



Genesis 31-32

Jacob had served Laban for fourteen years, as a dowry for the two daughters of Laban that he married. Now that the fourteen years of service are expired, Jacob has a yearning to go home. Laban, seeing how God has blessed him as a result of Jacob's labor among them, encourages and asks Jacob to stay on. He struck a bargain with him on which of the flocks should become Jacob's. So Jacob served him an additional six years and during this time, God has extremely blessed Jacob. The last verse of chapter thirty describes how God had blessed Jacob.

"And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory." (Gen.31:1).

The sons of Laban began to be jealous of the wealth that Jacob had. They were sort of saying, here in verse one, that the wealth actually belonged to them.

"And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before." (Gen. 31:2). Laban had begun to understand that God had blessed him because of Jacob's service. Laban had become extremely wealthy through the diligence of Jacob and now to see Jacob wealthy too began to bother Laban. As long as Jacob was making him rich, Laban went around smiling at him; but now that Jacob is also becoming wealthy, Laban's smile has changed to a scowl.

"And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." (Gen.31:3).

It is interesting how God prepares us for a move. It is sort of a disruptive pattern to our routines. Things aren't like they were. The circumstances change and things aren't as pleasant anymore. God begins to stir up things around us. This is often the purpose of God as He is ready to move us on. Probably, by nature, we are homebodies. We like to feel comfortable and secure in our home. There is nothing wrong with this feeling, but sometimes God wants to move us on and we may be reluctant to move because we are content there. So, God may begin to create situations that make us uncomfortable where we are and we begin to think about moving again.

Jacob had begun to settle down in Padan-aram but God wants him to go back to the land now. The brothers of the wives of Jacob become jealous and begin to speak evil of him and Laban begins to scowl at him; so, Jacob thinks it's time to go home. The LORD speaks to him and he is open to hear the voice of the LORD now.

God is giving Jacob His word that He will be with him. Once we have the word of God, we, then, step forth in faith. Faith in the word and not in our feelings. Many people step forth in the faith of their feelings, but we need to step out in the faith of God's word.

"And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock." (Gen.31:4). Jacob is going to tell his wives how he feels. Separating is not going to be an easy thing. Laban is going to be reluctant to let them go and may try to keep them by force. Jacob is probably seventy or eighty miles away from the others. He may have moved his flocks near the southern borders and so he sends for Rachel and Leah to tell them what is on his heart.

"And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled; and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me." (Gen.31:5-9).

Jacob acknowledges that God brought him the riches that he now possesses and not his own cleverness.

"And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstraked, speckled, and grisled." (Gen.31:10). Actually Jacob was tending only the solid colored animals of Laban, but in his dream the offspring were spotted and streaked.

"And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And He said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled; for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me; now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." (Gen.31:11-13).

The LORD is reminding Jacob of the place where he had his first encounter with God. Jacob had vowed a vow at Beth-el. He had prayed twenty years earlier if the LORD would be with him and take him safely to Haran and bring him again to the land, then he would give a tenth of all he had to God.

"And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money." (Gen.31:14-15).

The dowry that was given was, in a sense, alimony in advance. Women had no rights in that culture and day. They could not get a divorce, but their husband could divorce them for any reason or cause. In order to protect women, a dowry was arranged in advance. The father of the bride was to watch over and manage this trust so that the bride could be financially taken care of in case she was divorced by her husband. Jacob had served seven years each for Leah and Rachel. These were years of great prosperity for Laban. He should have set aside this money, in a trust, for his daughters; but, he spent it on himself and they resented it.

"For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's; now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do." (Gen.31:16) This is great instruction at any time.

"Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan." (Gen.31:17-18).

"And Laban went to shear his sheep; and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead." (Gen.31:19-21).

Driving the herds and the women riding on camels, it was impossible to cover more than approximately twenty miles a day as they were fleeing from Laban. They were probably three days journey away when they started. "And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." (Gen.31:22-24).

God warned Laban, in a dream, to leave Jacob alone and Laban was frightened by this experience.

"Then Laban overtook Jacob, Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount; and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? (Gen.31:25-27).

Since God had warned Laban to speak softly to Jacob, he was trying to be nice and made up this story, with a lot of hypocrisy, about a going away party.

"And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." (Gen.31:28-29). Laban says he could do Jacob in and he would, but God spoke to him and put fear in his heart.

