

Torah: B'resheet (Genesis) 32:4(3)-36:43
Haftarah: Hoshea (Hosea) 11:7-12:12(11)
 'Ovadyah (Obadiah) 1:1-21
B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu (Matthew) 2:13-23

	year 1 32:4-33:20	year2 34:1-35:15	year 3 35:16-36:43
1	32:4 – 6	34:1 – 4	35:16 – 26
2	32:7 – 9	34:5 – 12	35:27 – 29
3	32:10 – 13	34:13 – 17	36:1 – 8
4	32:14 – 32:22	34:18 – 23	36:9 – 19
5	32:23 – 30	34:24 – 31	36:20 – 30
6	32:31 – 33:5	35:1 – 11	36:31 – 39
7	33:6 – 20	35:12 – 15	36:40 – 43

and Jacob sent messengers
before him to Esau his brother
toward Seir, the field of Edom

*va'yish'lakh Ya'aqov mal'akiym
le'fanayv el-Esáv akhiv
ar'tzah Se'ir se'deh Edom*

וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכָיִם
לִפְנָיו אֶל־עֵשָׂו אָחִיו
אֶרְצָה שְׂעִיר שֵׂדֶה אֱדוֹם:

This portion covers Ya'aqov's reunion with his brother 'Esav, his struggle with an angel, the rape of his daughter Dinah, the revenge of her brothers, the addition of Ya'aqov's name, Yis'rael, the passing of his beloved, Rakhel at the birth of Binyamin.

The haftarah discusses on Edom, a nation descended from Esav and speaks of the conflict between Esav and Ya'aqov from the Torah portion.

Aliyah Highlights

- Gen. 32:4-6** The text infers that 'Esav had already established his kingdom (Ge. 14:6, 36:8, 30, De. 2:4-5). The three words, Seir (שְׂעִיר), se'deh (שֵׂדֶה) and Edom (אֶדֶם) trigger memories of a turbulent past with a ruddy (admoniy – אֲדָמִי) brother covered with hair (se'ar – שֵׁעַר) who was a man of the field (sadeh – שָׂדֶה). Ya'aqov repeatedly and formally addresses 'Esav as "my lord" and himself as 'Esav's servant ('eved – עֶבֶד). Ya'aqov message hints that he has the assets to make right what was wronged, understating his position.
- Gen. 32:7-9** The messengers return, saying 'Esav his brother – not his lord, is coming to meet him with 400 men, representing a standard militia (1Sa. 22:2, 25:13, 30:10, 17).
- Gen. 32:10-13** In well-founded terror (Ge. 27:41), Ya'aqov divides into two camps (makhanot – מַקְהָנוֹת - Ge. 32:3(2)). He prays, remembering HaShem's promises at the beginning of his journeys (Ge. 28:13-15, 31:3), noting his unworthiness and HaShem's faithfulness, now and to posterity.
- Gen. 32:14-22** Ya'aqov assembles a lavish present (*minkhah* – מִנְחָה) of 550 animals in droves. The repeated use of the Hebrew word, face (*pane*h – פָּנֶה, v. 21) portends encounters to come.
- Gen. 32:23-30** Ya'aqov struggles with man (ish – אִישׁ - v. 25) and God (elohiym – אֱלֹהִים - v. 29, 31, Hos. 12:4). The Jabbok (yabok – יַבֹּק) River is the frontier of Israel (Nu. 21:24, De. 2:37, 3:16). This struggle is not about river spirits and night demons. Ya'aqov's second/new name, Yis'rael, is bestowed here.
- Gen. 32:31-33:5** Face of God (p'niyel – פְּנִיאל). A perilous, auspicious, overwhelming experience. The sun rises as Ya'aqov returns to the land, even as it set when he left it (Ge. 28:11). Ya'aqov bows, fully prone, seven times, ironically in contrast to his blessing (Ge. 27:29). 'Esav is moved. Five quick verbs mirror the five verbs that described his actions when they last met (Ge. 25:34).
- Gen. 33:6-20** The wives with children are presented in ascending order of Ya'aqov's affection and social status. Eastern etiquette requires initial refusal of the gift, and a show of pressure from the giver. Ultimately, the recipient is a reluctant receiver. Terminology shifts from "take my gift" (v.10 and previous) to "take my blessing" (V. 11). 'Esav's lack of reciprocation infers the score is settled –

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not a gift exchange. Ya'aqov delicately disengages his entourage from 'Esav, the brothers going their separate ways in peace. Ya'aqov makes a prolonged stay in Sukkot, possibly to recover from the loss of the gift to 'Esav. He then makes his momentous return to The Land, building an alter as promised.

Thought Focus

Reconciliation – Yishma'el and Yitz'khak reconcile (Ge. 25:9-11). Leah and Rakhel fruitfully reconciled their struggle (Ge. 30:14-24, 31:4, 14-16). Now, 'Esav and Ya'aqov reconcile after twenty years of separation (Ge. 27:36, 41). Things broken are often more beautiful when masterfully repaired.

Legacy of the “other:” Esav reconciles with Ya'aqov and they live near each other in peace, yet today his legacy has a bad reputation. We know that Esav is **Edom** (Ge. 36:8) establishing a kingdom before Israel does (Ge. 36:31-39, Nu. 20:14-21, De. 2:4-5). Eventually, Israel (the younger brother) will rule over Edom (the older brother) with King David's conquest (2Sa. 8:14, 1Ki. 11:15-16) until Edom rebels, gaining freedom (2Ki. 8:20-22), fulfilling prophecy (Ge. 25:23, 27:40). During the Babylonian exile, Edom sides with Babylon (Ps. 137:7) ruling until conquered by the Hasmonean family, the Maccabees (1Macc. 5:65, Josephus-Ant. 13:9). Herod, an Idumean (Edomite), would marry into this family and develop strong ties to **Rome**. Rome would eventually legalize **Christianity**, and in the 4th century adopt it as the official religion.

Around the early second century, church fathers would allegorize the “older” and the “younger” as Judaism and Christianity (Barnabas 13:1-3). This sets up the misunderstanding of replacement theology where Esav=Jews and Ya'aqov=Christians exclusively, and the annulment of the covenant with Israel, replaced by a new covenant and a new, true people of Israel. When Paul compares Esav and Ya'aqov (Rom. 9:10-13), he does not exclude Jews from Ya'aqov.

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (32:3) You can be a messenger sent ahead of your Master; how do you represent Him? (Mat 5:14-16)
2. (32:14) The best gift is one that comes from the heart. Do you give based on formula and obligation, or from your life and heart? (Luk 20:25, 21:1-4, Psa 51:15-17)
3. (32:31) The Hebrew word for “face,” used twice here, is plural. Can we see the “faces” of God? Can “faces” be related to “attributes?” (Exo 33:20, Isa 6:1, Jud 6:22-23, Joh 1:14,18, 1Jo 1:1, 1Co 13:12)
4. (33:9) Does your perspective of material things (taxes, debt, etc.) affect authority in your life? All things belong to God, yet we are given responsibility and control of “things.” Who has rightful claim of your time and resources? (Luke 20:25, Rom 13:6-8, 1Ti 5:8)
5. (34:1) What attributes have you “inherited” from your parents? (30:16, Eze 16:44, Joh 8:38, 44) What is the truth that God speaks about them? (2Co 5:17, Heb 12:1, Rom 6:4-7)
6. (35:12) Are you moving forward in the certainty of God's promises? (Eph 3:20-21, Rev 21:6-7)
7. (36:20) Are you concerned about the political/economic events around you? (Psa 2, Rev 19:11-16)