



Parasha Vayishlach

December 6, 2025

Torah: Genesis 32:4-36:43

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

Ketuvim Shlichim: Revelation 7:1-12

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Parasha Vayishlach includes another interaction between the twins, Jacob and Esau, and their encounters continue to involve conflict and tension. In fact, Esau's intention to kill Jacob was the reason for his being sent to live with Laban. Interestingly, his anger was over Jacob stealing his father, Isaac's, blessing, not the birthright. They had lived apart for the twenty years Jacob was away with Laban, and as far as we know, their only contact after separating upon Jacob's return was to bury their father, Isaac.

But now, Jacob, having just returned to Canaan from Haran, is preparing to meet his brother, Esau, and is afraid of what he might do. But the night before they met, Jacob had an especially strange 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).

There's a lot of information to digest in these six verses. What do we know? 1. Jacob wrestled with a man until the sun came up. "Man" is **וְאֵשׁ** ish, which comes from **וְנַחַשׁ** enosh, meaning: man or mankind. 2. For some reason, the man did not overcome Jacob. The man wounded Jacob in his hip, but the text suggests that Jacob was as strong as he was. 3. Jacob would not let him go unless the man blessed him. 4. The man asked Jacob his name

and then said his name would no longer be **יעקב Ya'acov**, Jacob, but **ישראל Yisra'el**, Israel, because he had struggled with **אלֹהִים Elohim**, G-d, and men and overcome. The word *Yisra'el* is defined in this verse by Strong's Concordance as "strives with God," and "Wrestles with God" is also a suggestion. In our *parasha* last week, Yeshua called Nathanael "a true Israelite," which is often taken to mean "a man seeing G-d," and there are other suggestions for the meaning of Israel. "Prince of G-d" is a derived meaning that comes from *sar*, "prince," and the root *sarah*, meaning "to rule," with the word G-d translated from *Elohim*. 5. The man blessed him. 6. Jacob said that he had seen G-d פָנִים אֶל-פָנִים *panim el panim*, face to face, and his life was spared.

Before drawing any conclusions, we should first examine other evidence in the Scriptures. As we have emphasized numerous times, the written Word is our sole authority, but that doesn't mean we can answer all our questions from the Scriptures. Some things remain unexplained, mysteries we won't understand until Yeshua's kingdom is on 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 some questions that we can't answer. Scripture says that Jacob wrestled with someone identified as a man, but was he? Although he was identified as an *ish*, a man, he was definitely not a human man. Many people believe that this man was an angel, a *malakh*, a messenger of G-d, and that is how I interpret it.

Here's some background on *malakhim*, angels. In Genesis 6:2, there is a reference to those who married the daughters of men and fathered giants, and they are called sons of G-d, בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים *benei haElohim*. Scriptural evidence suggests they are *malakhim*, angels, possibly fallen angels expelled from heaven with *HaSatan*. There is some indirect evidence for this. Yeshua's brother *Yehudah* wrote: *6 And the angels—who did not keep their own position of authority but deserted their proper place—He has kept in everlasting shackles under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great Day.* (Jude 1:6 TLV). This suggests that some angels who had deserted were judged and placed in chains. Not all were, because others presently continue to serve *HaSatan* and plague mankind today. *Shimon Kefa* wrote: *4 For God did not spare angels when they sinned, but threw them into Sheol. He put them in chains of gloomy darkness, to be held until the judgment.* (2 Peter 2:4 TLV). This appears to be the same thing *Yehudah* wrote about, and while not direct references to the Sons of G-d in Genesis, these verses infer a connection. We also find the same term in the Book of Job, בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים *benei haElohim*, the Sons of G-d (1:6, 2:1, 38:7), in this case, referring to ordinary angels. The

likelihood is that the individual Jacob wrestled with was a *malakh*, an angel, a messenger sent by ADONAI to perform this task, who had His authority. This is what we know, and we shouldn't jump to conclusions or exaggerate circumstances beyond what the words imply.

