

PARASHAT VAYISHLACH

(HE SENT)

GENESIS 32:4[3]-36:43

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

Hosea 11:7-12:12

B'rit Chadashah

On the two camps or houses of Israel: **Hebrews 8:8**

On Yeshua wrestling with himself: **Matthew 26:36-46**

On being delivered from our enemies: **James 7:4-10**

On vengeance: **Romans 12:19**

On the tribe of Benjamin: **Philippians 3:5**

Outline of Text For This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

—32:4[3] Esau Prepares to Attack Jacob

—32:7[6] Fearful Jacob Positions His Family Accordingly

—32:10[9] Jacob Cries Out to YHVH

—32:14[13] Jacob Tries to Appease Esau's Wrath by Bribing Him

—32:25[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, (and of Rebecca Too? [according to Rabbinic tradition])

—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
- 32:29 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

Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

- 1 Laban chased Jacob out of Babylon, while Esau was blocking Jacob from entering Canaan. What is the message here about how YHVH directs our steps? Compare this with what the Children of Israel encountered in their leaving Egypt en route to Canaan. In both instances, how did YHVH supernaturally protect his people? How did he deal with their enemies? What lessons of faith did they have to learn before they saw the hand of Elohim move on their behalf? YHVH said he would lead his people through the rivers and the fire without being overflowed or burned (Isa 43:2). Is that promise still valid?
- 2 Chapter 32 is a study in how we often deal with major trials and stressful situations in life. Read and reread it to see how Jacob dealt with his trials and honestly compare yourself to him. Jacob (a) was gripped by fear, (b) resorted to fleshly schemes to appease his brother's wrath and "to save his own hide" and that of his family, and (c) at the same time he expressed faith in YHVH by uttering what some consider to be the first prayer in Scripture (verses 9–12). How often, when facing serious trials, do we take the shotgun approach by throwing everything we have at the problem: the "strong arm of the flesh" as well as our mustard seed of faith. Does YHVH's grace cover us in such situations? Did Yeshua heal the man's son who said, "I believe help my unbelief?" (Mark 9:24) Yes, but does YHVH require more faith and less carnality from mature believers? Does YHVH sometimes force us into situations where we literally have to come to the end of our schemes and ourselves and rely solely on him to deliver us from our enemies? How does Jacob's wrestling all night with the Messenger of Elohim and becoming a lame and humbled man with a new name (i.e., spiritual identity) figure into this process? Did Jacob gain the victory through appeasing Esau (verse 20) or by wrestling with his own limitations and coming out a broken and changed man? When did you last face such a trial? How did you handle it? Like Jacob? Are you learning to "let go and let God" as the old saying goes? To walk by faith and not by sight? To trust and obey? Compare Jacob's response to YHVH this time with his response in Genesis 28:16–22. Has his faith response changed? In Genesis 28:20–22, notice how Jacob bargains with YHVH. He promises to serve YHVH if he will bring him back safely to his father's house. In Genesis 32, no bargains are made. Jacob values the promises of YHVH so much that he was willing to wrestle all night with Elohim to insure that the divine blessing was his.
- 3 **32:2**, *He called the name of the place Mahanaim*. Mahanaim (*Strong's* H4266) or Machanayim/מַחֲנַיִם/ *mem-chet-nun-yud-mem sofit*) means "two camps" and is the plural of the root word *machanah*/מַחֲנֶה/ *mem-chet-nun-hey* (*Strong's* H4264) meaning "encampment, camp, camp of armed host, army camp, company, body of people." This spot is near the River Jabok, which is a tributary to the Jordan River located on the east side of that river in the modern country of Jordan. During the time of the nation of ancient Israel, it was located in the Gilead region on either the border between Gad and Reuben or Gad and Ephraim. Song of Solomon makes reference to *mahanaim* in 6:13 where we read,

Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you. What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were the company/*m'kolah* of two armies/*mahanah*.

The Hebrew word *m'kolah* (*Strong's* H4246) means "dance." The following is my observation on the prophetic/end-time connection between Genesis 32:2 and Song 6:13.

There is a correlation between Song 6:13 and Genesis 32:2 since Mahanaim in Genesis and "Machneh" or "two armies" in the Song of Solomon are the same word; the former is the plural and the latter is the root.

