

Genesis 33

Verses 1- 3

Then Jacob raised his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel, and the two slave women. ² He put the slave women and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. ³ But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Then Jacob raised his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel, and the two slave women.

Jacob had wrestled all night and received the blessing he was looking for but he is still unsure about the meeting that is about to take place. So what was the purpose of the wrestling match and him being blessed?

² He put the slave women and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

It would seem Jacob arranged them in the order of their importance to him.

³ But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Jacob may have been scared, but he took the lead. If Esau had evil intentions, Jacob might save the others by sacrificing himself.

It is hard to know if he planned on taking the lead when he first came up with this plan or was this decision made after he got the blessing from God. The blessing may have given Jacob the mental strength he needed to make the right decision.

If Esau was still angry, this act of humility might help in lowering the anger of his brother. Humility is usually a good approach when meeting an enemy.

Verses 4 - 7

⁴ Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. ⁵ He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, “Who are these with you?” So he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” ⁶ Then the slave women came forward with their children, and they bowed down. ⁷ And Leah likewise came forward with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came forward with Rachel, and they bowed down.

⁴ Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Esau had become a man of influence and power in that area and he had forgiven Jacob. The 400 men that were with Esau were there to help him welcome his brother back. We often worry about things that never come to pass.

⁵ He raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, “Who are these with you? So he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.”

Jacob had left 20 years ago as a single man and now he was the husband of 4 women and the father of 11 sons and a number of daughters. Jacob was correct to say, “God has graciously given them to your servant”.

All of Jacob’s family members bowed before Esau, from the least of them to the greatest. In this case the first (most valued) were the last to meet Esau and the last (least valued) were first to meet him.

Verses 8 - 11

⁸ And he said, “What do you mean by all this company which I have met?” And he said, “To find favor in the sight of my lord.” ⁹ But Esau said, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.” ¹⁰ Jacob said, “No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then accept my gift from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably. ¹¹ Please accept my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty.” So he urged him, and he accepted *it*.

⁸ And he said, “What do you mean by all this company which I have met?” And he said, “To find favor in the sight of my lord.”

Jacob had sent 5 herds, a total of 580 animals, ahead of him and his family the day before. Esau met the herds and those who were leading them before he reached Jacob and his family.

⁹ But Esau said, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.”

Esau was the leader of these 400 men and it is fair to assume that he had become a wealthy man and didn't need anything from Jacob.

¹¹ Please accept my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty.” So he urged him, and he accepted it.

20 years ago Esau wanted to kill Jacob but now he was glad to see him. Perhaps the many blessings that Esau had received helped him forgive his brother. Even though Esau had already forgiven him, Jacob urged him to accept the gift.

