



A Torah Study Guide
for the Young
& Young at Heart

PARASHAT
VAYISHLACH

וישלח

Genesis 32:4–36:43

by
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& his kids

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.

Great Discoveries In This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)


- 32:3 Esau Prepares to Attack Jacob
- 32:6 Fearful Jacob Positions His Family Accordingly
- 32:9 Jacob Cries Out to YHVH
- 32:13 Jacob Tries to Appease Esau's Wrath by Buying Him Off
- 32:24 Jacob Wrestles With the Messenger of Elohim
- 33:1 Jacob and Esau Meet
- 33:16 They Part Company
- 33:18 Jacob Arrives in Shechem
- 34:1 Dinah Is Abducted and Raped
- 34:7 Jacob's Family Is Outraged
- 34:13 Simeon and Levi Trick the Inhabitants of Shechem
- 35:25 Simeon and Levi Take Revenge Against Shechem
- 35:1 Jacob Returns to Bethel
- 35:16 The Death of Deborah, Rebecca's Nurse
- 35:9 Elohim Blesses Jacob and Changes His Name to Israel
- 35:16 Rachel Dies Giving Birth to Benjamin
- 35:21 The Sin of Reuben That Causes Him to Lose the Birthright
- 35:27 Jacob and Isaac Meet Each Other For the First Time in Twenty Years
- 35:29 Isaac's Death
- 36:1 The History of Esau
- 36:6 His Separation From Jacob
- 36:20 The Genealogy of Seir
- 36:31 The Kings of Edom

Exploring This Week's Parashah:


1 Exploring the Bible's First Prayer

 (a) Read Genesis 32:9-12.


This is the first prayer recorded in Scripture. There are other examples of men talking to YHVH face-to-face prior to Jacob's time, but this is the first spoken prayer in the Bible.


 (b) Why was Jacob praying? What was he concerned about or afraid of that caused him to cry out to his Father in heaven for help? (Read Genesis 32:1-8.) Why would Jacob expect Esau to be angry with him and want to kill him? (Read Genesis 27:41-42.)

Jacob had been away from his home (Bethel in Canaan) and hadn't seen his brother Esau in twenty years. In the mean time, Jacob had married, had many children and had become wealthy. If Esau still wanted to kill Jacob, as before, he and his band of men could have easily wiped out Jacob's entire family. So Jacob had reason to be concerned.

 (c) What does Jacob's example teach us about when we should pray or seek the face of our Father in heaven?

Up to this point in Jacob's life, he had trusted in his own strength and mind to get himself out of bad situations and to get success and wealth. Now he was in a situation where there was very little he could do to get himself out of the mess he was in. He didn't have any army to defend himself against Esau. He was stuck in the desert with nowhere to go. He couldn't go back to Babylon because he had just made an agreement with Laban not to go back in that direction (see Genesis 31:43-52). So Jacob couldn't go forward, and he couldn't go backward. There was only one place he could turn to for help. If you can't go forward or backward, then look upward! Things would go much better for us if we would do this more than we do.

 (d) Have you ever been in a tight spot where you didn't think you had any way out? Imagine that you're on a rocky mountain ledge with a vertical rock wall on one side and a cliff on the other side and your enemies are coming down the path at you from each direction. What would you do? Think of a situation in your life that seemed like this. What did you do? What happened to you? Did you feel scared? Did you try to use your wits or intelligence to figure a way out of it? Did you try tricks and lies or did you pray, seek the face of YHVH and place your situation in his hands for him to work out according to his will?

 (e) Remember the Children of Israel when they had just come out of Egypt? Remember how they had the Egyptian army behind them wanting to kill them (Exodus 14:9) and the Red Sea in front of them? What was the reaction of the Israelites? (See Exodus 14:10-12.) What did Moses do? (See Exodus 14:13-14.) Jacob was in a similar situation.



2 Exploring Jacob's Prayer (Genesis 32:9-12)

What is prayer? The answer is simple. It is talking to or communicating with YHVH. How do you talk to other people? Well, you do the same thing, but instead, when talking to YHVH it is called prayer.

Usually when talking to someone they are standing in front of you. If you are talking to them by phone, for example, you may not actually see them, but you can hear their voice. Prayer is a little different than this since we are not actually seeing the face of YHVH or actually hearing his audible voice. That is why prayer can be difficult for some people because it can seem like a one-sided conversation—like you are talking to yourself. That's probably why some people don't pray. But let me tell you this: when they suddenly find themselves in a difficult—even a life or death—situation, suddenly they get in the mood for prayer REAL QUICKLY, because they realize that only YHVH can get them out of the mess they're in! This is what happened to Jacob.

Let's now explore Jacob's prayer to see what we can learn from it.



(f) How did Jacob start out his prayer in Genesis 32:9? In the same verse, of what did he remind YHVH?

Had YHVH forgotten the promises he had made to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15? Of course not. By repeating the promises to YHVH, Jacob was reminding himself of the promises, which would help to strengthen his own faith in YHVH. Also, a child will come to their parent to remind them of a promise they have made. It is not that the parent has forgotten what he promised, but when the child asks in love and humility the parent will often grant the request quickly out of love and devotion for the child. The parent sees that the promise is important to the child and that can move the parent's heart to fulfill the promise. Our Father in heaven acts in the same way.