I believe that Genesis 32 is a prophetic shadow-picture of how Jacob's descendants will come back into the land of their inheritance prior to Yeshua's return. They will be divided into two camps as they enter the land of Israel and will have to confront Esau (many of whose descendants comprise the modern Palestinian-Arabs who will be blocking the way. Both camps (Judah and Ephraim, currently represented by the Jewish and Christian peoples) are returning out of spiritual Babylon (as per Rev 18:4) where they have been in servitude to the Babylonish world system even as Jacob was a servant to Laban (who lived in the area of ancient Babylon). They will not defeat Esau through appeasement (Gen 32:20) as Jacob tried to do with Esau. Appeasement got Jacob nowhere except poorer. The modern state of Israeli is dealing with the Palestinians as Jacob did with Esau by giving in to their demands in exchange for a peaceful existence in the land.

As our father Jacob did, so we too will have to wrestle with man and El (Gen 32:28) to return to the Promised Land. We must prevail with YHVH and demonstrate to him that we are serious about wanting to possess our promised inheritance, and at the same time, overcome ourselves (the carnal man within) with our pride and self-reliance. When we die to self as a people-group (both Judah and Ephraim), this will please the Father and he will make even our enemies (i.e., modern Esau) to be at peace with us (Prov 16:7). Appeasing the enemy, as the modern Israeli government is doing presently with the Palestinians, will get them nowhere, as it gained Jacob nothing. They/we must confront the devil/enemy head on in humble faith in the Abrahamic Covenant promises of YHVH. As with Jacob, they/we as collective Israel need to spend a dark night of the soul wrestling with YHVH, get a good look at his face to see who he really is, which will in turn help them/us to understand who they/we really are. Then they/we will be humbled, will learn to place our trust in the promises and protection of YHVH resulting in our being transformed from being a *Jacob* (meaning "heel catcher, supplanter, a deceptive sneak thief") into an *Israel* ("a prince of El or prevailer with El") with a new name and identity.

Similarly, Messianic Israel/Ephraim must go through the same process. The good news is that the kingdom of Israel *will* arise. Jacob will get transformed into Israel. How can I be so sure of this? Because IT IS WRITTEN in YHVH's Word! The two houses of Israel will have to learn to dance with each other before they can dance on their wedding day with King Shlomo (or Solomon derived from the Hebrew word *shalom*)/Yeshua Sar Shalom (Prince of Peace)—their Bridegroom.

Only then can we become the Bride of Yeshua like the Shulamite (also from *shalom*) was to Solomon when we have found peace within ourselves and each other as the Song of Solomon (*shalom*) and Genesis 32 depict.

4 **32:9–12**, Discuss the dynamics of Jacob's prayer. Do not forget that up to this point in Jacob's life he had relied on his wits to extricate himself from difficult situations. This time was different. Like the Children of Israel trapped between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea, Jacob could go neither forward nor backward. Behind him was Laban and in front of him was Esau. In this prayer, notice the importance Jacob places on covenant relationship. He was throwing himself at the mercy of YHVH's promised Word and reputation. Can we do the same now when in a difficult spot? Can we humbly remind YHVH of the promises he has made to us personally and in his written Word? What was Jacob's demeanor before YHVH? Arrogant or contrite in spirit? Did Jacob direct this prayer heavenward purely out of a selfish motive—to save his skin, or is there a bigger prophetic picture here on which Jacob had his eyes set? What are the last words of the prayer? Why is this so important and why does he end with this? If YHVH did not deliver Jacob and his family and the nation of Israel was destroyed, how would the promises of YHVH be fulfilled and would YHVH's name be glorified? Isn't this scenario somewhat like watching a movie where the villain is about to destroy the star of the show, but then you remember that the star cannot be destroyed since he's the hero, so you breathe easier knowing the outcome will somehow end favorably. How could YHVH allow Jacob and his family to be destroyed and still fulfill his promises? What can we learn from this? If we're walking in the perfect will of the Father, the end will always turn out favorably for us too no matter what we have to go through to get there. So give YHVH the glory, rejoice and have faith and go onward!

