

*Christ In The Old Testament*  
*“Face To Face”*  
*Genesis 32:22-32*

**Introduction:**

1. Tonight:
  - As We Continue To Look For:
    - “Christ In The Old Testament!”
    - We Find Him:
      - In A Rather Strange Place - And:
      - In A Rather Strange Way!
  - In Genesis 32:
    - We Find Him:
      - In A Wrestling Match:
        - With Jacob:
          - As He Was On His Way Back Home:
            - After A 20 Year Exile From The Land Of His Fathers, Abraham & Isaac!
2. So - Let’s Open Our Bibles Together:
  - To Genesis 32:
    - And Read About:
      - A Wrestling Match:
        - Between Jacob & God!
    - Read Genesis 32:22-32!
      - Now - As We Just Read:
        - Jacob Was No Stranger:
          - To Divine Encounters!
3. Because - Even Before:
  - Jacob *Left* Canaan:
    - Not Only To Find A Wife:
      - But To Escape The Wrath Of His Brother, Esau:
        - He Saw Angels & The Lord Himself:
          - In A Dream!
  - In Genesis 28:12-15:
    - At A Place He Called Bethel:
      - Which Means - “The House Of God!”
      - We Are Told:
        - “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. / And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I [am] the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; / And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed!”
        - So - The Same Promise & Blessing God Gave To Abraham & Isaac:
          - He Now Gave To Jacob!
4. But Then:
  - As Jacob Headed *Back* To Canaan:
    - 20 Years Later:
      - After Being Told By The Lord:
        - In Another Dream:
          - To Do So! (31:3)
  - In Genesis 32:1-2:
    - We Are Told:
      - “And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. / And when Jacob saw them, he said, This [is] God’s host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim!”
      - “Mahanaim” Means “Two Camps!”
  - This Could Either Refer To:
    - The Camp Of Jacob & The Camp Of The Angels!

- Or - It Could Just Refer To:
  - Two Camps Of The Angels!
- Which Means:
  - He Would Have Seen:
    - A Whole Lot Of Angels!
  - Who Were Probably Sent By God:
    - To Encircle Jacob's Band!
- To Protect Him From:
  - His Brother:
    - Who Was Before Him! And:
- To Protect Him From:
  - His Father-In-Law:
    - Who Was Behind Him!

5. But - I Wonder:

- How Did Jacob See Them?
  - Did Anyone Else See Them?
- Perhaps He Saw Them In A Vision:
  - Like The Vision God Gave Elisha:
    - In 2 Kings 6:16-17 - When He Said To His Servant - "Fear not: for they that [be] with us [are] more than they that [be] with them. / And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain [was] full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha!"
- So - It Would Seem That Jacob:
  - Was Given Eyes To See:
    - The Lord & His Angels:
      - By Both A Dream & A Vision!

6. But This Time:

- As We Just Read:
  - At A Place He Named:
    - "Peniel" - Which Means:
      - "Face Of God!"
- He Encountered God:
  - In A Visible, Physical Form:
    - As A Man!
  - In 32:24 - When "Jacob Was Left Alone!"
    - "There wrestled a *man* with him until the breaking of the day!"
      - But - As We Will See:
        - This Man Was More Than Just A Man!
- So - Let's First Look At:
  - Just:

1. **Who? Who – Wrestled With Jacob?**

- Who Was This Man?
  - He Was Clearly:
    - A Man Who Was:
      - **Greater** Than Jacob!
      - Greater:
- Because He Could Bless Him:
  - The Way No Other Man Could Have Bless Him!
    - After All - This Is What Jacob Wanted From Him Through That Wrestling Match!
      - In 32:26 - He Said - "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!"
  - In Hebrew 7:7 - We Are Given This Truth:
    - "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better!"
      - So - Even Jacob Recognized That:
        - The Man Who Was Wrestling With Him:
          - Was A Better Man & A Greater Man:
            - Than He!
  - And So - In 32:29 - We Are Told:

