



MORDEKAI'S DRASH — VAYISHLACH

Torah: *Vayishlach* (He sent), *B'resheet* (Genesis) 32.4(3)-36.43

Haftorah: *Ovadyah* (Obadiah) 1.1-21

Suggested Messianic Writings reading: Heb 11.11-20

Shalom,

(B'resheet 32.25(24)): "And Ya'akov was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day." As our parashah opens, *Ya'akov* (Jacob) is returning to his home, after all the many years of working for and being cheated continually by his less-than-honest father-in-law *Lavan* (Laban). Now he is returning home, uncertain of how his brother *Esav* (Esau) would greet him. By this time, *Ya'akov* has 11 sons and a daughter, and as far as he knows, he may be putting them all at risk. Yet at the same time he knew it was time to leave the home of *Lavan*. *Ya'akov* seems to have kept his faith in *ADONAI* during those years, but also seems to have leaned a lot upon his own devices. Now the time has come in *ADONAI*'s plan for the formation of a *chosen people*. (As we noted in last week's drash, *Ya'akov* was the first of the three patriarchs of Israel to father *only* "Hebrew" children.) But first *Ya'akov*'s *heart* must be dealt with.

So *Ya'akov*, before he comes in contact with *Esav*, spends a night alone wrestling with a man. I am reminded here of a later story, when *Y'hoshua* (Joshua), the new leader of Israel, was near Jericho when suddenly he saw a man in front of him with his sword drawn. When *Y'hoshua* asked the man if he was for Israel or for their enemies, the man basically replied, "No, I'm here to take over" (*Y'hoshua* 5.13-15). *Y'hoshua* was a soldier, and was prepared for battle, so he was ready to fight as needed. We are not told how the *Ya'akov* event began, so we don't know *Ya'akov*'s initial reaction. We do know that the Hebrew says that a "man, **אִישׁ** *ish*" was wrestling with *Ya'akov*; the same term is used for the *man* who stood before *Y'hoshua*. This word is a contraction of **אִנוֹשׁ** *enosh*, which we find used in the Book of Daniel, where the prophet saw "one like a *son of man*, and he came up to the Ancient of Days." The phrase "son of man" here is **בֶּן אָנוֹשׁ** *bar enosh*. When *Yeshua* referred to Himself as "the Son of Man," he would have used "Tanakh terminology" that the people of Israel, His listeners, were familiar with, and this title in particular indicated His deity. **אִנוֹשׁ** *Enosh* means, "sick, incurable, desperate, wicked, woeful," in the sense of the mortality of man. This is in contrast to another usage of *son of man* found in Scripture, **בֶּן אָדָם** *ben adam*, meaning, "[son of a] human being." (*Bar* is Aramaic for "son," *ben* is Hebrew.) Stern uses "human being" in the CJB. **בֶּן אָדָם** *Ben adam* is seen particularly in the book of *Yechezk'el* (Ezekiel), as *ADONAI* calls out often to *Yechezk'el* with this title.

When *Yeshua* called Himself "Son of Man, **בֶּן אָנוֹשׁ** *Bar Enosh*," He was indicating His dual role. [Although this term is not seen in the Greek, we must remember that *Yeshua* was Jewish, speaking to His Jewish audience, using the language they knew – Hebrew and/or Aramaic.] Firstly, He came and took on the weak flesh nature of man, to the point of experiencing physical death; Secondly, He stated that He *is* THE Son of Man who approached the throne of the Ancient of Days, as seen by the prophet Daniel. No mere mortal man could have done that and lived; this One was blessed and given an eternal kingdom. Nor is any angel ever blessed in such a manner. This **בֶּן אָנוֹשׁ** *Bar Enosh* could only be one "person" – the One who is fully God and fully man, *Yeshua HaMashiakh*, *Yeshua the Messiah*. This heavenly vision of Daniel's is found in Daniel 7.13-14; a similar picture is found in Revelation 4 & 5 as witnessed by *Yokhanan* (John).