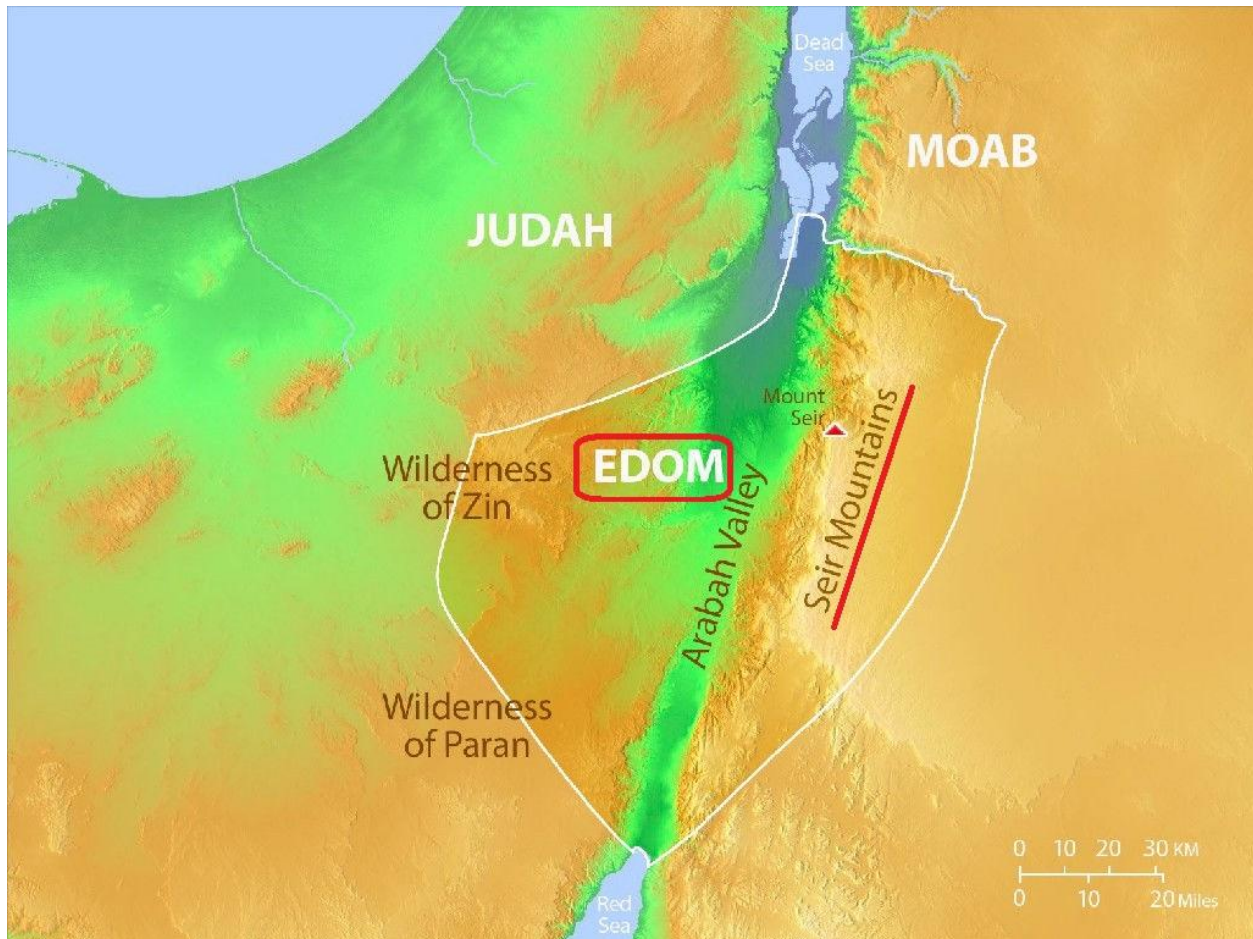
Verses 12 - 17

¹² Then Esau said, “Let’s journey on and go, and I will go ahead of you.” ¹³ But he said to him, “My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds that are nursing are a matter of concern to me. And if they are driven hard *just* one day, all the flocks will die. ¹⁴ Please let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, at the pace of the cattle that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.” ¹⁵ Then Esau said, “Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.” But he said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.” ¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷ But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth.

¹² Then Esau said, “Let’s journey on and go, and I will go ahead of you.

Esau wanted Jacob to follow him to his home in Seir.

See map 3305



¹⁴ Please let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, at the pace of the cattle that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.”

Jacob indicates that he will visit him later but for now they must go at a slower pace for the sake of the young kids and the herds.

¹⁵ Then Esau said, “Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.” But he said, “What need is there?

The offer of an escort by Esau was a nice gesture, but it seems that Jacob was in no hurry to stay with his brother in Moab and having Esau’s men around was not needed or convenient because Jacob had already decided that he would remain near the Jabbok River.

See map 3310



¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷ But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth.

Esau went south to his home in Edom and Jacob built a house near the Jabbok River. The place was called Succoth because of the shelters he erected there for his cattle.

Verses 18 - 20

¹⁸ Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. ¹⁹ He bought the plot of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. ²⁰ Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

¹⁸ Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city.

We don't know how long Jacob remained in Succoth but he left there and camped near the city of Shechem.

See map 3315



Before Jacob left for Haran he was living in Beersheba but now that he had returned he was living in the heart of Canaan.

See Map 3320



Jacob will stay in Shechem for 10 or 12 years.

¹⁹ He bought the plot of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money.

This was the first property that Jacob owned in the Promised Land and 364 years later it will serve as a burial plot for the bones of Joseph.

See Joshua 24:32

³² Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the plot of land which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph's sons.

See pics 3325, 3330, and 3335





Jacob also dug a well there.

See Picks 3340, 3345, and 3350





The well of Jacob was never mentioned in the O.T but John speaks of it in his gospel.

See John 4:6

⁵ So He *came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; ⁶ and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, tired from His journey, was just sitting by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman at this well.

²⁰ Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

Jacob followed the example of Abraham who built an altar wherever he went.

El-Elohe-Israel means Mighty is the God of Israel, or God is the God of Israel.