

My mind is often filled with fairly useless trivia as my family can attest to. But when it comes to the Word of God it is packed with such great detail that contains meaning and God placed these meanings there that are neither useless or trivia. If you go to the Canyon Bible website once David uploads this mornings message you will get a lesson in Hebrew for the pronunciation of the many names of people from the Old Testament I am using this morning. Some are very similar to how I have heard them and some a quite different. Some I will do well with and some not, but I enjoyed looking at these names and what depth was added by the meaning of each name. God inspired these names and their meanings; therefore they help us understand the person the name belongs to. However, I did not include the meaning of most of these names in the text you will find on the website, you will have to look up the meanings for yourself. This might be a fun exercise, especially with your children. Then look up the meanings of your own names. For example, my name, William, is German in origin and means “resolute protector.” I desire to be just that, the resolute protector of both God’s Word and my family. Now moving on.

Judah and Jacob

Reading from chapter 12, verse 2, “**The LORD (yeh·ho·vaw) has an indictment against Judah (yeh·hoo·daw) and will punish Jacob (yah·ak·obe) according to his ways; he will repay him according to his deeds.**” Hosea’s (ho·shay·ah) prophecy has been focused on Israel (yis·raw·ale), but now he turns to Judah. Hosea’s ministry had lasted for about 50 years as a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel and Judah were divided and had traveled similar paths towards destruction by turning away from God (el·o·heem) all though they traveled slightly different directions and at

different speeds. Israel and Judah had been one nation in the past. They were one under king David (daw·veed) and his son, Solomon (shel·o·mo). Under Solomon's reign he had taxed Judah heavily to accomplish his building programs, including the temple. Upon Solomon's death began the reign of his son, Rehoboam (rekh·ab·awm). Judah sent representatives to the new king requesting relief from the heavy taxes of his father. In response Rehoboam increased the tax burden and Judah rebelled. The 10 tribes, Asher (aw·share), Dan (dawn), Ephraim (ef·rah·yim), Gad (gawd), Issachar (yis·saw·kawr), Manasseh (men·ash·sheh), Naphtali (naf·taw·lee), Reuben (reh·oo·bane), Simeon (shim·one) and Zebulun (zeb·oo·loon), were known as the northern kingdom of Israel and the 2 tribes, Judah (yeh·hoo·daw) and Benjamin (ben·yem·ee·nee) split away and became known as the southern kingdom of Judah.

At the time of Hosea's writing, not long before the fall of Israel in 721 B.C., the northern and southern kingdoms had been separated for almost 200 years. Despite, this long separation these 2 kingdoms still represent the 12 tribes that make up the nation called by God. Both kingdoms moved away from God, although at different rates. The doom of prophecy for Israel is now also applied to Judah. Now, Hosea tells Judah in verse 2, [“The LORD has an indictment against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways; he will repay him according to his deeds.”](#) The prophecy here is shorter than the one found in chapter 4 against Israel, but they say essentially the same thing.

Focusing on verse 2, the question that came to my mind was, “What is there about Jacob that reflects how God sees Judah?” Just as Judah had 2 distinct phases in his life, so too there will be judgment and restoration for Judah and Israel. This is true for me as well; I was lost, miserable in my sin and dead in spirit. I wrestled with God and with letting go of the world until the point I had to submit to God as the Creator of all or face my ruin and destruction.

Let's look at Jacob's life in 2 phases and see how these phases relate to the struggles of Israel and Judah, and also, to our own life and the lives of others we know. Think about where we are and where are those the Lord has placed in your life.

The Ensnarer of Jacob and Mother of Esau

We travel back to Genesis chapter 25 for the story of Isaac (*yits·khawk*) meaning "he laughs" and Rebekah (*rib·kaw*) meaning "ensnarer" and their twin sons, Esau (*ay·sawv*) meaning "hairy" and Jacob (*yah·ak·obe*) meaning "supplanter". I have included the meaning of these names because they are important to the story you will now hear. For the sake of time I going to tell you the story hitting the high points so we can move along and hopefully see what Jacob's story means for Israel and Judah, and you and me.

