

## Outline GENESIS 32:1-21 'FACING GOD - FACING OUR NEIGHBOUR'

Series 'God moves in a mysterious way' #10

IBC Eindhoven, 25 April 2021

### INTRODUCTION

Returning to the Jacob narratives. Leaving Laban and Haran. Returning home. Returning to the unresolved conflict with Esau. Listen carefully again to the text. Then we'll listen to Torah's teaching: Facing God - Facing our neighbour.

### VERSE 1-2 MAHANAIM

- Abrupt appearance of the angels of God. For the attentive listener an alert that more is going on than meets the eye. God moves in a mysterious way.
- Mahanaim - two camps...
- // Psalm 34:7 *'The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them'*

### VERSES 3-8 MESSENGERS

- Messengers - note that in Hebrew 'angels' has the same root as 'messengers'. So using the same words in verse 1-2 and here in 3-8, the account towards God is connected with the account towards Esau - facing God - facing our neighbour
- Note the language Jacob is using: 'my master Esau - your servant Jacob (verse 4) and my lord (verse 5) - I may find favour (grace/chen) in your eyes (verse 5) >> something has changed in Jacob's heart and attitude
- Verse 7: Hearing about Esau on his way to meet Jacob with 400 men, arouses great fear. Read KJV: *'Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed'*

### VERSES 9-12 PRAYER

- Jacob addresses the God who called him to return.
- The wording sounds like Genesis 12:1 as if his home coming is completing Abraham's sojourn.
- But then a confession - seemingly for the first time in Jacob's life: *'I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness. See KJV: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou has showed unto thy servant*
  - Kindness and faithfulness - a frequently used characterisation of the God of Israel - notably Exodus 34:6. Also characterisation of Jesus in John 1:14
- In his prayer Jacob holds firmly to God's promises.
- Even emphasising: *'I will make you prosper (verse 9) >> I will surely make you prosper (verse 12)*

### VERSES 13-21 READY TO FACE THE FUTURE?

- Jacob prepares to meet Esau - presentation of gifts - clearly an act of appeasement - verse 20 *I will pacify him with these gifts - pacify >> atone ...*
- Note in verse 20 four times 'face' - listen to my translation of the text to make this clear *'I will cover his face with the gifts, which go ahead of my face; then I will see his face; perhaps he will lift my face*

### FACING GOD - FACING OUR NEIGHBOUR

#### 1. All relationships begin with God

- Matthew 22:39 - 2nd commandment preceded by 1st
- Psalm 51:4 *'Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight'*
  - Fearing God should be first. Fearing God brings fear for man back to its proper proportions.
    - [Jesus in Matthew 10:28 *'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell'*]
  - Important in our normal daily lives - engaging with our loved ones, friends, colleagues, neighbours, students, teachers etc.
- Proverbs 29:25 (Message) *'The fear of human opinion disables; trusting God protects you from that'*
  - so pray to God before you face your neighbour/relative/colleague/boss in facing your fears - more about this next week with Derek Bass as he will preach on Jacob wrestling with the angel of God in Pniel

2. In the struggle with ourselves and our neighbours:
  - Remember Jesus faced our rejection on the cross – Isaiah 53:3-5 (i.e. WE rejected Him)
  - Therefore Jesus was highly exalted – Philippians 2:9
    - Jesus has lifted up our face - atoned for our sins - how awesome - amazing grace - God moving in a mysterious way
  - As we face God through Jesus Christ - we receive the confidence to face our ourselves and our neighbour
  - Because He lives I can face tomorrow

#### FOR REFLECTION

1. Read Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. In what way does this prayer inspire you for your own prayer life?
2. Reflect on the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24-26 in relation to the message in Genesis 32. Note especially Genesis 32:20 and my translation of that verse.