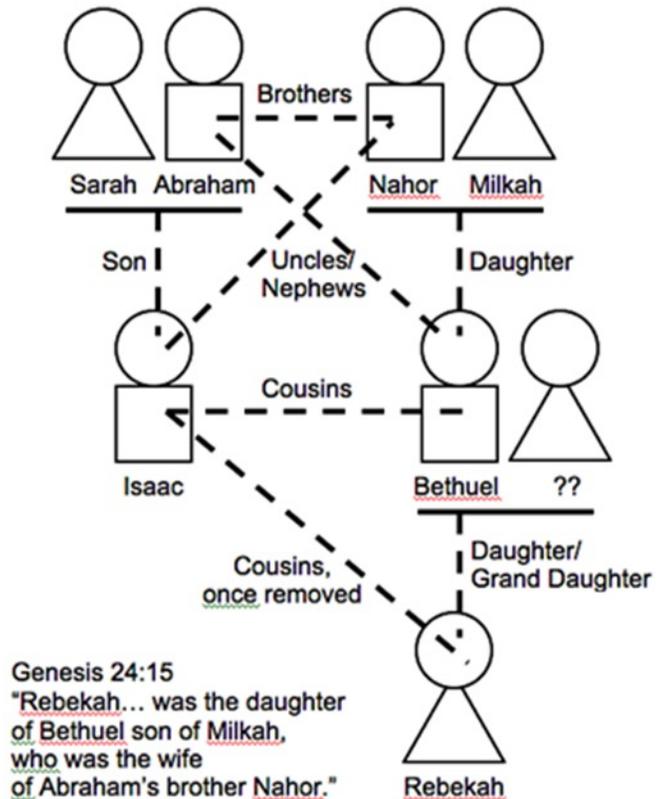




Genesis 24-33

Come Follow Me

Genesis 24: Isaac and Rebekah



Our Petitions

The task is to draw close enough to the Lord that we progress to the point where we petition Him according to His will, not ours. “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.” (1 John 5:14.) In modern revelations the Lord has declared His willingness to grant us the requests contained in our petitions if what we ask for is expedient for us. (D&C 88:64-65.)



Sufficiently Purified

When we become sufficiently purified and cleansed from sin, we can ask what we will in the name of Jesus “and it shall be done.” (D&C 50:29.) The Lord even promises us that when one reaches a certain spiritual condition, “it shall be given you what you shall ask.” (D&C 50:30.)

Thus we clearly need to have the Spirit with us as we petition, because “in the Spirit” we will ask “according to the will of God wherefore it is done even as he asketh.” (D&C 46:30.) (Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979, 95)

RVUS ABRAHE ADFONTE VENIT REBECCA ET DA
CAMELISEIVS

Rebekah waters
the camels –
Gen. 24.10-20





Another way to
see this story –
Gen. 25.27

Jacob was a plain (תָּם)
man, dwelling in tents.

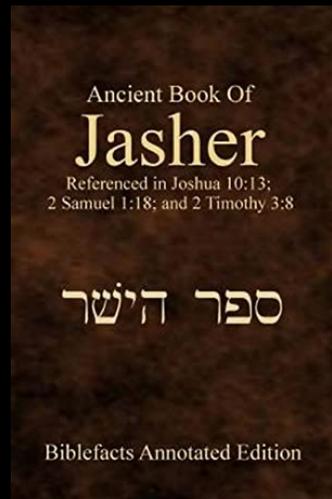
וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יוֹשֵׁב אֹהֳלִים

