

Vayetze (He went out)

Genesis 28:10-32:3

Hosea 12:13-14:9

John 1:43-51

His God Too

Yaakov's life has been one of testing from before he could remember. He did not choose this war, but from his mother's womb, he has been thrust into it. He now breaks free of his brother's grasp and heads out on his own to make a life for himself. Life from now on is going to be a bed of roses. Well, maybe not. The trials are only beginning.

Yaakov leaves the house of his father and mother and begins to walk. We are not told why he walked in the direction he did and the truth is, he probably did not know why himself. Yaakov is no doubt exhausted mentally and physically from the events of the preceding days and finds a comfortable rock to lay his head on. It is there he will see the Heavens opened and begin to understand his true calling in life. He is to be the one whom the covenant given to his father and grandfather will continue through.

Yaakov is not unfamiliar with the word covenant. He has heard this word from his earliest memories sitting on his Grandfather Abraham's lap. His Father Isaac also made sure the story was forever engrained in his memory. Now this God of Abraham and Isaac is wanting to enter into covenant with him. Yaakov decides it is time to put this God of his fathers to the test. Sure, he knows He can take care of his fathers, but can He take care of Yaakov? That is still a question.

Now, for most of us, seeing a ladder to Heaven with angels going up and down, we probably would have given in right away. Yaakov, on the other hand, decides to put this God to the test. Yaakov names the place Beit-El, (House of God) then does something really gutsy. Yaakov looks to the heavens and ushers a challenge to this God of his fathers. He tells Him that if He will go with him on his journey, provide him bread, water and a safe return, He will be able to be known not only as the God of Abraham and Isaac, but will then be known as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Yaakov. By the way, I just love this guy for this one!

As a side note. Notice there is no record of Yah getting nervous here. It is not even recorded that he says a word. I personally feel He sat back in His throne a bit and gave a bit of a smile to the angels around Him.

Yaakov heads out onto a journey which I call his "Crisis of Faith." He will begin his trial with a relative named Laban. Through Laban he will learn some lessons about faith in Yah. He will deal with trickery, deception, a barren wife and even some speckled goats. All the while, Elohim is showing Himself as faithful to Yaakov.

We end this Torah portion with Yaakov leaving Laban behind and heading back to Beit-El. He will still have a trial awaiting him just over the horizon, but at this point it appears Elohim is going to pass the challenge.

So what can we learn from this Torah portion which will help us in our own walk?

Each of us, just like Yaakov, come into this world and are at some time challenged with what god we will serve in life. We read the stories of covenants given to people who lived thousands of years ago. We can look to the heavens and see His glorious work. At some time we must come face to face with a decision of whether we will also enter into that covenant. He must go from the God of our forefathers and foremothers to being our God. Many of us who have entered this covenant understand this. Many of us can recount our own version of a “Crisis of Faith” just the same as Yaakov was be able to do.

What about our children though? Are we sheltering them from their own “Crisis of Faith?” Are we, in an attempt to protect them from the “Evil of the World” also sheltering them from making HaShem their God?

Yah was up the the challenge regarding Yaakov. I believe His desire is to prove Himself mighty to each of us. To do this there are times He needs to take us to places we are not comfortable with. All the while though he is working all things together for good, because He is able to see past our challenge and to a love that is just waiting to break forth toward Him. A love which will make our desire to walk in the covenant of our forefathers.