A child must come to their parent not demanding anything in pride and rebellion, but in humility. Humility is feeling small in your own eyes. When we pray to our Father in heaven it is very important that we come to him humbly or in humility.



(g) Was Jacob humble when praying? (Read Genesis 32:10.) What does this teach us about how to come before YHVH when praying? (Also read Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 and James 4:10.)



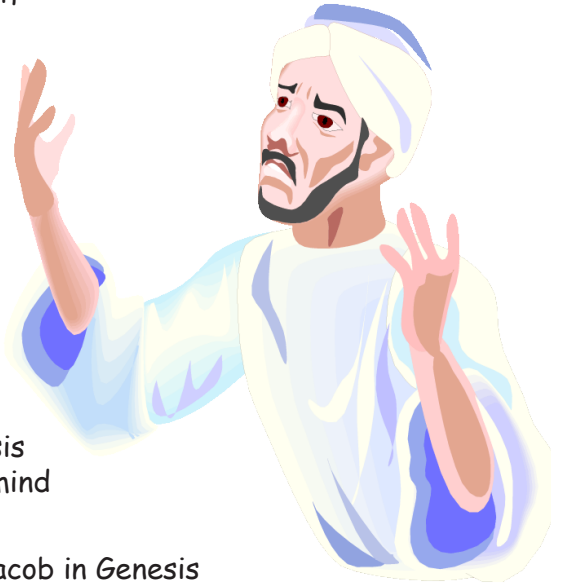
(h) After Jacob had acknowledged who YHVH was, and then humbled himself before YHVH, what did Jacob do? (Genesis 32:11.) Did Jacob make his needs and requests known to YHVH before or after praising YHVH and humbling himself? This is a very important thing to remember when coming before YHVH in prayer.

Let's take a look at some other prayers in Scripture to see if they follow the same pattern of acknowledging or praising YHVH, humbling oneself before YHVH, and then making one's requests known to YHVH.

- Ezra 9:5-15.
- Daniel 9:3-19
- Nehemiah 1:5-11
- Matthew 5:5-15




(i) What are some things that these prayers have in common? What is the heart of the person praying before YHVH? How do all these prayers start out? Does the





person immediately start to ask YHVH for what they want, or do they do something first before making their requests to YHVH? Think of how these examples of prayer can help you when talking to YHVH.

3 With Whom Did Jacob Wrestle All Night? (Genesis 32:22-32)


 (j) With whom is Jacob wrestling in this passage—man or Elohim? In verse 24, with whom does it say Jacob wrestled? Now read Hosea 12:3-4. What does it say here?


The word “angel” is the Hebrew word malak and simply means “a messenger.” It could mean an angel in the traditional sense, or it could mean a human messenger sent by a king, for example, or it could be a reference to Yeshua who was Elohim’s Divine Messenger to man.

 (k) In Genesis 32:30, what does Jacob name the place and why? So why does Scripture call the Being with whom Jacob wrestled “a man,” “a messenger” and “Elohim”? Who is the only Divine Person to have ever lived that fits all three of these descriptions? So with whom did Jacob really wrestle?

 (l) Who is the One who blessed Jacob and made covenants with him and with his father and grandfather? For the answer turn to Isaiah 53:1. Who is the “arm of YHVH” that now sits at the right hand of YHVH in heaven (1 Peter 3:22)? If you’re still not sure, read the rest of Isaiah 53 for the answer. It is the same one who led the Children of Israel in the wilderness (for further proof see Acts 7:37-38 and 1 Corinthians 10:4).

4 Why Did Jacob Have to Wrestle With Elohim?

 (m) Let’s now read Genesis 32:22-32. This is the story of the wrestling match.


 (n) Why did Jacob have to wrestle all night with Elohim (Genesis 32:24)? What did he want from Elohim? (Read verse 26.)

This story teaches us a several important lessons about our spiritual walk with YHVH Elohim.



Many people want to put their trust in YHVH-Yeshua, and they want to get the blessings that come from YHVH, but they don’t want to be an overcomer. What is an overcomer? It is someone who will do what’s necessary to walk with YHVH no matter how hard the walk is or what they have to do to get YHVH’s blessing. An overcomer is one who overcomes his own sin nature by repenting of sin and walking according to YHVH’s commandments. An overcomer is one who submits to the lordship of Yeshua and will do whatever Yeshua tells him to do. An overcomer is one who keeps seeking YHVH and his blessings no matter what until YHVH gives him that blessing. Jacob was an overcomer. You can be like Jacob. He was a biblical hero! There are many examples of overcomers in the Bible. Overcomers have to overcome

the world, the flesh or sin nature and the devil and his demons. Yeshua was an overcomer, as were David, Moses, Abraham, Paul, Noah, Esther, Ruth, Elijah, Joseph, Daniel and Nehemiah.

 (o) Who is your favorite biblical hero who was an overcomer? What did they have to overcome to gain the rewards of YHVH’s blessings?



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Benjamin

Bethel

Bless

Chief Amalek

Children

Dinah

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Esau Is Edom

Gate Of City

Hamor

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Hill Country Of Seir

Isaac Died

Israel

Jabbok

Jacob

Journey

Leah

Levi

Limp

Peniel

Rachel

Shechem

Simeon

Succoth

Third Day

Twelve Sons

Two Camps

Uncircumcised

Wept

Wives

Wrestled