Esau, Nimrod, and the garment of power

1 And Esau at that time, after the death of Abraham, frequently went in the field to hunt. 2 And Nimrod king of Babel, the same was Amraphel, also frequently went with his mighty men to hunt in the field, and to walk about with his men in the cool of the day. 3 And Nimrod was observing Esau all the days, for a jealousy was formed in the heart of Nimrod against Esau all the days. 4 And on a certain day Esau went in the field to hunt, and he found **Nimrod walking in the wilderness** with his two men. 5 And all his mighty men and his people were with him in the wilderness, but they removed at a distance from him, and they went from him in different directions to hunt, and **Esau concealed himself for Nimrod, and he lurked for him** in the wilderness. 6 And Nimrod and his men that were with him did not know him, and Nimrod and his men frequently walked about in the field at the cool of the day, and to know where his men were hunting in the field. 7 And Nimrod and two of his men that were with him came to the place where they were, when Esau started suddenly from his lurking place, and drew his sword, and hastened and **ran to Nimrod and cut off his head**. 8 And Esau fought a desperate fight with the two men that were with Nimrod, and when they called out to him, Esau turned to them and smote them to death with his sword. 9 And all the mighty men of Nimrod, who had left him to go to the wilderness, heard the cry at a distance, and they knew the voices of those two men, and they ran to know the cause of it, when they found their king and the two men that were with him lying dead in the wilderness. 10 And when Esau saw the mighty men of Nimrod coming at a distance, he fled, and thereby escaped; and **Esau took the valuable garments of Nimrod, which Nimrod's father had bequeathed to Nimrod, and with which Nimrod prevailed over the whole land, and he ran and concealed them in his house.**

Esau, Nimrod, and the garment of power

11 And Esau took those garments and ran into the city on account of Nimrod's men, and he came unto his father's house **wearied and exhausted from fight**, and **he was ready to die** through grief when he approached his brother Jacob and sat before him. 12 And he said unto his brother Jacob, **Behold I shall die this day, and wherefore then do I want the birthright?** And Jacob acted wisely with Esau in this matter, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, for it was so brought about by the Lord. 13 And Esau's portion in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought from the children of Heth for the possession of a burial ground, **Esau also sold to Jacob**, and Jacob bought all this from his brother Esau for value given. 14 And Jacob wrote the whole of this in a book, and he testified the same with witnesses, and he sealed it, and the book remained in the hands of Jacob. 15 And when Nimrod the son of Cush died, his men lifted him up and brought him in consternation, and buried him in his city, and all the days that Nimrod lived were two hundred and fifteen years and he died. 16 And the days that Nimrod reigned upon the people of the land were one hundred and eighty-five years; and **Nimrod died by the sword of Esau in shame and contempt**, and the seed of Abraham caused his death as he had seen in his dream. 17 And at the death of Nimrod his kingdom became divided into many divisions, and all those parts that Nimrod reigned over were restored to the respective kings of the land, who recovered them after the death of Nimrod, and all the people of the house of Nimrod were for a long time enslaved to all the other kings of the land. (*The Book of Jasher*, ch. 27)



Chapter 26

The Lord promises Isaac posterity as the stars of heaven in number — In his seed, all nations will be blessed — The Lord prospers Isaac, temporally and spiritually, for Abraham's sake — Isaac offers sacrifices — Esau marries Hittite wives to the sorrow of his parents.

Gen 27 - Who are the daughters of Heth?

Heth is, according to Genesis 10:15, the second son of Canaan, who is son of Ham, son of Noah. Heth is the ancestor of the Hittites, second of the twelve Canaanite nations descended from his sons, who lived near Hebron (Genesis 23:3,7).

In Genesis 10:15-16, Heth is placed between Sidon and the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgasites, Hivites, Arkite, Sinite, Arvadite, Zemarite, Hamathite and other peoples, showing their descent through their children, called "Children of Heth"(Genesis 23:3, 5, 7, 10, 16, 18, 20). Heth means *That who Jehovah strengthened*.



Genesis 27 The Birthright Blessing

As the record in Genesis now reads, there is little option but to conclude that **Rebekah and Jacob deliberately deceived Isaac and that Jacob explicitly lied to his father** (see v. 24). Rebekah and Jacob believed the deception was necessary because Isaac obviously favored Esau. **Joseph Smith, however, taught that certain errors had crept into the Bible through “ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests”** (Teachings, p. 327). For example, a comparison of the early chapters of Genesis with the fuller accounts revealed to the Prophet (now found in the books of Moses and Abraham) shows how much has been lost. It is possible that the story of Jacob’s obtaining the birthright has also lost much or been changed by unbelievers. These changes could then explain the contradictions. (O.T. Institute Manual)

Although the early patriarchs and their wives were great and righteous men and women who eventually were exalted and perfected (see D&C 132:37), **this fact does not mean that they were perfect in every respect while in mortality.** If the story is correct as found in Genesis, Isaac may have been temporarily shortsighted in favoring Esau. Or Rebekah may have had insufficient faith in the Lord to let Him work His will and therefore undertook a plan of her own to ensure that the promised blessings would come to pass. These shortcomings do not lessen their later greatness and their eventual perfection. (O.T. Institute Manual)



The Prophecy

Here away from the fat of the earth shall be your home, and from the dew of the skies from above. And you'll live by your sword. And you'll serve your brother. And it will be that when you break loose you'll shake his yoke from off your neck. (Gen 27:39-40)



Could this be reconstructed by the Yahwist?

