

# Genesis 32:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

## Analysis

**And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with th...** This passage belongs to the Jacob narratives which demonstrate God's sovereign election overriding human merit and the transformation of a deceiver into Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. The Jacob cycle shows how divine purposes advance through flawed individuals whom God graciously transforms.

Key themes include God's sovereign choice ("the older shall serve the younger"), the consequences of deception and family dysfunction, exile and return patterns, wrestling with God leading to blessing, and covenant renewal across generations. Jacob's character development from manipulative deceiver to mature patriarch demonstrates sanctification's lifelong process.

Theologically significant aspects include:

1. divine election based on grace not merit (Romans 9:10-13)
2. God's faithfulness to covenant promises despite human unfaithfulness
3. discipline as evidence of divine love and means of transformation
4. generational patterns of sin requiring divine intervention to break
5. prayer and wrestling with God as legitimate expressions of faith.

Jacob's limp after wrestling God symbolizes how divine encounters leave permanent marks, transforming our approach to life and dependence on God rather than our own cunning.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

### Study Questions

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1. What theological truths about Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau emerge from this passage?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

### Interlinear Text

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אָמַר	גַּם	הִנֵּה	עֲבֹדְךָ	יַעֲקֹב	וְאַחֲרָיו	כִּי
And say ye	moreover		Behold thy servant	Jacob	and afterward	
H559	H1571	H2009	H5650	H3290	H310	H3588
אָמַר	אֶכְפֹּךְ	פָּנָי:	בְּמִנְחָה	הָהֵלֶךְ	כֵּת	פָּנָי:
And say ye	I will appease	before me	with the present	that goeth		before me
H559	H3722	H6440	H4503	H1980		H6440
וְאַחֲרָיו	כֵּן	אֶרְאֶה	פָּנָי:	אוֹלַי	יֵשׁ	א
and afterward		I will see	before me		peradventure he will accept	
H310	H3651	H7200	H6440	H194	H5375	
פָּנָי:						
before me						
H6440						

### Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 21:14** (Parallel theme): A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.