The breakup of Abraham's family, caused by the separation of these two brothers, has worsened over the centuries to the point that many of their descendants are now enemies, but Jacob's Jewish descendants do not want it to be that way. 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* provides clues about how the descendants of Abraham's other children became enemies of Jacob's children.

It began with Esau, Isaac's son. He rebelled against his father by marrying wives he opposed, women from the Hittites and Hivites (Genesis 26:8-9). Genesis 36 tells us that Esau also married the daughter of his uncle Ishmael, Abraham's son through Hagar, Sarah's servant girl. And Esau also separated himself physically from his family. *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). His reason for leaving Canaan was that they had too many flocks and herds, and that the land could not support them. When Isaac died, the twin brothers buried him in *Hevron*, and that was the last contact reported in the Scriptures. But because they remained otherwise separated, animosity likely persisted. Esau moved to Mount Seir, a place hundreds of miles away, and the physical distance continued the process of spiritual separation that ultimately led to their descendants becoming enemies. Esau's grandson, Amalek, harbored such hatred that his descendants attacked Israel as they emerged from Egypt, and the Amalekites continued to be a thorn in the side of Israel through the years.

The current conflict Israel has is with some of the descendants of these two brothers, and it is apparent that some of the ancient hatred has continued. One enemy of Israel is people composed of a mixture of the children of Lot's grandsons *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. Another modern enemy is some from Iran, the descendants of the ancient

Persians who became Muslims. In Iran's case, it is primarily the government that is the enemy, while many of the people are kindly disposed to Israel, and many have become Christians. Iran is said to have the fastest-growing underground churches in a nation hostile to the Gospel. But the earliest enemy of Israel was the Amalekites, descendants of Esau's grandson Amalek. The Amalekites attacked Israel soon after they escaped from Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. We can only speculate, but the possibility is that it stemmed from anger toward Jacob, because they felt that Esau was the rightful descendant of Abraham and Isaac. Another possibility is jealousy. The last Amalekite that we read about in Scripture was Haman, who, because of his hatred, tried to exterminate the Jews living in Media-Persia some 1200 years after the time of Jacob and Esau. That same hatred exists in the Middle East today and has been exported to our own shores.

The ancient rabbis called this type of jealousy עין הרה Ayin Harah, "the evil eye," someone who looks askance at others. Instead of being glad for others' good fortune and achievements, he resents them for what they have. This is something that we, as followers of Yeshua, can also fall prey to if we're not careful. This kind of person spends his time wishing he were someone else, with their talents, success, popularity, or prestige. And often, a person who wishes they were someone else fails to live up to their own potential. Israel's Muslim enemies may be victims of "the evil eye," a people who have allowed their jealousy and anger to lead to an even stronger emotion.

This stronger emotion is the hatred of Jews. One who hates others is fixated on them rather than fulfilling his own potential. Instead of focusing on his own abilities and living his own life, he gnaws at himself over his dislike of others. He's more concerned with his enemy's failure than with his own success, and his hatred is more destructive in nature. Understanding the reasons behind this kind of hatred and its origins is very difficult. *Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki*, the man known as *Rashi*, wrote 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 and find fault in every action they take. The ancient Jews were not free from sin in this aspect. The *Talmud* says that the destruction of the Second Temple happened because the Jews hated each other for no reason, *sinat chinam*. It was groundless hatred among the factions of Israel, including the Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, and other splinter groups of that era. Doesn't that seem like a perfect picture of our nation, the United States of America, today?

When we analyze the actions of Arab extremists of Islam today, we see hatred reflected in their writings, their chants, and their willingness to destroy themselves if it means killing their enemies, especially the Jews. Suicide bombers are encouraged by the alleged promise of seventy-two virgins waiting for them in Paradise. Is their hatred also a result of intense jealousy? If we analyze the life and teachings of Mohammed, we can sense a hint of jealousy. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has been recognized throughout the Middle East since 1,800 BCE. But suddenly, through Mohammad, He became the God of Abraham and Ishmael 2,400 years later in 610 CE. That jealousy has escalated into hatred that persists today, primarily aimed at Christians and Jews. In the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, Bible followers are being abducted, murdered, forced to give up their faith, or expelled from their land. In most cases, this persecution is carried out by radical followers of Islam—those who follow the Koran's command for *jihad*, fighting Islam's perceived enemies. Radical Islamists have no tolerance for those who don't practice Islam, and their religion's progress in these areas has come through threats of death.