Here, Isaac's default blessing to Esau (Genesis 27:39-40) depicts the political world of the early monarchy, specifically the realities of the 9th and 8th centuries BC when in fact Edom rebelled against Israel's rule and broke free (2 Kings 8:20-22). Since Edom was an ethnic neighbor bordering the eastern territory of the southern kingdom of Judah, this particular tradition probably was a product of a southern author, the Yahwist, writing in the late 9th century BC. Thus, the prophetic announcement of Jacob and Esau's discord and the latter's servitude to and liberation from the former is a way of describing, explaining, and legitimizing the political realities of Israel and Edom known to a later historical period. In other words, the brotherly rivalry depicted in Genesis with its divine justification for Jacob/Israel's supremacy over **Esau/Edom is a story of etiology, a way of explaining why things are the way they are in the world of the author of this text.**

The blessing – relaxing our literalist lenses

ARCHETYPES

The Father's eyes are "dim" ... a veil? - Gen. 27.1.

Jacob "dresses up" as the covenant son.

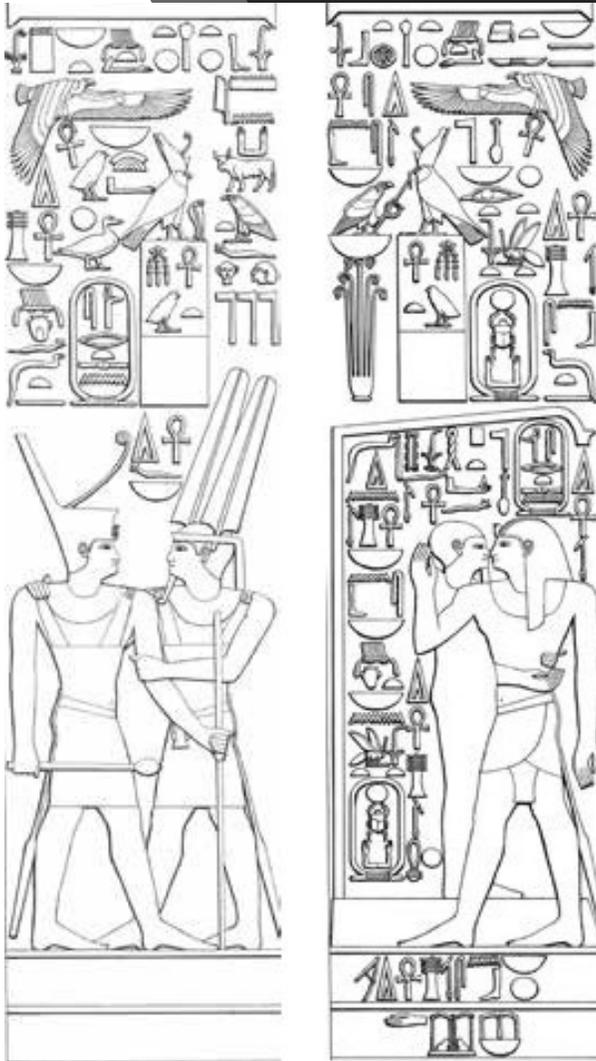
"Come near..." Gen. 27.21.

"He felt him..." Gen. 27.22.

He takes him by the hand – 27.23.

The embrace/kiss - 27.26-27.

Hugh Nibley discusses the sacred embrace from a ritual perspective extensively. See: *Approaching Zion*, p. 566-7 and *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, p. 17-18.



Jacob's "ladder" - Gen. 28.11-6

וַיַּחְלֶם וְהִנֵּה סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אֶרְצָה

And he dreamed, and behold! A
sullam was set up towards the
earth...