- “And He Blessed Him There!”
- This Man Was Greater Than Jacob:
  - Because He Could Bless Him:
    - The Way No Other Man Ever Could!
    - This Man Was Also Greater Than Jacob:
- Because He Could Touch Him:
  - The Way No Other Man Could Have Touched Him!
    - In 32:25 - Right In The Middle Of The Wrestling Match:
      - “And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him!”
  - Now - At First - This Could Mean:
    - That The Man Made Some Kind Of Fancy Wrestling Move:
      - That Caused His Leg & Hip Go Out Of Joint:
        - In Order To Weaken Him:
          - So Jacob Would Let Him Go!
  - But Later In The Story:
    - In 32:32 - We Find That The Man:
      - Did Not Touch “The Hollow Of Jacob’s Thigh” - From The Outside:
        - But From The Inside!
      - “Because he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh in the sinew that shrank!”
        - That Is A Wrestling Move:
          - That No Ordinary Man:
            - Could Do!
    - This Man Was Greater Than Jacob:
      - Because He Could Touch Him:
        - The Way No Other Man Ever Could!
        - But - He Was Also Greater Than Jacob:
    - Because He Could Change Him:
      - The Way No Other Man Could Have Changed Him!
        - He Changed Him:
          - Not Just In A Physical Way:
            - So That Jacob “Halted / Limped Upon His Thigh!” (32:31)
              - Any Man Could Have Done That!
        - But - He Changed His Very Name!
          - 32:28 - Because - “He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed!”
            - This Name Reflected A New Nature & A New Character For Jacob!
              - No Longer A “Supplanter” - But:
                - A “Prince Of God!”
        - This Man Was Greater Than Jacob:
          - Because He Could Bless Him & Touch Him & Change Him:
            - The Way No Other Man Ever Could!
            - So - Who Was This Man?
          - Jacob Believed:
            - This Man Was His God!
              - Which Is Why - In 32:30 - “Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved!”
          - And Then - Later:
            - In Hosea 12:3-5 - Which Recounts This Encounter:
              - We Are Told That Jacob - “Had power with God: / Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him [in] Bethel, and there he spake with us; / Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD [is] his memorial!”
          - In Hosea - This Man:
            - Who Was No Ordinary Man:
              - Is Called An Angel! Messenger!
            - But He Was No Ordinary Messenger Either!
              - Because - That Man / That Messenger:
                - Is Expressly Called - “The LORD God Of Hosts!”

- In Genesis 32 - We Have Another “Christophany!”
  - Another Personal, Visible, And Physical Appearance Of Christ:
    - Before His Birth Into This World!
      - So - Who Wrestled With Jacob?
        - Christ Wrestled With Jacob!
  - And - Even More:
    - It Was A Real, Physical:
      - Rough & Tumble Wrestling Match As Well!
- But - I Also Want Us To Look At:

## 2. ***When? When – Did Christ Wrestle With Jacob?***

- When Did This Match Take Place?
  - Well - Christ Came To Wrestle With Jacob:
    - When Jacob Was:
      - In The Darkness:
        - Of The Night:
          - Just Before He Would Face His Greatest Fear:
            - The Very Next Day!
              - His Own Brother!
          - And - That Night:
            - Would Have Been A Very Long:
              - And Dark Night For Jacob!
        - Because - On That Same Night:
          - 32:22-23 - “And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. / And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had!”
            - Not Sure How Many Times:
              - He Would Have Crossed The River:
                - To Make Sure His Family Got Over Safely!
            - But - That Would Have Taken:
              - Time & Effort!
                - But Then - He Crossed Back:
                  - One Last Time!
          - And - It Was Then:
            - When Christ Came:
              - To Wrestle With Jacob!
                - In The Darkness Of The Night!
                  - It Was Also:
        - In The Despair:
          - Of His Soul!
            - After He Crossed Back Over The River:
              - In 32:24 - We Are Told:
                - “And Jacob was left alone!”
              - But - Why Had He Come Back:
                - Only To Be Left Alone?
                  - Likely To “Cast All His Cares Upon The Lord!” (1 Peter 5:7)
            - In 32:11 - We Get A Sense Of:
              - The Anguish Of Jacob’s Soul:
                - When He Began The Lord In Prayer:
                  - “Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, [and] the mother with the children!”
              - He Probably Went Back To Keep Praying:
                - This Kind Of Prayer!
                  - A Prayer Of Humility:
                    - Before God!
                  - A Prayer For Deliverance:
                    - From God! And:

- A Prayer In Dependence:
  - Upon God!
- 32:10-12 - "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. / Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, [and] the mother with the children. / And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude!"
  - But - It Was Then:
    - When Christ Came:
      - To Wrestle With Jacob!
      - In The Distress Of His Soul!
  - It Was Also When Jacob Was:
- In The Dust:
  - Of The Earth!
    - In 32:24 - We Again Read:
      - "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day!"
  - The Root Of The Word:
    - Translated Here "Wrestle" - Means:
      - Dust! Probably Because:
        - When Two Boys Or Two Men Go At Each Other:
          - Things Are Going To Get Dusty & Dirty Fast!
  - But - I Also Think This Points To:
    - Where Jacob Was:
      - When He Was Praying To & Pleading His Cause Before The Lord!
        - He Was "In The Dust!"
      - He Was Probably Lying Prostrate:
        - On His Face:
          - In The Dust:
            - Of The Ground!
      - A Place Of Profound:
        - Humility!
  - And - That Is Where Christ Found Jacob:
    - When He Came To Wrestle With Him!
      - When Jacob Was:
        - In The Dark!
        - In Despair! And:
        - In The Dust!
    - It Seems Like:
      - In The Lowest Point Of Jacob's Journey In Life:
        - Christ Came To Him:
          - Not To Help Him Up:
            - But To Wrestle Him:
              - And To Keep Him Down!
    - What's Going On Here?
      - Well - That Leads Us To The Question:

### 3. **Why? Why – Did Christ Wrestle With Jacob?**

- Perhaps This Is The Biggest Question:
  - Of Them All!
    - Why Did Christ Wrestle With Jacob?
      - Now - We Really Aren't Given A Whole Lot Of Detail About This Wrestling Match!
        - But - I Do Believe We Can Determine:
          - Who Started It!
  - **IE:** This Was Always What My Parents Wanted To Know, When My Brother And I Got Into It With Each Other!
    - I Believe - It Was, In Fact, Christ:
      - Who Started It!

- As Jacob Was Alone:
  - Face Down On The Ground:
    - In One Of The Most Difficult And Dark Nights Of His Life:
      - Pouring His Heart Out To God!
- God Himself Came To Him:
  - And Started Wrestling With Him:
    - In The Person Of Christ!
- 32:24b - “And there wrestled a man *with him* until the breaking of the day!”
  - But Why?
- **IE:** That Was Always Another Question My Parents Asked When My Brother And I Got Into A Kerfuffle! Why? What Was It All About? Usually It Was About Nothing!
  - But - Christ Wrestled With Jacob:
    - For A Reason!
    - And - One Reason Would Have Been:
- To Prove Jacob!
  - And To Test Jacob!
    - To See What It Would Take:
      - To Get Him To Give Up:
        - In His Prayer & In His Plea:
          - To The Lord!
  - Sometimes - The Lord May Test:
    - Your Faith & Your Faithfulness:
      - In Your Relationship With Christ!
        - And - How Many Times:
          - Do We Fail?
      - How Many Times:
        - Do We Give Up?
          - In Our Prayer Life!
          - In Our Pursuit Of Holiness!
          - In Our Witness!
  - Well - By God’s Grace:
    - Jacob Passed The Test!
      - Jacob Cried Out - In 32:26:
        - “I Will Not Let The Go, Except Thou Bless Me!”
    - And - By God’s Grace:
      - You Too Can Persevere:
        - In Your Walk With God!
          - And - Sometimes - Even In Your Wrestling Match With God!
  - But - I Think There’s Another Reason:
    - Why Christ Would Have Started:
      - This Wrestling Match With Jacob!
- To Prod Jacob!
  - To Goad Him & To Stimulate Him:
    - To Keep Making His Appeal To God:
      - With Effectual & Fervent Prayer!
    - **IE:** If You’ve Ever Watched The Sidelines During A Football Game - Things Can Get Tough There Too! Coaches & Players Will Poke & Push & Prod Each Other - To Stir Them Up - To Do Their Best - To Win - No Matter The Cost!
      - I Believe This Is What Christ Was Doing With Jacob:
        - Because They Were On The Same Side & On The Same Team!
- So - Christ Wrestled With Jacob:
  - To Get Him To Grasp Him:
    - Even More Closely!
      - **IE:** That’s What You Do In A Wrestling Match! Sometimes - Looks Like - Even Too Close!
  - There May Be Times In Your Life:
    - When Christ Seems To:
      - Test You & Wrestle With You! But Why?