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 to us until recently. The author of the book, *Daniel Unsealed*, has shown its meaning and reveals that there is an exact date for “the beginning” of the time of the end, June 7, 1967, the day that Israel recaptured Jerusalem from the Gentiles, who happened to be Muslims. Read the book to see how Daniel Bruce determined it to the day, and the fact that we are now able to understand these things indicates that we are in “the time of the end.” In 2022, Pew Research conducted a survey, the latest available, showing that 39% of the general U.S. population believes we are in the last days, with 62% of Evangelicals sharing this belief. There was no category for Messianic Judaism, but we should be close to 100% in that belief. But many other followers of Yeshua cannot understand these things because they have a distorted view of the end times.

Some hold firmly to the hope that they will be raptured out of this earth and avoid torture or death. This is false hope from those followers of Yeshua who ignore the millions of Christian deaths caused by violence around the world today, believing that their special status as “American Christians” will save them. 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* suggests that another 50 million people died in wars caused by *jihad*. When you count the million African Christians killed in the 20th century, the total killed by Islam approaches 60 million.

What is the most persecuted religion in the world? 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. <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/world-watch-list/> 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? Wake up! Face reality! Even though we don't know exactly what life will bring, we must remain faithful to the commitment we made to Yeshua as well as recognize the signs of the times all around us. 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 country.

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 *Allah*, a demonic being promoting *jihad*. The Scriptures have not changed. Abraham did not take Ishmael to Mount Moriah for sacrifice. He took his son Isaac. In our *parasha*, 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.* (Genesis 35:10b TLV). The angel warned Jacob that his name would be changed (Genesis 32), but the *Torah* states that it was אֱלֹהִים Elohim, G-d, who changed his name. Years after this, ADONAI spoke to Moses and said: *3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, as El Shaddai. Yet by My Name, Adonai (יְהוָה), I did not make Myself known to them.* (Exodus 6:3 TLV). *Elohim*, here, is a reference to יהוה YHVH, ADONAI. It was ADONAI who gave Jacob his name change. The man with whom he wrestled was not ADONAI, but a *malakh*, an angel, who had ADONAI's authority. 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 (עֶלְיוֹן) 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 officially changed Jacob's name, meaning "supplanter," the one who grasped his brother's heel, to Israel, meaning "struggles

with G-d.” And ADONAI now gives the newly named man, 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 that 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 significant destruction and death, but they will ultimately surrender to God’s love and His power. Although they are our enemies now, Scripture says that eventually certain nations will turn back 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 realize today is that many people who now claim to be Muslims or follow other religions will abandon their false beliefs and turn to the G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and trust in His Son Yeshua.

Revelation presents many things that are difficult to understand because much of it is symbolism. Although it is symbolic, Yeshua appears to have invited His followers to interpret it, but our interpretation must be rooted in related events in Scripture. These verses clearly illustrate the difficulty in understanding. *2 Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He cried out with a loud voice to the four angels who were permitted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, “Do no harm to the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” 4 Now I heard the number of those marked with the seal: 144,000 from every tribe of Bnei-Yisrael—* (Revelation 7:2-4 TLV). The verses then list the 12 tribes of Israel, each represented by the number 12,000. We immediately notice that the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are not included, with Manasseh and Joseph taking their place to make up the twelve. Since the following Scriptures continue the topic of tribulation, my prayerful proposal is that the 144,000 symbolize Yeshua’s followers who were saved from the Great Tribulation in Jerusalem in 70

CE. Josephus reported that 97,000 were taken captive, a number close enough to the multiple symbolism of twelve. Their sealing symbolizes their being preserved to serve as witnesses for Yeshua in the areas where they were scattered after being taken as slaves by the Romans. Ephraim and Dan probably weren't made a part of this group because of their role in rejecting ADONAI in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the two golden calves, worshipped by the Kingdom of Israel, were located within their tribal boundaries.

