DECEMBER 13, 2019

Parashat Vayishlach

(Genesis 32:4-36:43)

Taught By:

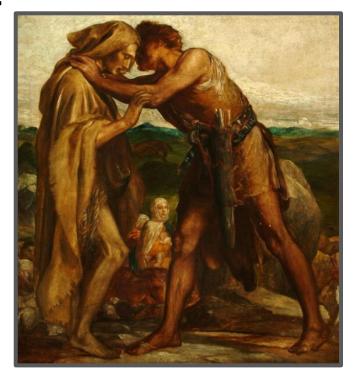
Sophia



SUMMARY

When Ya'akov and his family leave Lavan's home, Ya'akov sends messengers to tell his brother Esav that he is returning home and that he wants to make peace with him. The messengers return and tell Ya'akov that Esav is coming toward him with four hundred men. Ya'akov has not seen Esav in twenty years, and he is feeling scared because when he last saw him, Esav threatened to kill him for stealing his blessing.

Ya'akov divides up his camp in case Esav attacks. He sends gifts ahead to his brother Esav. He separates himself from his family, animals, and servants and is left alone. He then spends the night wrestling with a mysterious man. Ya'akov only lets him go when the man agrees to bless him. The man blesses him by giving him a different name--calling him "Yisrael." When Ya'akov and Esav see each other, Ya'akov offers Esav a blessing and they hug. Still, they go their own ways after their reunion.



Rachel later dies along the road while giving birth to Binyamin. Yitzhak dies, and Ya'akov and Esav come together again to bury him in the Cave of Mahpelah--with ancestors Avraham and Sarah.

1) When Yaakov's messengers went ahead of him to meet Esav and to tell Esav that Yaakov has been successful and is coming to meet him, they return to Yaakov to report that Esav has left his home and is heading Yaakov's way to meet him. Esav is bringing 400 men with him. Why might Esav have brought 400 men with him?

Maybe he brought 400 men with him to make *Yaakov* worried. Maybe he was even planning to attack *Yaakov*. Or maybe *Yaakov* just sees *Esav* with these men and gets nervous because he doesn't know these men, so he *thinks Esav* is going to attack him. Maybe *Esav* just wants to introduce *Yaakov* to all of these people so they can meet and become friends.

2) When Yaakov hears that Esav is heading his way he immediately divides his people into two different camps and prays to G!d for protection. Then he sends his brother Esav hundreds of animals as gifts. Why do you think Yaakov sent his brother Esav so many presents?

Maybe Yaakov realizes that he misses Esav so much and he hopes these gifts will show Esav how much Yaakov loves him so that Esav won't want to hurt him.

3) When they do meet, the brothers hug and kiss and cry. *Yaakov* tells *Esav* that seeing him is like seeing the face of G!d. What do you think that might mean?

I think it means that *Yaakov* loves his brother so much he thinks his brother is holy like G!d--true and kind and sweet and someone he can trust. He must have missed him so much.

