
Pearl Seeking

TREASURING HIS WORD

Let's do a quick overview of the entire Torah portion:

Monday:	Gen. 32:3-32	Ya'aqob prepares to meet Esaw; Ya'aqob wrestles with a 'Man' until daybreak and gets his hip dislocated; Ya'aqob's name is changed to Yisra'el
Tuesday:	Gen. 33	Ya'aqob and Esaw are reunited
Wednesday:	Gen. 34	Dinah's story
Thursday:	Gen. 35	Ya'aqob keeps his promise to return to Beyth El; Rahel dies after Binyamin is born; Yitshaq dies
Friday:	Gen. 36	Genealogy of Esaw, father of the Edomites

*Much had happened to Ya'aqob since he left his parent's home. In parsha Vayeitzei, he had settled down to sleep on a stone and had a dream from Yahweh that encouraged him to continue on his journey. Here is a brief overview of the rest of the parsha (which we shall provide in a future year): Ya'aqob had arrived at his Uncle Laban's home, married his 2 wives and fathered 11 children. His 20 years of service to his father-in-law, Laban, was marked with many challenges and conflicts. In this week's Parsha Pearls lesson, Ya'aqob returns to his homeland with his family and all his possessions, wanting to make amends with his brother Esaw. He also has to fulfill his vow to Yahweh, where he swore that if Yahweh would bring him to his father's home in peace, he would return to Beyth El. Now, let's read Gen. 32:3-20; 33 & 35:1-7, 9-15.

PARSHA POINTS

- While on his way to Esaw his brother in the land of Se'ir, the field of Edom, Ya'aqob sends messengers ahead of him with words of peace towards Esaw - 32:3
- Ya'aqob's messengers are to tell Esaw that Ya'aqob his 'servant', has been with Laban all this time and has acquired bulls, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants, with the hope to find favor in his 'master' Esaw's eyes - 32:4-5
- The messengers return with a disturbing message: Esaw is approaching Ya'aqob's camp with 400 (**arba me'ot**) men - 32:6



- Fearing that his brother, Esaw, is coming to finally take vengeance upon him, Ya'aqob splits his family into 2 (**shtayim**) camps, so that if Esaw strikes one camp, the other can escape - 32:7-8
- As soon as he is left all alone, Ya'aqob immediately begins to plead with Yahweh (32:9-12):



- "Elohim of my father **A**braham and Elohim of my father Yitshaq" (*reminding Yahweh that he is in this line of promise*)
- "Return to your land and to your relatives, and I do good to you" (*reminding Yahweh what He said*)
- "I do not deserve the least of all the kindness/loving-commitment and all the truth which You have shown Your servant" (*humbly appealing to Yahweh's righteous characteristics*)
- "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esaw, for I fear him" (*Even though he knows all of the above, he still does NOT have confidence that all will end well*)
- "For You said, 'I shall certainly do good to you, and shall make your seed as the sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count'" (*ending with a reminder that he is the one who must continue the promise/covenant, and needs to be alive to do that*)
- Ya'aqob sorts into droves (groups) presents (**minchah**) of livestock and servants he intends to give his brother Esaw (32:13-17):

We have a resource available to learn these Hebrew numbers. You can find it on the YMTOI site: <https://ymtoi.org/parsha-pearls/resources/>

- 200 (**matayim**) female goats
- 20 (**esrim**) male goats
- 200 ewes
- 20 rams
- 30 (**shloshim**) suckling-camels with their colts
- 40 (**arba'im**) cows
- 10 (**eser**) bulls
- 20 female donkeys
- 10 foals



- Ya'aqob instructs his servants to line up in droves. Each drove of presents is meant to 'butter up' Esaw and to assure him that Ya'aqob is coming behind them - 32:18-20
- Ya'aqob arranges his family so that the female servants (Bilhah and Zilpah) and their children go first, followed by Le'ah and her children, and lastly, Rahel and Yoseph - 33:1-2

- When Ya'aqob sees his brother Esaw, he begins bowing to the ground, and does this 7 (**sheva**) times before reaching him - 33:3
- Esaw runs to his brother, embraces and kisses him and they both weep - 33:4



- Ya'aqob introduces his family to his brother - 33:5-7
- Esaw and Ya'aqob talk about the presents Ya'aqob has sent, with Esaw asserting that he doesn't need them - At last, Ya'aqob convinces Esaw to receive them - 33:8-11
- The brothers (**achim**) also 'discuss' the pace at which they need to proceed. Ya'aqob convinces his brother that he needs to go at a slower pace and that he does NOT need Esaw's men to stay with them - 33:12-16
- Ya'aqob settles in **Sukkoth** (booths), builds himself a house, and makes booths for his livestock - 33:17
- Ya'aqob sets up an altar to Yahweh in Shekem, pitches his tent there and calls it **El Elohe Yisra'el** (meaning, 'Mighty One of Israel') - 33:18-20

* Remember back in Parsha Vayetzai (28:20-22) that Ya'aqob had a dream and made a vow to Yahweh that if he returned to his father's house in peace, he would return to Beyth El (House of Elohim) and do some things? Let's find out the conclusion of this story.

- Elohim tells Ya'aqob to go to Beyth El and make an altar to Him there, where He first appeared to him - 35:1
- Ya'aqob's household is told to put away their mighty ones (idols) before they go before Yahweh and to cleanse themselves and change their garments - 35:2
- Ya'aqob takes the idols and earrings and hides them (buries them) under the terebinth tree near Shekem - 35:4
- The surrounding cities recognize that Elohim is with Ya'aqob, and allow him to pass through them without being pursued - 35:5
- Ya'aqob builds an altar in Beyth El - 35:7
- Elohim appears to Ya'aqob and declares a second time (first time - 32:28) that his name is now Yisra'el. He also tells him (35:10-12):
 - "I am El Shaddai"
 - "Be fruitful and increase"
 - "A nation and a company of nations will arise from you"
 - "Sovereigns will arise from him"
 - "The land I gave to your forefathers, I give to you and your children"
- Ya'aqob sets up a standing column/pillar and pours a wine drink offering and oil on it - 35:14-15



DIGGING DEEPER

Parents/Teachers may choose to use these prompts for further discussion of the Torah portion.

- Why does Ya'aqob call himself Esaw's 'servant' when he has the birthright and firstborn inheritance? Why does he call Esaw his 'master'? Is he 'battering' him up? (32:4)
- Why did Ya'aqob have mighty ones (gods/idols/elohim) in his camp? Do you think that Ya'aqob just found out about these idols? Could Ya'aqob have been thinking that these might have been the idols that were stolen from Laban's house? (35:2)
- Why did Ya'aqob tell his household to remove their earrings before they left for Beyth El? Do you think they might have been worn for superstitious reasons or pagan practices? (35:4)
- Why do you think Ya'aqob hid the idols under the terebinth tree instead of destroying them as we see later instructed in Scripture? (35:4; also see Ex. 23:24; 34:13, Deut. 7:5; 12:3)
- Is Rahel's early death a fulfillment of what Ya'aqob said in Genesis 31:32? Notice she died shortly after the idols were discovered. (35:19)