The theme of tribulation continues, but now switches to a greater tribulation, worldwide tribulation. *9 After these things I looked, and behold, a vast multitude that no one could count—from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues—was standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”* (Revelation 7:9-10 TLV). This group of Yeshua's faithful followers is worldwide and spans all generations, a group so large that no one can count them. *13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these dressed in white robes, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” 14 Then he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 For this reason, they are before the throne of God, and they serve Him day and night in His Temple.* (Revelation 7:13-15 TLV). The Greek of verse 14 reads: *tēn thlipseōs tēn megalēs* (tain thlip-se-os tain meh-ga-lays), the tribulation the great. This is the ongoing great worldwide tribulation that began in the first century and has gathered momentum over the years. It is not specifically the Great Tribulation of 70 CE which Yeshua referred to (Matthew 24:21), but it includes the martyrs of that tribulation, the symbolic 144,000. The total number of Yeshua's followers who died because of their faith is much higher, estimated at 60,000,000 from the 1st century to the present. Verse 9 says that it was a group so large that no one could count them. Calculation reveals that counting to 60 million, one number per second, would take 693 days, just under 2 years. For a human, that's an uncountable number. Counting the 1.1 million Jews affected in Jerusalem in 70 CE, as reported by Josephus, would take about 12.7 days.

Why has tribulation not happened in the United States? It has happened, but it's so minor that we can't even call it a tribulation. Sha'ul told Timothy: *12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Messiah Yeshua will be persecuted.* (2 Timothy 3:12 TLV). But greater tribulation has not yet come because, as a people, we have primarily served G-d and Yeshua

throughout our centuries of existence, that is, until recently. Now, the number of those who follow Yeshua is dwindling. Percentagewise, do we currently have more righteous living here than lived in Sodom and Gomorrah?

It is our enemies who are promoting “death to the Great Satan and the little Satan,” the United States and Israel. 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 are against us in our nation are our neighbors, and Yeshua has also told us that loving our neighbor is the second greatest commandment. We are to pray for them. Technically, beyond our borders, the people of the world are not our neighbors, but we still need to pray for them. All the “isms” in the world are false religions, and many are fueled by hatred against Christians and Jews. We are now beginning to see more persecution of Christians from the Chinese, Hindus, and Buddhists, but they, along with Muslims, will have an opportunity to repent and turn to Yeshua. We must love and not hate them.

Love must begin within the household of faith. First, we must love our fellow followers of Yeshua and allow His Spirit to heal the division that currently exists within Yeshua’s body. This process begins with each 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 His disciples’ 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). The Holy Spirit has come upon us, and we can have that power now. It’s been 2000 years since Yeshua’s words, but the time is approaching for His return, the set time for the kingdom to be restored to Israel. We are preparing for that now. We have received the *Ruach HaKodesh*, and we now have the promised power to be Yeshua’s witnesses in our “end of the earth.” As Yeshua told us, we are in the world, but not of the world (John 17:11). Until Yeshua returns, our citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20), but then it will be upon His restored earth. Many of those we currently see as enemies will someday become our friends because with G-d, nothing is impossible. We will witness Syria, Iraq, and Egypt become

friends of Israel, a trio blessed by ADONAI. This upcoming time is what we wait for and pray about: 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). While there are curses for those who hate Israel and the Jews today, there's a double blessing for Jews and Gentiles who trust in Yeshua. Our initial blessing came when we received salvation through Abraham's descendant, Yeshua, and we experienced a second blessing when we, both Jew and Gentile, blessed Abraham's children, the Jews. Stand firm and be faithful! *Shabbat shalom!*