Jacob was one of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebekah and his brother was Esau and scripture tells us that these two boys struggled in their mother's womb and for much of their lives after they were born. Esau was born first and therefore the eldest and Isaac's favorite, and Jacob the younger was born holding Esau's heel and his name meant both "heel grabber" and "supplanter" and he was Rebekah's favorite. How are these 2 name meanings for Jacob related? To grasp the heel of another person meant to go behind them in order to deceive them and to gain by deception and this was a character trait of Jacob. Jacob was smaller than Esau and seemed to always be trying to use his wits to out-smart his brother and trying to get ahead of him. Hosea does not mention Jacob's cheating his brother Esau out of his birthright as the oldest son and the deception at his father's deathbed receiving Isaac's blessing meant for Esau. However, this is a perfect example of being a heel grabber and supplanter. Hosea does say in verse 3, that Jacob **"in his manhood he strove with God."** Jacob thought he could handle and manipulate God as he had

done with Esau and other people. Jacob thought he could manipulate God into doing what he wanted, but he had much to learn about God. Do you, at times, think you can out-smart God, that you can manipulate God into doing what you want? Do you think you can hide your motives from God? At times, we have all had a little Jacob in us.

Here is also where Hosea was bringing home his reference to Jacob for Israel and Judah; they had lost their way because they thought they could manipulate God. Israel and Judah wrongly thought that if they performed rituals; prayer, sacrifices, feast days and reading of scripture they would blind God to their true motives and God would protect and prosper them. As they tried to manipulate God and hide their motives from God it led to them to worshiping false idols and this led them further away from God. This is also true today of individual people and nations. Do we see churches around the world and the nation of Israel thinking that if they perform rituals, both those found in the Bible and those not, that they will convince God they belong to him instead of the prince of this world? I have shared with others that I dislike religion. Religion is man-made, what I seek is a relationship with God. Last week we explored the false premise that if one comes to church on Sunday and says a prayer before meals that would be enough to gain favor with God. If one does not spend time knowing God they may find out they were worshiping a false god, like the Mormons, Islam and the Jehovah Witnesses to name just a few. Most would find it easy to say, these do not worship the God of the Bible, and therefore, they in truth worship a false God. But, what about Catholics, Episcopalians, Scientology, Seventh Day Adventists and the list could go on and on. How can you have a relationship, not religion, with a God you do not know? It takes effort, as with any relationship, to know the true God. You also have a responsibility to know if what I preach and teach is true to God's Word. You can

only do that if you spend time with God - studying the Bible and talking to and listening to God in prayer.

Now we will move onto the 2nd phase of Jacob's life. Having cheated his brother out of his birthright Rebekah sent Jacob away and Jacob the supplanter flees Esau to Haran (*haw·rawn*) the land of Isaac's ancestors. Jacob desired to marry Rachel (*raw·khale*) the daughter Laban (*law·bawn*) and agrees to work for Laban for 7 years. At the end of 7 years Laban deceives Jacob and he finds himself married to Leah (*lay·aw*), not Rachel. Jacob the supplanter did not understand why Laban would deceive him and failed to see his behavior as a factor. After another 7 years Jacob takes Rachel as his 2nd wife. Jacob was not pleased with Laban and finally in Genesis chapter 31, the Lord says to Jacob, **“Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.”** If we take what God says as truth, then Jacob should have trusted God for God said to him, **“I will be with you.”** But because Jacob was not trustworthy himself he did not trust God for we read in verses 20 and 21, **“Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean (*ar·am·mee*), by not telling him that he intended to flee. ²¹ He fled with all that he had and arose and crossed the Euphrates (*“nabar” naw·hawr*), and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead (*ghil·awd*).”** (Genesis 31:20-21) Jacob leaves Laban with relief and since it had been more than 20 years the memory of his cheating Esau out of his birthright was not on his mind, but as he came closer to his homeland the words of Esau came flooding back, **“I will kill my brother Jacob.”** (Genesis 27:41) Jacob thought having been 20 years surely Esau had forgotten these words or maybe his brother was dead.