(this word probably denotes
steps and not necessarily a
ladder)



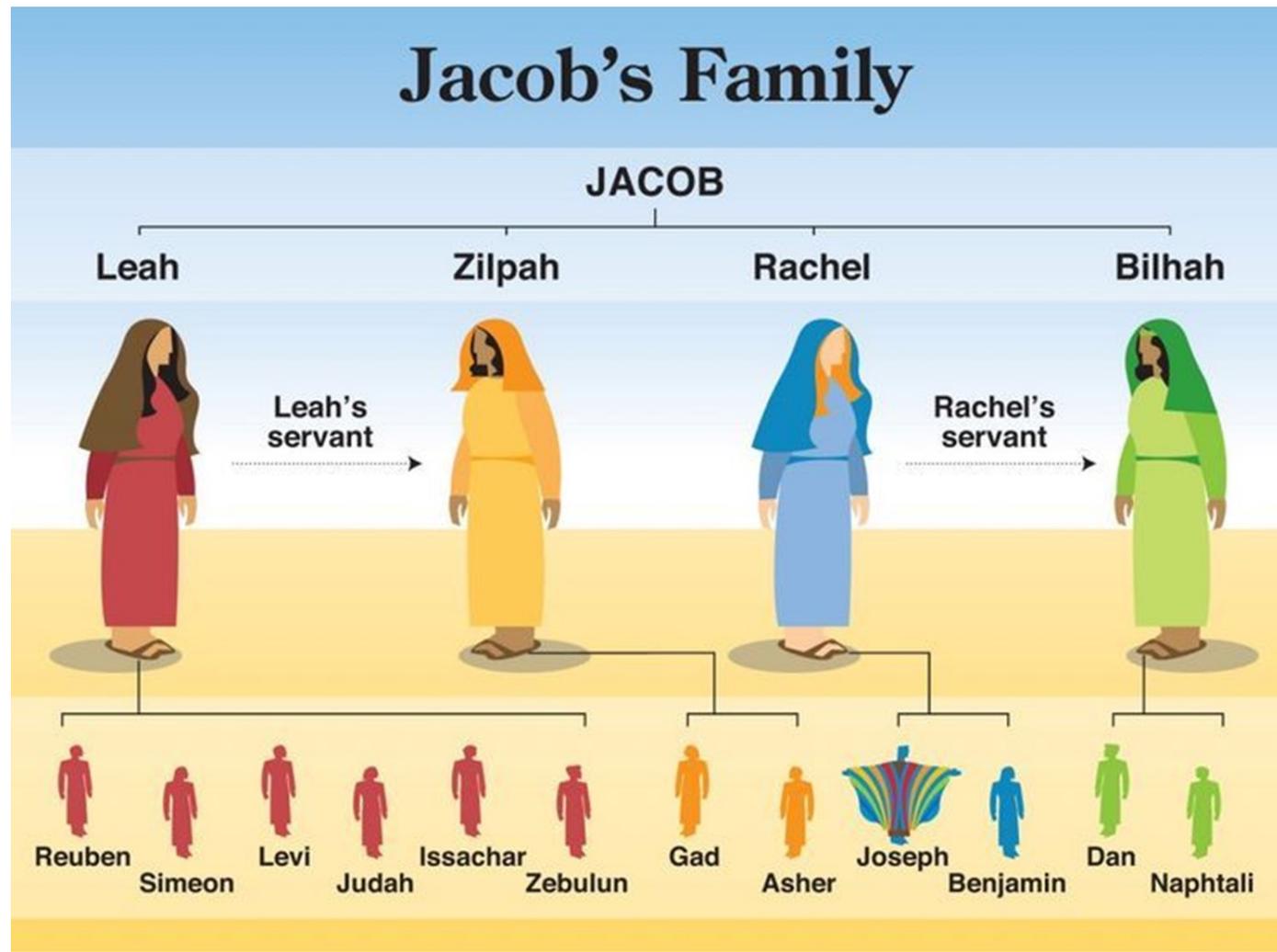
The Mysteries of God

“Wherefore, we again say, search the revelations of God; study the prophecies, and rejoice that God grants unto the world Seers and Prophets. **They are they who saw the mysteries of godliness; they saw the flood before it came; they saw angels ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached from earth to heaven...**”

Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Deseret Book, 1976, p. 12-13.