"And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longest after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? (Gen.31:30). Laban is trying to attribute to Jacob, very magnanimously, a good motivation for fleeing. It is also amusing that a man has gods that can be stolen. It's amusing, but tragic.

Remember that we read where Rachel took these little idols. They're called the "terriphim," and they were idols that were used for purposes of divination. They were thought to be oracles through which God spoke to the people and were often used for guidance.

"and Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid; for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live; before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee, For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them." (Gen.31:31-32).

There is a code that is called the "Hammurabi Stone." A code of laws which are quite extensive and are in many ways parallel to the commandments that God gave to Moses. In one of the laws of the Hammurabi code, it deals with the subject of stealing another man's idols and it was a capital offense. So, Jacob, no doubt, familiar with the code of Hammurabi after spending several years in the area of Babylon, told Laban to search and whoever had the gods, let him die. He also told him to look around and if he saw anything that was his to take it with him.

"And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not." (Gen.31:33-34).

"And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I can not rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched but found not the images." (Gen.31:35).

The whole time Laban was searching, Jacob was thinking of the injustice of Laban's accusation. Laban was going through and dumping out all their bags and making a mess of things and Jacob became more and more angry. After going through everything, Laban had not found them.

"And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both? This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten." (Gen.31:36-38).

Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban for pursuing him and accusing him of stealing. Jacob reminded Laban that in the twenty years that he had served him, none of his flock had miscarried and he had not eaten any of his rams. It was the shepherd's prerogative to eat of the flock, but Jacob had not done that.

"That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night." (Gen.31:39)

Another right of the shepherd was to bring a torn carcass to the owner to prove it had been torn by beasts; but, instead of doing this, Jacob paid for the loss himself.

"Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou hast changed my wages ten times." (Gen.31:40-41).

Jacob is rehearsing the troubles he has gone through in the service of Laban and Laban's ingratitude by changing his wages ten different times.

"Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight." (Gen.31:42).

Jacob is upset and knows that if God hadn't intervened, at this point, Laban would have taken everything that he had and he would have gone back home empty.

"And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine; and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?" (Gen.31:43). Laban has a wrong attitude, because Jacob worked for all these things and they are his.

"Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap; and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha; but Jacob called it Galeed." (Gen.31:44-47).

So they made a covenant and Laban called the place Jegarsahadutha, an Aramaic word which means "a heap of witness" and Jacob called it Galeed, a Hebrew word meaning the same.

"And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." (Gen.31:48-49).

There are people today who have taken "Mizpah" for a pleasant benediction. In the context, it is not a pleasant parting. What Laban is saying is that Jacob was going away and taking his daughters, grandchildren, and flocks and that he had tried to keep him straight, but now he was going where he couldn't watch him and so he is asking the LORD to do it. The idea is for the LORD to watch over him, sort of like watching over a thief.

"If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm." (Gen.31:50-52).

So, Laban is saying if Jacob afflicts his daughters in any way that God will be the witness and they made a covenant not to pass over a certain heap or pillar to do each other harm.

"The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread; and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them; and Laban departed, and returned unto his place." (Gen.31:53-55).

It had been a day of high pressure. Laban came and made his accusations and Jacob then got angry and vented his feelings on Laban. You can't go through these kind of confrontations without feeling the effects of it. It leaves a tenseness and a pressure and Jacob probably felt a big release after Laban had gone.

"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." (Gen.32:1). It is interesting that after the tension and the battle, the angels of God were there to meet him and to minister to him. After Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, the angels came and ministered to Him.

"And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim." (Gen.32:2). The word Mahanaim means the place of two hosts. There was the host of Laban,

who were going home, and the host of angels, who had come to minister to Jacob.

"And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now." (Gen.32:3-4).

"And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and women-servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight." (Gen.32:5). Basically, he is sending them on to Esau to let him know that he is coming back and really doesn't need anything. He's not coming back to get his inheritance or get his share of what belongs to his father, Isaac. He's a wealthy man in his own right and is just wanting to come home and make his peace with Esau.

"And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him." (Gen.32:6). It doesn't sound like the kind of welcoming party that Jacob is looking forward to. Possibly, Esau had heard that Jacob was coming back and had rounded up these four hundred men; because, it was in his mind to kill his brother. He, perhaps, was seeking to fulfill the vow he had made. He had planned to wait until his father, Isaac, had died; but, here was a chance to get Jacob when he was still out of the land and Isaac would never know.

"Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands." (Gen.32:7).

The pile of stones was behind him, so he couldn't cross over them and go back; but, Esau was in front of him. Jacob was afraid because he realized the implications of Esau coming with such a great company of men. So, Jacob divided the people and the animals into two bands, instead of one large group.

"And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape." (Gen.32:8). He planned to form, sort of a holding company. The ones in the front group might be able to hold Esau and his men while the second group got away.

"And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee; 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." (Gen.32:9-10).

Jacob is reminded of the purpose of his flight at the beginning of his journey. He had fled because Esau had made a threat to kill him. He didn't take anything with him except a walking stick and the last time that he crossed the Jordan, his only possession was this staff. Now, he is remembering the mercies and goodness of God and that he has blessed him with wives, children, servants, and a multitude of flocks and Jacob is overwhelmed with it all.

"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." (Gen.32:11). "God, I am afraid, deliver me from my brother." I love the honesty of Jacob with God. I think when we come to God, we need to be totally honest. Sometimes, on our part, there is a foolish endeavor to con God with our prayers and to make ourselves look a little better than we really are. God knows our heart.

"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." (Gen.32:12). Jacob is reminding God of His promise and if he is killed, how can this promise come true? It's wonderful to pray on the basis of God's promises and we should pray this way and hold God to His word. It helps to strengthen you, when you know God has promised the very thing you are praying for.

"And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother." (Gen.32:13).

After Jacob prayed and laid out the whole situation to God, recognizing that he was afraid in that he

didn't have the strength or the manpower to battle with Esau and his four hundred men, he turns around and starts to scheme on his own. We are so much like Jacob, God help us! We put it in God's hands and then we start to scheme and plot on our own. This was one of Jacob's problems and became a tremendous weakness with him.

Our greatest natural strength becomes a spiritual barrier and a problem to our spiritual development. The fact that Jacob was able, by his cunning, to get by and to do so many things; he took advantage of his brother, Esau, and bought the birthright. By his cleverness, he disguised himself as Esau and got the blessing from Isaac and he outwitted Laban and got the strong herds. Now, he puts it all in God's hands and then immediately reverts back to his old scheming ways and seeks to appease Esau.

"Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. (Gen.32:14-15). This gives you an idea of the wealth that Jacob had. These are just a present he is going to offer to Esau.

"And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and, behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us, For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me." (Gen.32:16-20).

Jacob knows that he is in a life threatening situation and wants to appease his brother with these gifts. He spaces them all out so that Esau's wrath might be appeased when he sees all of these animals. Cleverness! Scheming his way out of a situation that he had already turned over to God.

God is wanting to work in Jacob's life. He has chosen Jacob to be one of the patriarchs, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. God has chosen that the Messiah would, one day, come from Jacob and one of the tribes.

Jacob has been chosen by God for special privileges, but, he is still not usable; so, God has a problem. Jacob is not fully surrendered to God. God can't do all he desires to do for you until your life is completely surrendered to Him.

As long as you can get by with your wit, your cunning and your devices; God is apt to let you go, but He will put the squeeze on you. God put the squeeze on Jacob when Laban came, but he put up the stones and made a non-aggression pact with Laban and got out of it. Now the word has come that Esau is coming and the squeeze is on and so he prays; but, he turns right back to his scheming again. He hasn't fully surrendered his life and so, God can not do the full work He is wanting to do in Jacob's life. It takes complete surrender and so God has to deal further with him.

"So went the present over before him; and himself lodged that night in the company. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, 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." (Gen.32:21-23).

"And Jacob was left alone..." (Gen.32:24a). I believe that Jacob wanted to get a good night's rest and so he sent his wives, children and servants over to the other side.

"...And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." (Gen.32:24b). Of all of the things that you don't need the night before a major confrontation, is a wrestling match all night long. When you want to be alert, sharp and at your best and instead you are worn down by a wrestling match.

Many times we find ourselves wrestling with God over a situation. God is dealing with us on issues and we wrestle with Him, not wanting to surrender. God was wrestling with Jacob to bring him to the place of surrender so that He can do all that He wants to do through this man, but Jacob is a tough nut. He won't

give up and he keeps wrestling.

"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." (Gen.32:25). We realize that the LORD could have done this earlier, but, He was giving Jacob a chance to give up. Jacob, being stubborn, would not give up and so, the LORD touched his hip as the day was breaking. Jacob is now in pain and crippled.

