

## “Wrestled” - Genesis 32:22-32

Ask - “Have you ever watched wrestling or been to a wrestling match? Share your story.”

Background - Jacob stayed with Laban for a while longer and built up his own flocks. Finally, he decided to return to Israel and left secretly. Laban initially pursued him, but the 2 men made a covenant and parted ways once and for all. As Jacob neared his homeland, he worried about how his brother Esau would react upon his arrival after all these years. Then, something strange happened...

“Jacob Wrestles” - Genesis 32:22-25

(v22-23) Where was Jacob and who was with him? What did he do with his wife, children, and possessions? On a Bible map, locate the Jabbok river.

[https://bibleatlas.org/full/jabbok\\_river.htm](https://bibleatlas.org/full/jabbok_river.htm)

(v24) When Jacob was left alone, what happened? Who was this man (see verse 28 & 30)? How long did they wrestle?

(v25) Did the man prevail over Jacob? What did the man do to Jacob? Do you think the man could have beaten Jacob had he wanted to? Why didn't he?

ON HIS WAY HOME, JACOB SENT HIS PROCESSION ACROSS THE RIVER AND STAYED ALONE ON THE OTHER SIDE. THAT NIGHT HE WRESTLED WITH A MAN (GOD) UNTIL DAYBREAK AND HIS HIP WAS DISLOCATED.

“Jacob Receives a Blessing” - Genesis 32:26-29

(v26) What did the man ask Jacob to do? Had Jacob given up when his hip was dislocated? What does this reveal about Jacob? What did Jacob ask the man to do for him in exchange for letting him go?

(v27-28) What did the name do in regard with Jacob's name? Why did he change Jacob's name to Israel? What does Israel mean? (*Answer: “God contends” or “one who struggles with God”*)

(v29) What did Jacob want to know about the man? How did he answer Jacob? Did the man bless Jacob, as he'd requested?

JACOB AGREED TO LET GO OF THE MAN IF HE WOULD GIVE HIM A BLESSING. THE MAN NOT ONLY BLESSED JACOB, BUT ALSO CHANGED HIS NAME TO ISRAEL.

“Jacob Presses On” - Genesis 32:30-32

(v30) What did Jacob name the place where this wrestling match happened? What does the name Peniel (Penuel) mean? (*Answer: the face of God*) Read Exodus 33:20 and discuss how Jacob’s experience was miraculous.

(v31) After the man departed, what did Jacob do? As he rejoined his family, what do they notice about the way he was walking?

(v32) How have the Israelites memorialized this event throughout their history? What is a sinew? (*Answer: a tendon or ligament; fibrous tissue that connects muscles and bones*)

AFTER THE DAWN BROKE AND THE MAN DEPARTED, JACOB CROSSED THE JABBOK AND REJOINED HIS FAMILY. HE NAMED THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD WRESTLED WITH GOD PENUEL.

Application - Jacob wrestled with God, saw His face, and survived. This was a life-changing encounter. Up to this point, Jacob had been a trickster who had taken advantage of and/or fooled his brother Esau, his father Isaac, and even his uncle (and father-in-law) Laban. Going forward, however, Jacob would walk in a closer (though still imperfect) fellowship with the Lord. His new name was Israel, which would eventually become the name of the nation that was born through his sons. This nation and its people would also struggle with God, and though wounded, they too will endure. What stands out to you in today’s lesson?