Genesis 29-30



Gen. 29-30

The names all tell a story

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Reason for Name</i>
Leah	Reuben	See a son	Joy for having a son (see Genesis 29:32).
Leah	Simeon	Hearing	Because the Lord heard that she was hated (see Genesis 29:33).
Leah	Levi	Joined	"This time will my husband be joined unto me" (Genesis 29:34).
Leah	Judah	Praise	"Now I will praise the Lord" (Genesis 29:35).
Bilhah	Dan	Judging	"God hath judged me" (Genesis 30:6).

Bilhah	Naphtali	Wrestling	"With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister" (Genesis 30:8).
Zilpah	Gad	Troop	"Leah said, A troop cometh" (Genesis 30:11).
Zilpah	Asher	My happiness	"Leah said, Happy am I" (Genesis 30:13).
Leah	Issachar	A reward	God hath given me my reward (Genesis 30:18).
Leah	Zebulun	Dwelling	"Now will my husband dwell with me" (Genesis 30:20).

Rachel	Joseph	Adding	"The Lord shall add to me another son" (Genesis 30:24).
Rachel	Benjamin	Son of my right hand	"You are the son of my right hand" (see Genesis 35:18).



Jacob departs Laban's company – Gen. 31

The Lord tells Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers!" (Gen. 31.1-2)



Rachel's household Gods – Gen. 31.30-35



The story of the **stolen *teraphim*** is interesting. There is much debate among scholars about what the images were that were stolen by Rachel and what they represented. The Hebrew word which is sometimes used for small images of false gods is *teraphim*. Some translators render the word as “**household gods.**” Was Laban an idolator? If so, why did Jacob go all the way back to Haran to find a wife if they were idolators like the Canaanites? Others believe they were astrological devices used for telling the future. But this suggestion raises the same question. One scholar theorized that **these images were somehow tied in with the legal rights of inheritance**

(see Guthrie, *New Bible Commentary*, p. 104. See also Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: Commentary*, p. 493).

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Stolen *teraphim*

Westerman (p. 493) claims that the reason for the theft of the *teraphim* had to do with their accusation against Jacob in Gen. 31.14-16, where Laban has taken away their inheritance. We read in Genesis 31.15 that Laban has מְכָרְנוּ וַיֹּאכֵל גַּם־אֶכּוֹל אֶת־כֶּסֶפֶנוּ – “he has sold us, also he ate our silver,” suggesting that these women are owed something by Laban, and the theft of the *teraphim* somehow compensate for this injustice.

Nahum Sarna suggests that these items were stolen in order that Rachel might deprive Laban from detecting Jacob’s escape. (Sarna, p. 216)



Genesis 32.24-32 Jacob's Wrestle

“Who wrestled with Jacob on Mount Peniel? The scriptures say it was a man. The Bible interpreters say it was an angel. More than likely it was a messenger sent to Jacob to give him the blessing. To think he wrestled and held an angel who couldn't get away, is out of the question. The term angel as used in the scriptures, at times, refers to messengers who are sent with some important instruction. Later in this chapter when Jacob said he had beheld the Lord, that did not have reference to his wrestling.”

(Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:17.)



Other interpretations

A celestial patron of Esau-Edom
(Sarna)

An externalization of all that Jacob
has to wrestle with (Alter)