"And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." (Gen.32:26).

A lot of times it is difficult to understand the full truth of the story by reading words on a page. Words on a page do not give you tonal inflection. I think that because we don't hear the tonal inflections, we, oftentimes, misinterpret scripture.

In the Garden of Eden when God said to Adam, "...Where art thou?" we often hear that as the words of an arresting officer ready to do him in. I think if we had heard the voice in the garden we would have heard the sob of a heart broken father. We need to hear the tone of voice. Fortunately when Hosea makes commentary on this he gives us the tone of voice. Hosea says in chapter twelve, verse four, "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him..." So, Jacob was not demanding from a place of strength, but he was crying out from a place of weakness. He was now defeated. Jacob's plan was to run if all failed, but now God has put an end to that plan. He has put his hip out of socket and there is no way that Jacob can run. God has brought Jacob to the place of total surrender as he weeps and prays for God's blessing.

It is interesting that when Jacob asks the LORD for a blessing the LORD responds by asking Jacob what his name is. "And He said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And 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." (Gen.32:27-28). Jacob responds to God and says his name is "heelcatcher," "supplanter." One who takes advantage of one by catching his heel. I'm a heelcatcher who has gotten by with my wits and my cunning.

The blessing is that, no longer will you be Jacob or "heelcatcher," but you will be Israel or "ruled by God." You will no longer be a self-sufficient, self-made man, but you will be a man ruled by God.

What a blessing when your life is ruled by God. This is exactly what Jacob needed and the blessing was obtained by his surrender to God. God had to cripple him in order to crown him. The Bible says, "Woe unto him who strives with his maker." Why? Because God desires only the best for you and when you wrestle with Him, you are actually fighting against your own good. God wants to show you His mercy and His love, but you're fighting against it when you run from Him and wrestle against Him.

So, Jacob is crippled and is now defeated. He surrenders and he weeps and prays for a blessing. The blessing is a change of character. The name expressed his character. "Supplanter" very well expressed the character of this sly and cunning guy, Jacob. That's exactly what he was, but now there is going to be a change of character and what a blessing that change was.

God wants to change your character from a carnal man to a spiritual man; from a life governed by the flesh to one governed by the Spirit. That's God's intention for you. Does God have to cripple you to do it? I hope not! I hope that we will not be so foolish as to wrestle with God until He has to bring us into full submission to Him. If God has to use that measure, one day we might say with Paul, "...Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (II Cor.12:9). The day came when Jacob rejoiced in the crippling, because of the work; the power of God was manifested in his life when he came to the place of surrender to God.

Verse twenty-eight is often misinterpreted because they do not hear the tone of Jacob's pleading voice. They think that Jacob prevailed with God because of his tenacity, but he prevailed with God by his surrender.

The LORD is open to the cry of His children. Often, the time we prevail with Him is when we pray and weep and come to the end of ourselves.

"And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And He blessed him there." (Gen.32:29). In other words, what difference does it make what my name is.

I believe and am convinced that Jacob was wrestling with Jesus Christ and that this is one of the theophanies, the appearances of Jesus in the Old Testament times. A theophany is the appearance of God in the form of man. No man has ever seen God, but Jesus has made Him known to us. The fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Jesus. When the Old Testament speaks of seeing God, they have seen God in the form and in the person of Jesus Christ.

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." (Gen.32:30). Here I have seen God face to face and I'm still alive.

"And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh." (Gen.32:31). Jacob, now leaves this place where he has seen God and wrestled with Him. As he goes over the Jabbok towards his family, he is limping because of his hip.

You can hear Rachel and Leah say, as they are running to meet him, "Jacob, Jacob, what is wrong?" And he says, "Don't call me Jacob, call me Israel. I am a new man, I have met God. I've surrendered to Him; so, call me governed by God."

Verse thirty-two brings up one of Israel's customs, even to the present day. "Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank." (Gen.32:32). It would indicate that the crippling was permanent.

Now, just to peek ahead a little, let's look at verse four of chapter thirty-three. It says, "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept." I don't think this would have been the end of the story if Jacob had not surrendered to God; but, having surrendered God worked out the details of the whole thing. By the time the confrontation came, there was no confrontation; only embracing and weeping. Oh, how God can change our situation if we'll only surrender to Him.