So in all likelihood, *Ya'akov* was very possibly wrestling with the pre-incarnate *Yeshua*. But there are other aspects to look at. English is a boiling pot language, with a word history coming from many ancient languages of the earth, so it is good to study the Word of G-d in the original language and thought as best we can. In the book, *Aleph-Bet Soup*, by Charles J. Thurston (Hearthstone Publishing), the author notes that "there are more different English versions of the Bible (at least fifty) than any other translation in any other language." Thurston's book is a study on the reliability of the Hebrew Scriptures through the ages, and the author continues, "The freedom of speech so treasured by the English, both in Britain and its colonies in America and Australia, has permitted a very wide range of potential meanings of Scriptures not necessarily intended by the Author, as the Scriptures have been brought down to our modern lowest English common denominator. It is not the original inspired Hebrew and Greek Scriptures that create so many divisive factions and such wide disagreements of theology, but rather the inferior and imprecise nature of the English language."

With that in mind, let's proceed. We are told that, "a man *wrestled* with [Ya'akov]...." The Hebrew root for *wrestled* is אָבַק *ah-bahk*, which means, "to float away (as vapor); to bedust, to grapple." A dictionary definition of *grapple* is, "to struggle, in or as if in wrestling" (my emphasis). This gives a bit of a mysterious slant to the idea of wrestling here. Is it possible that Ya'akov was not actually *physically* wrestling with this man? But what about the hip injury? That sounds pretty physical. Wikipedia gives this description of the working of a hip: "The strong but loose fibrous capsule of the hip joint permits the hip joint to have the second largest range of movement (second only to the shoulder) and yet support the weight of the body, arms and head." Could this possibly mean that Ya'akov, as the father of a [coming] new nation, could no longer depend upon his own strength to lead this people? Did this injury infer his weakness, and that the strength and power would have to come from the One who wrestled with him? The literal Hebraic implication is that the man struck "the power of the generative parts;" perhaps the limp that followed referred to the constant "pain" that the descendants of Ya'akov would endure.

My take here is that Ya'akov spent the night "wrestling" with ADONAI in deep, deep intercession. In doing so, Ya'akov became totally aware of the weakness of his flesh-man, and the error of doing things his own way. And so he interceded for his prophesied numerous descendants. His "hip injury" meant to him that he could not depend upon his own strength anymore, but would have to lean upon the strength of the One who "touched" him. Yet because of his persistence all night long, his faithfulness was shown to ADONAI, who in turn blessed him mightily. I believe that when we are told that "the man saw that he did not prevail against Ya'akov," this simply meant that ADONAI was testing the faith of Ya'akov to the nth degree. So this *man* in a sense said here also, "No, I'm here to take over". Because of this, Ya'akov knew that He had touched the heart of the Father, who was guiding and protecting his every step, and thus from Esav he would have nothing to fear.

So whether or not this was an actual physical wrestling, or a spiritual wrestling, the implication for us is that when things seem so fearful and life does not seem fair and just, in the midst of great trials and difficulties, Yeshua is there. His "touch" may seem at times to be injurious, but in reality it is healing, and "all things work together for good...." Things may not go the way we would desire, even to the point of suffering and death, but He is still there. Yeshua, as a man, walked the same path we walk, and He understands. Why He allows great trials to come is beyond our human understanding. Even such questions as "Why the holocaust?" are well beyond our understanding, but yet I believe that He was there, tending to His sheep, providing for many a Corrie Ten Boom or an Oskar Schindler; history has revealed that there were many such rescuers and "angels;" others remain unknown, as Irena Sendler did for many years.

There is another lesson here. This wrestling continued until "the breaking of *the day*". We are entering a season of darker and darker days, as evil is growing stronger in these end times. Perhaps the idea is not so much one of whether or not we can spend an entire night in intercession, as it is that we must continue in intercession – "grappling" in prayer constantly (praying without ceasing) – until The Day comes, the Day of the return of Yeshua. We will have to press in while the darkness seems to envelop us. I want to encourage all who read this that you must prepare your hearts for greater and greater spiritual darkness, for potential tribulation. But be encouraged, do not be fearful, for greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world. Scripture speaks of a great end-time apostasy, a massive falling away from the faith. I encourage you to hold on to your faith, just as Sha'ul wrote to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of the faith, take hold of [literally, "seize"] the eternal life to which you were called when you testified so well to your faith before many witnesses" (1 Timothy 6.12).

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! The salvation of the Jewish people will affect the rest of the planet, for only when they cry out to Yeshua in acceptance and repentance will He return (see Matthew 23.37-39). That most likely will not happen until *after* "Jacob's trouble" (*Yirmeyahu*/Jeremiah 30.7). As a Messianic believer, my choice would be to stay here and stand with Israel during her trials. May ADONAI grant me that grace if/when it is needed!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you
into heaven, will come back to you in just the
same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)