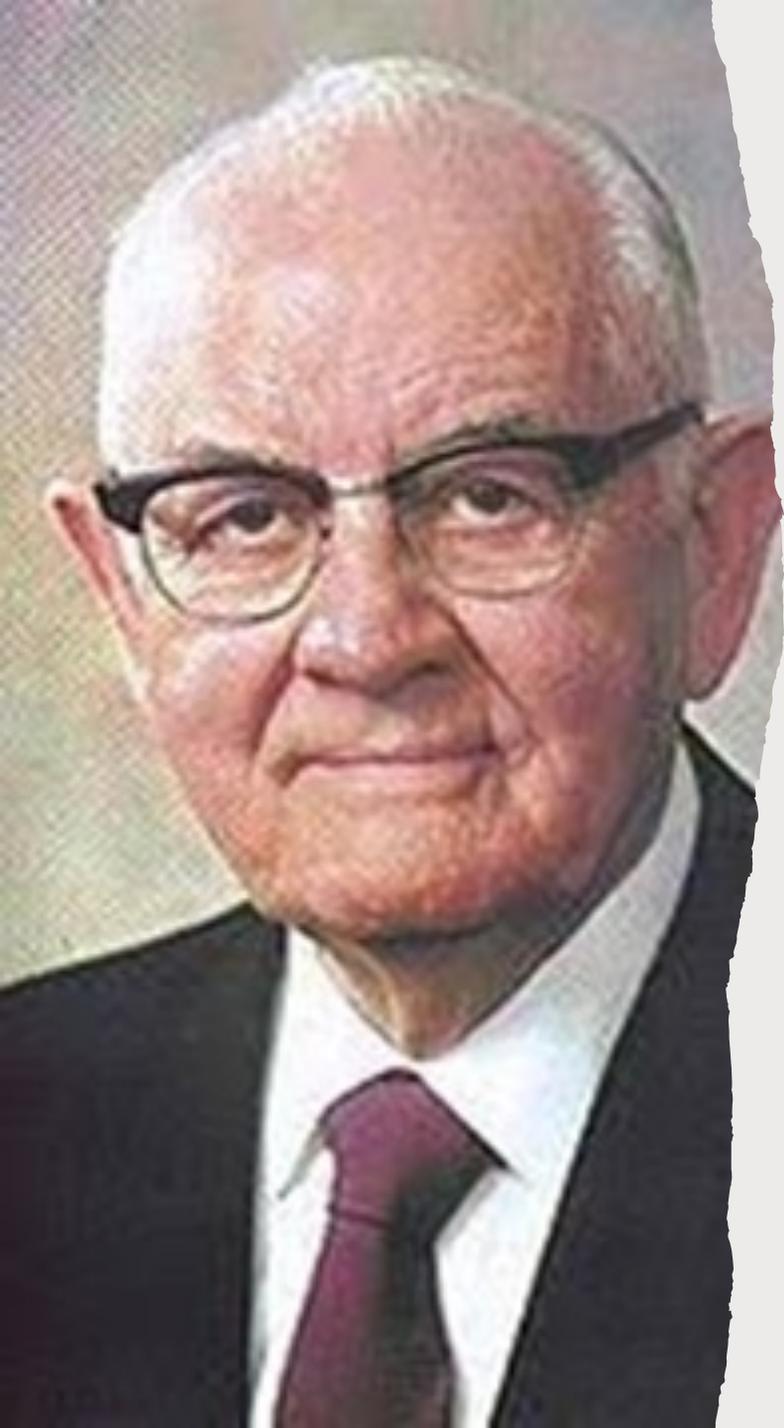
A river crossing being from another
realm (Westermann)

The text is enigmatic!



The Wrestle

Speaking of his call to the Apostleship 12 weeks before he was sustained) [During] those long days and weeks I did a great deal of thinking and praying, and fasting and praying. **There were conflicting thoughts that surged through my mind**—seeming voices saying: ‘You can’t do the work. **You are not worthy.** You have not the ability’—and always finally came the triumphant thought: ‘You must do the work assigned—you must make yourself able, worthy, and qualified.’ And the battle raged on.



The Wrestle

I remember reading that Jacob wrestled all night, ‘until the breaking of the day,’ (Gen. 32:24) for a blessing; and I want to tell you that for eighty-five nights I have gone through that experience, wrestling for a blessing. Eighty-five times, the breaking of the day has found me on my knees praying to the Lord to help me and strengthen me and make me equal to this great responsibility that has come to me. I have not sought positions nor have I been ambitious. Promotions have continued to come faster than I felt I was prepared for them.

(President Kimball, “The Resolve of Obedience,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, 32)

“TO PREVAIL”

שָׁרָה

TO PERSIST; TO EXERT ONESELF; TO PERSEVERE

- ▶ POSSIBLY RELATED TO TERMS DENOTING “CHIEFTAIN, PRINCE, RULER, OR TO ACT AS A PRINCE OR RULER”?

ISRAEL - A "THEOPHORIC" NAME

ישראל



Theophoric Name (One that contains the name
of God within it)

יְשׁוּרַ - אֵל (וְהַיִּם)



LET GOD PREVAIL!

- ▶ In the imperfect form, the verb “he will prevail” looks like this:

- ▶ יִשְׁרָה

- ▶ Another form called a **Jussive** may be what President Nelson was referring to in his comments. The Jussive is a **3rd person imperative**, usually translated with a “Let [the subject] DO this [verb]!” This Jussive verb loses the final ה and so it would appear like this:

- ▶ יִשְׂר

- ▶ Now consider יִשְׂר אֵל !

