothing is impossible. We will see Syria, Iraq and Egypt become the friends of Israel, a threesome which ADONAI has blessed. This coming time is what we await and for what we pray: Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ADONAI blessed Jacob and his descendants and He will also bless us. He has already prepared a blessing for us, but it’s conditional. ADONAI said to Abraham: 3 *“My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”* (Genesis 12:3 TLV). There are curses for those who hate Israel and the Jews today. But, there’s a double blessing here for us. We will be blessed if we bless Abraham’s children, the Jews, and also receive from Abraham’s descendant, Yeshua, the blessing of salvation. *Shabbat shalom!*

Article: Christianity Is The World’s Most Persecuted Religion Confirms New Report

<https://www.cato.org/commentary/christianity-worlds-most-persecuted-religion-confirms-new-report#:~:text=The%20group%20Open%20Doors%20USA,another%204%2C000%2Dplus%20were%20kidnapped>