The thoughts of his brother Esau troubled Jacob's mind and the closer he got to his homeland the more worried he became. As Jacob came to the bank of the Jabbok (*yab·boke*), which marked the beginning of Esau's territory, he was concerned with what he should do. If Jacob had not tricked Laban and burned his bridge behind

him, he may very well have turned back, but he had nowhere to go, but forward. Jacob decided to send servants out ahead to find out about Esau. These servants indeed did find Esau. They returned to Jacob and informed him, “We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him.” (Genesis 32:6) Jacob had to think 400 men – Esau is coming with an army! Jacob divided his people and animals into 2 groups and had them separate for his thought was, “If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape.” (Genesis 32:8) Had Jacob so quickly forgotten that God said for him to leave Laban and God would be with Jacob? He must have forgot, because he decided to send animals and servants ahead to Esau. He began by sending 200 female goats. Jacob instructed his servants that when they reached Esau they were to say the goats were a gift from Jacob and he is coming. Jacob was hoping to soften Esau’s heart. Jacob then thought the 200 goats was not enough, so he sent a 2nd group with 20 male goats and instructed his servants as he had the 1st group of servants. Jacob was still afraid so he sent a 3rd group with 30 female camels and their young with the same instructions. Jacob had after all stole his brother’s birthright and as he contemplated this he decided he had better up the ante, so he now sends 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. Wow Jacob was feeling guilty! I don’t think Jacob slept well that night for in the morning he decided in a cowardly fashion to send 2 of his wives and their children. Finally, he sends Rachel and the children before him. So stretched out over the land are these groups intercepting Esau as he traveled towards Jacob. Who came last of all? Jacob the supplanter! He had given up his possessions, even his family but he was the same old Jacob – he had not given himself. Have there been times in your life that you have offered God all sorts of things, but not yourself, not your heart?

Jacob is alone and God sends a messenger, an angel and he wrestled with Jacob all night until sunrise. At first Jacob is able to hold his own, but as daybreak approached the angel touched Jacob's hip and it was suddenly out of socket. Jacob is now in pain and at the point of surrender. It was the same for me. For some reason God decided I would be his, but he had to take me to the bottom to break me and break my pride in order that I would surrender to him. It was a painful experience just as it was for Jacob. But when Jacob came to the end of himself, God then blessed him. The angel told Jacob, **"Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel (the name Israel means "God prevails", for you have striven (the Hebrew word here is "Sarah" saw-raw and means to contend with or to strive.) with God and with men, and have prevailed."** (Genesis 32:28) What is interesting both the name "Israel" and verb "sarah" comes from the same Hebrew root word. One word means God will always prevail and his plans cannot be contended with by man and the other means man will contend with God, but God will prevail.)

Many do exactly what Jacob did. When God gets close to them, they become afraid of God and that he will expose their true heart and their sins. They become afraid of what God might ask of them. So like Jacob who sent his animals, possessions and family because he did not want to give himself – today many give money or they help with a charity or they serve on the church board or teach Sunday school, but at some point they will find themselves standing alone before their God and God may send his angel to wrestle until they submit. All I have to say is, "Been there and done that." It is the hard way, save yourself pain and give yourself to God and let him bless you.

Israel and Restoration

Just as God prevailed with Israel the man he will also prevail with Israel the people. Please turn in your Bible to the last chapter of Hosea. Reading from

chapter 14, verses 4 to 7, God says through Hosea, “I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.” God says in the future he will do several things for Israel. ⁵ “I will be like the dew to Israel; God’s refreshing watering will allow Israel to ~~he shall~~ blossom like the lily; not only will Israel bloom but, he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; ⁶ his shoots shall spread out; once again Israel will spread out bringing the good news of salvation, his beauty shall be like the olive, God will make Israel attractive to the world again in the last days, and his fragrance like Lebanon. ⁷ They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; God will once again extend his protection and because of this they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.” As always God’s plan is sure, but for the people Israel they will need to change. God will restore but they must come to the end of themselves like the man Israel and then God can rebuild them. For us, we must give **not** just money, or time to God but we must give our most precious treasure to God and that is our hearts. In Proverbs we read, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6) Parents teach your children a love for the Word of God and the joy of conversation of prayer! If you do not take this opportunity the path may be more difficult. I was not raised in a Christian home. I knew nothing of giving my heart to God. I had no thoughts of letting go and giving my most inner-self to God. So God had to take me on a painful journey for me to understand all of this – who He is and who I am as his child. Let me make it clear – praise God he took me on that journey, praise God he broke my self-seeking worship of self. Parents your children may have to go through the hard journey that Jacob and me and so many have had to take for God to save us, but you can help them with teaching them the truth of God’s Word. Their journey does not have to be difficult if you instill in them what is true faith.