- 5** 32:22–32, This is the account of Jacob wrestling with ??? In verse 24, who does it say Jacob wrestled with? Now read Hosea 12:3–4 where it says that Jacob strove with Elohim *and* the angel (the word *angel* is the Hebrew word *malak*, which means “messenger” whether human, angelic or divine.) 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 one in all of Scripture that fits all three of these descriptions? So with whom did Jacob *really* wrestle? 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 Pet 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 Cor 10:4).
- 6** 32:24, Why did Elohim wrestle all night with Jacob? Why not just wound him early on and save the time and trouble? What does this teach us of the long-suffering nature of Elohim who will continue to strive with us and our fleshy tendencies and reliances until we finally submit to him and recognize that only through him can we have real strength and victory, though we might end up physically lame in the process? Why the wrestling all night “till the breaking of the day”? What does *night* and *breaking of day* represent metaphorically with regard to our spiritual walk? What does this teach us about faith, the struggles of this life and about not giving up until the very end when the blessings and dawning of a new day are about to break forth? Jacob received the new name of *Israel* during this time (verse 28). Through this struggle, he took a quantum leap spiritually and became a new man with a new identity. Has this ever happened in your life? Don’t we progress spiritually only out of crisis? No pain, no gain(!), as the saying goes. What were the results of Jacob’s struggle? Verse 32 says of Jacob, “as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he limped upon his thigh.” *Penuel* means “faces of El.” Taking a little poetic license (at the *drash*/allegorical or third level of Jewish Biblical interpretation) here, we could paraphrase this phrase as follows: As he emerged out of the darkness of self reliance, the face of Elohim shined favorably upon him as he no longer relied on the flesh. Pause to reflect on this for a moment and take quick stock of your spiritual walk in the light of these words.
- 7** Who are some other notable Biblical characters besides Jacob who struggled with trying to achieve their divine mission through human means? How about Abraham with Hagar, Moses when he murdered the Egyptian, Samson, or Peter when he cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant? Can you think of some others? What did these men learn about walking in the Spirit versus walking in the flesh?
- 8** 32:28, *Jacob/Ya’acov* means *heal snatcher/holder* or *supplanter* while *Israel/Yisra’el* means *Prince of El* or *El Prevails/Prevailer with El*. What can we learn about the change of Jacob’s character as reflected in the changing of his name? Who is the focal point of the name and the initiator of the action in the first name ... in the second name? What can we learn from this for our own faith walk?
- 9** 32:32, Please notice that the sinew, representing the strength of the flesh, only shrank. It was not removed. What does this signify spiritually with regard to the old flesh nature? When one is born of the Spirit from above does he lose his soul (mind, will and emotions) nature? What happens to it? It must be transformed and renewed by the Spirit of Elohim to be conformed to his perfect will (Rom 12:2). The soul-man will still try to assert dominance over the spirit-man. Paul discusses the struggle between the two in Romans 7:14–25.
- 10** 35:1–15, Jacob, twenty years earlier, had left Canaan in disgrace fleeing eastward into exile (as his descendants would do generations later), where in captivity to Laban he pays the price for being a deceiver. In captivity, Jacob prospers and finally is able to return to the Promised Land. En route westward back to Canaan, he goes through a wilderness experience, as the children of his namesake would do several generations later. What type of individuals does YHVH *not* permit and permit to enter into the Land of Promise? The answers are in Hebrews 4:1–11 where the writer speaks of doubt and unbelief, faith, hardness of heart versus resting in YHVH and not in the works of our flesh. (Read it.) To come home, like the prodigal son, to the home of his earthly parents and to that of his Heavenly Father (*Beth-el* or *House of El*) what was required of Jacob? He had to manifest brokenness, humility, a new identity, repentance, and make restitution for past sins committed against others (Gen 34). Will YHVH similarly break our stiff