- It's Because He Is Prodding You:
  - To Get Closer To Him!
  - To Grasp Him:
    - With All Your Heart & With All Your Might:
    - By Faith!
- Don't Be Discouraged:
  - When It Feels Like The Lord Is Against You!
    - Because - If You Belong To Him:
      - As Jacob Did!
  - He Is For You!
    - And He Only Wants You:
      - To Get Closer To Him!
  - So - You Will Say - As Jacob Did:
    - "I Will Not Let Thee Go!"
      - I Can't Let You Go!
    - Because - "I Need Thee!"
      - "Oh, I Need Thee! Every Hour I Need Thee! Oh, Bless Me Now My Savior, I Come To Thee!"
- Sometimes - Christ Will Wrestle With You:
  - To Get You To Grasp Him:
    - More Closely! But Also:
- Christ Wrestled With Jacob:
  - To Grapple With Him:
    - Even More Tightly!
      - **IE:** That Too Is What You Do In A Wrestling Match! In Order To Overcome Your Opponent - With Strength!
  - When Jacob Knew Who Was Wrestling With Him:
    - He Took Hold Of His Heavenly Opponent:
      - With All Of His Might & Strength!
      - Even To The Point That:
        - Christ Himself - 32:25 - "Saw that he prevailed not against him!"
    - Of Course - Since Christ:
      - Was Greater Than Jacob:
        - He Was Certainly:
          - Stronger Than Jacob!
    - So - How Could Jacob:
      - Have "Prevailed" Over Christ?
        - Even If It Was For:
          - A Little While?
      - It Was Because:
        - Christ Let Him!
    - Christ Let Jacob Prevail Over Him:
      - Even As A Father:
        - Would Let A Son:
          - "Prevail" In A Wrestling Match!
  - You See - This Was A Match:
    - Between Friends!
      - It Was A Scrimmage!
        - And - To Encourage Jacob In His Faith & In His Prayer:
          - He Let Him Gain The Upper Hand!
  - And - This Is True For You As Well!
    - When It Seems Like Christ Is:
      - Wrestling With You!
        - Remember - It's Just A Scrimmage Match!
    - And - Instead Of Trying To Hurt You:
      - As An Opponent:
        - He's Trying To Help You:
          - Become "Strong In The Lord, And In The Power Of His Might!"

- Because - What Happened In 32:25?
  - “And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him!”
  - Christ Weakened Jacob:
    - By Touching “The Hollow Of His Thigh!”
  - But - Even In His Weakened Condition:
    - “He – Still – Wrestled With Him!”
- This Would Have Been An Eye-Opening Experience For Jacob!
  - He Would Not Have Been Able To Grasp On Or Grapple With Christ At All:
    - In His Own Might & In His Own Strength!
    - Instead - It Was All Through Christ’s Might & Christ’s Strength!
  - So - He Learned The Same Lesson:
    - That The Apostle Paul Learned:
      - In 2 Corinthians 12:10 - That:
        - “When I Am Weak, Then Am I Strong!”
  - And - This Is True For You As Well!
    - Only When You Realize That:
      - You Are Weak:
        - In Your Own Might!
      - Will You Be Strengthened:
        - With The Might Of Christ!
- He Is The Reason:
  - You Can Hold On To Him!
    - Grasping Him Closely - And:
      - Grappling Him Tightly:
        - “With All Perseverance And Supplication!”
  - But - Even More:
- Christ Wrestled With Jacob:
  - So That Jacob Would Be Able To:
    - Gaze Upon Him!
  - In 32:26 - Christ Said:
    - “Let me go, for the day breaketh!”
    - But - Jacob Held On - And Said:
      - “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!”
  - Not Only Did Jacob:
    - Seek This Man’s Blessing!
      - I Believe - He Wanted To See Him:
        - With His Own Eyes!
  - And - Christ Granted Both:
    - Of His Desires!
      - Because - In 32:30-31 - When The Wrestling Match Was Finally Over!
    - We Are Told:
      - “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. / And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh!”

### **Conclusion:**

1. It Was A New Day For Jacob That Day!
  - Matthew Henry:
    - “It Is Sunrise With That Soul That Has Communion With God!”
  - He Grasped Christ:
    - In A Fresh, New Way!
  - He Grappled With Christ:
    - In A Prevailing Way! And:
  - He Had Even Seen & Gazed Upon Christ:
    - And That Gaze:
      - Gave Him The Strength He Would Need:
        - To Face His Fears:



- That Very Same Day!
- 2. Through This Wrestling Match With Christ:
  - He Found "Grace To Help":
    - In His Time Of Need!
      - And - This Is What Christ Will Do For You:
        - When You Wrestle With Him:
        - And Cry Out To Him:
          - Even With Tears!
  - This Is Why - And - These Are The Reasons:
    - Christ Wrestled With Jacob!
      - And - These Are The Same Reasons:
        - Why - Sometimes - Christ Will Wrestle With You!
- 3. And - When He Does:
  - Don't Give Up!
    - Wrestle Back! Certainly - With "Reverence And Godly Fear!"
      - But - Grasp Onto Him Closely!
        - Grapple With Him Tightly:
          - In Fervent Prayer!
    - Because - One Day:
      - The Eternal Sun Will Rise Upon You As Well!
        - And You Will Be Completely Changed & Transformed:
          - Into The Image Of Christ Himself!
      - Even As 1 John 3:2 Tells Us:
        - "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is!"
          - Even - Face To Face!
    - 4. But - Remember - That Change All Started:
      - When Christ Came To You:
        - And Wrestled With You:
          - Here!
        - To Save You!
          - To Sanctify You! And:
            - To Strengthen You!
              - All In The Power Of His Might!

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