- ▶ It could read a few ways:
 - ▶ **Let God Prevail!** or **Let God Exert** [His strength]! or **Let God Continually Strive!**



Jacob's defeating God is blasphemous; his defeating a man is meaningless. One naturally tries to posit some intermediary, but still supernatural being: an angel. But why is the term *mal'āk* then avoided, especially since it already forms one of the *Leitwörter*, and angels play prominent roles elsewhere in the Jacob saga?⁴⁹ On the other hand, *'ēlōhīm* can certainly refer by itself to angels; cf. 32:2–4!⁵⁰

The only reasonable answer is that it is not the author's intention that we resolve this issue; i.e., the ambiguity is precisely his aim. He is making use of the play of oppositions, as molded by the conventional uncertainty in regard to the identity of supernatural beings, to heighten the associative significance of the name Israel. Perhaps Jacob did defeat only a man; the event is then itself typological and symbolic. Perhaps he defeated God himself; an act only comprehensible as an expression of the ultimate divine favor: God allowed himself to be bested. Or perhaps it was, after all, an angel Jacob overcame, a victory tantamount to raising him, and his descendants, to members of the divine assembly, albeit, like prophets, human ones. The point is this: the meaning is in the restless activity of the mind as it tests each option. By being unclear on such a vital point the text allows intimations of all possible answers. This is what makes it “spacious,” as von Rad said.

The concept of pregnant ambiguity is a cornerstone of modern literary analysis. This biblical story presents an extreme example of its use. But here both the ambiguity and the extremeness are, from the biblical point of view, essential. The name Israel is such a mystery that paradox is the only fit form of expression in describing its origin.



Genesis 33.3-4

In the biblical account, the word “embraced” constitutes a paronomasia on the name “Jacob” (Similar wordplay on “Jacob” in terms of embrace can be found in Genesis 29:13 and 48:10) similar to the paronomasia on “wrestle” יָבֵקַ (yē’ābēq) and Jacob (Ya’āqōb). This wordplay is a sublime pun on “Jacob” that emphasizes his transformation from his former identity: **he is no longer the “heel [-grabber]” or “usurper,” but “the embraced,” i.e., “the at-one-ed.”** This pun confirms Hugh Nibley’s suggestion that “the word conventionally translated as ‘wrestled (yē’āvēq)’ can just as well mean “embraced.”

See: [Bowen](#), p. 157.

"As though I had seen the face of God..." - Gen. 33.10

This is an important connection between the text of Gen. 32 and Enos' work. Following this "divine" embrace, Jacob articulates his feelings about this "reconciliation" or "at-one-ment" in words that recall his "wrestle" at Peniel ("face of God") where he saw God "face to face" (Genesis 32:30) and his earlier words ("I will see his face, and he will [lift up my face]," 32:20): And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore **I have seen** [rā'îti] **thy face** [pānêkâ], **as though I had seen** [kir'ôt] **the face of God** [pěně 'ělohîm], and **thou wast pleased with me** [or, "thou hast been reconciled to me"] (Genesis 33:10). Enos, who goes down to the grave with the knowledge that the Lamanites will one day be reconciled to God (Enos 1:12-17),...

"As though I had seen the face of God..." - Gen. 33.10

... anticipates his final "reconciliation" and "atonement" to God in words that directly recall Genesis 32:20 and 33:10: And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall **stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure**, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen. (Enos 1:27).



"As though I had seen the face of God..." - Gen. 33.10

... "Enos's words here, adapting Jacob's words from the Jacob-Esau story, constitute a marvelous play on both "Peniel" and "Israel." Enos rejoices in the eventual at-one-ment of his body and spirit, i.e., his becoming an immortal man, and he foresees that when **he finally stands "before" God** (cf. Peniel), he will "see his face with pleasure," just as when Jacob "saw" Esau's "face" and was finally reconciled to him (Genesis 33:1-4). **He knows the Lord will embrace him.**" (cf. 2 Nephi 1:15; 4:31-35; Alma 34:16; Mormon 5:11; Luke 15:20; Moses 7:63). See: Bowen, p. 157.