Israel has gone astray and if they wanted God's blessing then they must change. So, God speaks saying in verses 8 and 9, "O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? Israel you need to remove your idols. Unfortunately, Israel's idols are still there to this day. Israel is filled with buildings that glorify man, empty ritual and the pride of being God's chosen people. The problem this is – all of this is in the past for they have chosen to reject the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. God continues by telling Israel, "It is I who answer and look after you." *One is saved by God's grace and not by self-righteous works. God continues, "I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit. ⁹ Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them."* As long as Israel and other nations and people all over the world do not seek God in the only 2 places he can be found and understood; the Bible and Jesus the Christ they will continue to stumble as transgressors. Let us live as a people of faith – not faith in the world or in our abilities – but in God alone. Let us learn from the past and glorify God today and in the future. Let us grow our relationship with God through the study of his Word, by the power of his Holy Spirit and through the grace of his Son, Jesus. Let us surrender and let God prevail in our lives. Amen!

My message is over and now we will prepare our hearts and minds for the Lord's Supper. I pray that it is a heart felt action of obedience built on a foundation of love for Christ and not ritual. This was the mistake of Israel. Let us take time to open our hearts to God, repent of our sins, so that, we may partake in the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. Let us now have a time of quiet prayer.

Lord's Supper

My beloved, as often as we observe the Lord's Supper, we should let it remind us afresh of God's love for us, a love that will never fail, a love that will never get

smaller. Though humans may be unfaithful, God will never leave us or forsake us. Though we may struggle and stumble many times, God never abandons us. He is always ready to welcome us back just as he did Jacob who God made into Israel.

As we commemorate Jesus' death, we are gloriously confident of God's love for us. When we are repentant we no longer need to worry that our sins have cut us off from God. God sees us through Christ and this is what we celebrate in his atoning death and glorious resurrection. God always welcomes his children when they come to him through Christ.

We are also mindful that Jesus died because of sin, the world's sin, but also your sin and my sin. He went to the cross because humans chose to decide for themselves what is right and wrong. We have all done that, and we have all repented of that — many times. We seek to do God's will, not our own. We do not want to participate in a self-willed life, for that is the approach to life that sent Jacob and Israel away and sends people away from God to a sentence to eternal death. Our sins were the cause of our Savior's death. So the Lord's Supper is a reminder to us to humble ourselves even as Jesus did and seek to serve others. Let us love Christ and model our lives after his. As Paul wrote, ⁴“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:4-8)

Each of us is woefully inadequate to the task set before us! It is so hard for us to put aside our own interests and serve others! The good news is that God has provided the way for us to not only escape this body of death, but also to have

God's heart for being a servant and it comes through Jesus' life. Scripture teaches, "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." (Romans 5:10) For a balanced understanding of the Christian life, we must remember that our Savior is a living Savior, resurrected from the dead, ascended into glory, seated in a position of honor and power with God the Father. He intercedes for us, and he lives in us, and we live through and in him. Because of his life, we walk in newness of life, living in a state of forgiveness instead of condemnation.

Now my beloved, take the cup representing Christ's shed blood and drink it in remembrance of his sacrifice so that you may appreciate his gift of eternal life. We take this morsel of bread that represents Christ broken body that man nailed to the cross and his side that was pierced and we eat in remembrance of Jesus' sacrifice that we may live with God forever.

Let me close in prayer. Father, we call out to you for your strengthen, for the power of the Holy Spirit that lives within, help us Father be faithful. Help us live fully for the glory of our Savior and to serve others as our Lord demonstrated. We know without You we are hopeless and weak, but we also know that by You and through You we can withstand the gates of hell until Jesus returns! Amen.