necks, refine and purify us to become suitable for the Master's use in his spiritual house? Are you fighting the process that YHVH is working in your life to prepare you for your spiritual Beth-el? Jacob got hit again and again until his carnal will was finally broken, his heart was circumcised and he died to the willfulness of his flesh and scheming to bring YHVH's will to pass in his life. (Have other notable personages of Scripture tried the same things and had their will broken before they were useful to YHVH? Remember Moses when he murdered the Egyptian? What did YHVH do with him for 40 years?) Remember, neither the uncircumcised in heart nor flesh will enter into the spiritual House of Elohim (Ezek 44:9), which is the ultimate Promised Land. Where are you in this spiritual process? The Promised Land belongs to those (i.e., the seed of Jacob) who pass the wilderness tests of YHVH (Gen. 35:12). Who is that seed? (Read Romans 4:16; 9:8,11; Gal 3:7,9,14,28,29.) Are we not following exactly in our father Jacob's footsteps leaving our exile and captivity in Babylon (false religious systems, which contains a mixture of both good and evil, see Rev 18:4), returning westward across the Jordan into the land of Promise, to our spiritual inheritance, which is defined in terms of YHVH's covenants with Israel (Eph 2:12–14)? Is not YHVH calling out a growing remnant of believers in Yeshua to do just that in our time? Do you understand that Jacob's life is a prophetic road map of what each individual believer must go through to obtain his spiritual inheritance? His life is a prophetic picture of what all Israel, collectively, must go through, as well.

HAFTORAH READING—HOSEA 11:7–12:12 (11)

The Heart of the Father Longing for His Prodigal Ephraim to Return to Him

- 1 As in the previous Haftorah, we find YHVH using more parallels from the life of Jacob (12:2–4) in an effort to bring his people to repent of their backslid condition. In order to move Israel to repentance, YHVH recalls an example from Jacob's life. As the patriarch Jacob wrestled with the Messenger of Elohim at Bethel and prevailed, it was not without Jacob paying a price. What was that price and how did Jacob really win, in the long run? Hosea portrays Israel as a proud and self-reliant people, yet what lessons could she have learned from the example of Jacob? When we finally turn from our prideful and worldly ways and have our own divine encounter with Elohim's heavenly messenger—Yeshua the Messiah—at our own spiritual Beth-El (House of El) how will our lives change for the good?
- 2 What are the sins of Ephraim that YHVH identifies in this passage? Look for key phrases that reveal the nature of this sin. Do any of these areas of sin apply to the Christian church in general ... or to you, in particular?
- 3 What are the key phrases that reveal the Father's never-ending love for his people and his longing for them to return to him? Through what means is YHVH attempting to get Ephraim to recognize their backslidden and worldly spiritual condition in hopes they will wake up, repent and return to him?
- 4 Identify the places in this passage where YHVH brings in the issue of judgment as a sobering impetus to get Israel to return to him.
- 5 Now, in light of what we have learned above, and in light of Ephraim's spiritual condition and YHVH's approach to bringing them back to him, what lessons are in this for us, and how can we apply this to our own lives?
- 6 **11:10**, *The children shall tremble from the west* (KJV), or *the children will come trembling from the west* (CJV). Who are the "children of Ephraim" who will return to YHVH "trembling from the west"? Has this happened yet? There are numerous biblical references about Ephraim's (i.e., the House of Israel's) lost and scattered descendants returning from various parts of the earth. Here are some scriptural references to this:
 - The exiles of Ephraim will return from the north. (Jer 3:18; 16:14–15; 31:8–10)
 - The exiles of Ephraim will return from the isles of the sea at the proper time. (Jer 31:9–10; Isa 24:15; 42:4; 51:4–5)
 - Israel will be scattered to the ends of the earth. (Isa 41:5; 41:9; 43:6; 45:22; 52:10; 16:19; Acts 13:47)

Who are these descendants of the Northern Kingdom or ten tribes of Israel? The modern-day Jews are descended primarily from the tribe of Judah (*ArtScroll Chumash*, p. 1106), so it can't be them. For YHVH's Word not to be broken and the words of his prophets not to be a lie, this still has to be fulfilled.

7 12:7–8, Ephraim is a *merchant* (literally, a *Canaanite*). This seems to have a double meaning here. Ephraim has become very prosperous through merchandising, and not always honestly (but through deceit). But Ephraim has also become just like Canaanites (the people of the land) with whom YHVH commanded that they were not to intermingle. What are the spiritual implications of this? Compare this with what we read in Revelation 6:5 and 3:17. Notice some similar phraseology in all of these passages. Are there any correlations between who Ephraim was historically and who he has become in the end of days?

