

# The Formidable Reunion

## *Genesis 33:1-20*

- I. THE COMING FOR THE REUNION (Genesis 33:1-4)
  - A. The Sighting of Esau's Coming (Genesis 33:1)
    1. The moment of the sighting
      - a. *"Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came."* (Genesis 33:1a)
      - b. The sighting of Esau came following Jacob's high spiritual experience of wrestling all night with the angel of God. (Note: Trial often comes following triumph. Battle often follows blessing.)
      - c. Jacob had *"seen God face to face"* (Genesis 32:30) and had also seen *the angels of God*" (Genesis 32:1); however, now came into view his brother Esau and his men.
      - d. Note: This is the way life is, but the spiritual views were to help Jacob with his earthly views. Sot it is with us.
    2. The men in the sighting
      - a. Jacob had lifted up his eyes and beheld Esau and his 400 men coming.
      - b. These 400 men had caused much concern for Jacob.
      - c. Note: The majority/crowd usually sides with the world against the Christian (see Psalm 27:1-6).
  - B. The Separation for Esau's Coming (Genesis 33:1-2)
    1. Jacob had seen Esau coming (Genesis 33:1)
    2. Jacob divided up his camp (Genesis 33:1-2)
      - a. Jacob had divided up the children between the women for their protection.
      - b. He placed the handmaids and their children foremost.
      - c. While placing Leah and Rachel and their children toward the rear.
        - (1) Leah and her children after the handmaids
        - (2) Rachel and her children hindermost
  - C. The Salutations at Esau's Coming (Genesis 33:3-4)
    1. Jacob approaches Esau in humility and reverence (Genesis 33:3)
      - a. Note: After mountaintop experiences, the flesh (Esau) has a way of rearing up its head (1 Kings 19:3).

- b. It is at these times we must remember that our help comes from the LORD (Psalm 121:1-2).
- c. Note: rather than waiting on Esau, Jacob *passed over before them* [to meet Esau]” (Genesis 33:3).
  - (1) Jacob went boldly to meet Esau, even though he was limping from his time with God. Thus, he exposed his weakness to his brother.
  - (2) Jacob acting upon faith in God’s promises faced his brother.
  - (3) Christianity is not for the coward, rather it gives courage (Hebrews 13:5b-6).
- 2. Esau ran to meet Jacob (Genesis 33:4)
  - a. *“Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept”* (Genesis 33:4).
  - b. This is a moving scene in this reunion of Jacob and Esau.
    - (1) Esau’s warm and enthusiastic welcome for Jacob was blessing indeed.
    - (2) This was an answer to prayer (see Genesis 32:11); and God who had promised protection when speaking to Jacob at Bethel and again when commanding him to leave Laban was true to His promise and had answered Jacob’s prayer and worked in the heart of Esau.

## II. THE CONVERSATION AT THE REUNION (Genesis 33:5-15)

### A. The Conversation About the People (Genesis 33:5-7)

- 1. Esau’s curiosity (Genesis 33:5)
  - a. Esau asks about the family.
  - b. When Jacob had left, he was a single man with just what was on his back and what he carried with him.
  - c. Now he was returning with a sizeable family.
- 2. The description of the people (Genesis 33:5)
  - a. *“The children which God hath graciously given thy servant”* (Genesis 33:5).
  - b. Jacob appropriately described his family as a gracious gift from God.
    - (1) Children are an heritage from God (see Psalm 127:3).
    - (2) Note: this is not the attitude our day and time, we are plagued with abortion, day-care centers, and Planned Parenthood.
    - (3) This is the first of five times Jacob refers to grace in this conversation with his brother Esau (see Genesis 33:5, 8, 10, 11 and 15).
    - (4) As was noted in Jacob’s prayer at Peniel (Penuel), Jacob was very much aware of grace in his life (Genesis 32:10).
- 3. The deportment of the people (Genesis 33:6-7)
  - a. Jacob and those with him *“Bowed”* (Genesis 33:3, 6, 7).
  - b. When Jacob introduced his family to Esau, they all came and bowed themselves before him.

## B. The Conversation About the Present (Genesis 33:8-11)

1. The purpose of the present (Genesis 33:8)
  - a. Esau questioned the purpose of the present (Genesis 33:8a).
  - b. Jacob suggested that they were gifts for peace and grace (Genesis 33:8b). God had humbled and broken Jacob and he was willing to go as far as he could to win his brother back.
2. The protest over the present (Genesis 33:9)
  - a. Esau refused the present on the account that he had enough (Genesis 33:9). The rejection was the custom of politeness not sincerity. But it did afford Jacob the opportunity to show sincerity when “*he urged him [Esau]*” (Genesis 33:11) to keep the present “*and he took it*” (Genesis 33:11).
  - b. In type, the flesh tells the spiritual man to keep what he has because the flesh does not need it.
3. The pardon in receiving the present (Genesis 33:11)
  - a. In those days the receiving of a gift was an indication of friendship, but to decline was an indication of the rejection of that friendship.
  - b. Thus, one sees Jacob earnestly urging Esau to take the present. Esau did, signifying friendly relations between them.
  - c. In type, Esau picturing the unsaved man, must be urged to accept the gift from the spiritual man.

## C. The Conversation About the Proposal (Genesis 33:12-15)

1. The peril in the proposal (Genesis 33:12)
  - a. Esau offered to journey ahead of Jacob for protection (Genesis 33:12)
  - b. “*I will go before thee*” means that Esau would lead. This is contrary to the covenant promise given to Jacob by God; for it has Jacob as the leader, not the follower, of the two brothers.
2. The protesting of the proposal (Genesis 33:13-14)
  - a. Jacob suggested that he had to travel at a slower pace for the young (Genesis 33:13-14).
  - b. Jacob pointed out that he and Esau had two different ways of walking and he could not walk any other way.
3. The protection in the proposal (Genesis 33:15)
  - a. Esau offered his men to travel with Jacob for safety, but Jacob refused (Genesis 33:15-16).
  - b. Esau went his own way when he found out he could not budge Jacob to follow him.

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### III. THE COURSES AFTER THE REUNION (Genesis 33:16-20)

#### A. The Course of Esau (Genesis 33:16)

1. Esau went to Seir
2. This is the land of Edom

#### B. The Course of Jacob (Genesis 33:17-20)

1. Jacob journeyed on to Succoth (Genesis 33:17)
  - a. Building himself a house
  - b. Building booths for his cattle
2. Jacob journeyed from Succoth to Shalem, a city of Shechem (Genesis 33:18).
  - a. Shalem means peace; Shechem means safe and sound (Genesis 33:18).
  - b. Maintaining separation from the ways of this world brings peace and safety.
3. Jacob journeyed to Padanaram, bought a parcel of a field, and erected an altar to the Lord (Genesis 33:18-20).