

32:1

So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. So Jacob has been gone 20 years finding wives and wealth. Laban has finally resigned himself that Jacob and family are not returning to Haran. Here **the angels of God met him.** The last time Jacob saw angels, they were moving up and down on the staircase to Heaven in Genesis 28. It has been about 20 years since he has seen them at Bethel (“House of God”). **Angels of God** is found in only these two places in Genesis.

32:2

When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim. Or “double camp.” If you ever see a word ending in “im,” it’s probably the Hebrew plural. Think of “Baalim” as in Isaiah 66, for example (“more than one Baal”) or “seraphim” (Isaiah 6). It must, therefore, mean that there are two camps of Jacob’s people.

32:3

Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. The last time we saw this guy, he was marrying people that were not in the approval of his parents. This lifestyle is both the cause and the result of Isaac and Rebekah’s sending of Jacob to another land, the land of their relatives, to get a wife. Yes, Esau married ungodly, non-covenant people twice.

Interestingly enough, **Seir** meaning “hairy” and **Edom** refer to Esau. Remember, **Edom** was a result of his sinning over food, or giving away the grace of God over food as Adam did. Moses is perhaps adding this additional light and that **the country of Edom** is really called something else some 400 years previous to authorship.

Remember that Job is from this very place, more specifically the land of “Uz.” Lamentations 4:21 tells us this “Uz” is in “Edom.” Job, therefore, is from this same place of Edom.

32:4

And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. In other words, “please give him the history lesson, and how we got to this place.”

32:5

I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, Jacob is establishing himself as the subordinate. that I may find favor in your sight." ' ' "

32:6-7

Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." 7 So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; Yes, how would you feel if a guy you saw 20 years ago was angry—very angry—with you was approaching you with tokens of his own prosperity: 400 men? Esau has found a way to be prosperous also. We’re not told about how this happened. If we do all the surmising here that we do with Abraham (318 men with families, probably), we are seeing a man with at least that much. What if he had that much assumed wealth as well? Esau was a mighty man! **and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies.**

32:8

And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape." Who gets to be in the “other group” which could be decimated, perhaps? He has the promise of his father Isaac that he would be blessed with many seed to inherit the promised land (Genesis 28:12ff). So somebody, theoretically, must survive. He is not at home yet.

32:9

Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you':

32:10

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. I left with a stick and now have two camps!

32:11

Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. A crisis of faith! He's already been promised that he would live through this! See the next verse.

32:12

For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" Twice, this frightened Jacob reminds God of his promise that he and his would receive a certain land. God had promised his grandfather Abraham in Genesis 22 and his father Isaac in Genesis 26. Later, he promised this same Jacob in chapter 28. "I'm afraid, and it doesn't hurt to remind God of His promise." Maybe this is simply Jacob desiring to take interest in God's promise. After having left dad 450 miles behind, Jacob is now interested in reuniting with his father. Statements later in the book tell us that Jacob was approximately 77 when he left Isaac. This would have made Isaac 137 years old. Isaac is still alive, then, as he dies at 180 years old and he is currently 157 years old.

If Isaac is still at Beersheeba, his boys are about to tangle about 100 miles from home. Jacob probably feels like the third wheel as Mount Seir is only about 50 miles from dad.

32:13

So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: He has already split his things/people into two groups, but he doesn't feel like that is enough.

32:14-15

two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. That should just about satisfy anybody.

32:16

Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." Maybe Esau will sit and think "What should I do with all of these animals?"

32:17-20

And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?' 18 then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.' " **19 So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves,** So there were more than the four groups. This makes sense later in the next chapter when both brothers say "I have enough." Clearly, Jacob has some behind the three groups if he can still say "Take these from me; I have enough." **saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; 20 and also say, 'Behold, your servant** For the third time in this passage, Jacob wants his people to let Esau know that he knows he is at the mercy of Esau. "Jacob, your servant, your minion, your boot-licker...is behind us. **Jacob is behind us.' "** **For he said, "I will appease** "You're going to stall. Basically, you're going to buy me time and earn me some mercy. Maybe I'll survive, but hopefully somebody will." The word here is *kippur* which means he was hoping for there to be an atonement of sorts. **him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept**

me." This is not how it actually transpires in the next chapter. Jacob goes before them, "bowing 7 times" and then as he is talking to Esau, the droves come up behind them one by one. Jacob has changed the plan a few times here.

32:21

So the present went on over before him, So there was a Jabbok crossing and a Jordan crossing in this story. Many think this was a play on words on "Jacob." Don't forget this was a potentially huge tangle in the wilderness so this is not out of the question that this encounter was of such magnitude that they just named the river after the event. **but he himself lodged that night in the camp.**

32:22

And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. The order of march is spelled out in the next chapter, first few verses. It is rather humorous. We hope they don't all die....but if they do, let's have a preferred order of death. Leah is going to get a very clear signal that she is not the favorite with Leah bringing up the rear.