

RUSSELL SANDERS
JESUS' PRE-INCARNATION MANIFESTATIONS
PART 10 – JACOB'S WRESTLING

Another theophany occurred with Jacob. This was an important encounter because Jacob would become father to twelve sons which are the twelve tribes of Israel. This would be the nation that would be identified for all eternity as being God's own chosen people.

God spoke to Jacob upon occasions to reveal himself to him. The first time it happened was when Jacob was leaving Canaan to flee from his brother Esau. As nightfall came, he took stones for his pillow and fell asleep. He had a powerful dream of a ladder extending up into heaven. There were angels of God ascending and descending what we call Jacob's ladder. The LORD stood above the ladder and spoke to him. [Genesis 28:11-19] He said, ***"I AM the LORD God (Jehovah Elohiym) of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."*** God continued to pronounce a blessing upon Jacob.

Upon waking from this dream Jacob proclaimed the location to be the house of God and named it Beth-el. (Beth means house and El means God in Hebrew.) Jacob pledged to tithe unto the Lord.

However, the theophany occurred many years later as he was returning to Canaan. Jacob feared Esau, his brother. He sent his family and flocks ahead to meet his brother, but he stayed behind alone. (Genesis 32) At nightfall, there came a man (Jesus in human form) who wrestled with Jacob all night long. Neither prevailed over the other (vs. 25-26). The man wanted to leave as the day was coming on, but Jacob would not allow it unless the man (Jesus) blessed him. The man did bless him, but also touched Jacob's thigh and he became lame.

Jacob named the place that this happened Peniel, which means ***"the face of God,"*** saying, ***"For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."***

This was a face-to-face encounter with the pre-incarnate Jesus (Genesis 32:29-30).

You might ask, "If Jesus is all-powerful, why did he fight Jacob to have it end in a draw/tie?" Jesus did not wish to defeat Jacob, but rather to bless him with a personal encounter to strengthen his faith for God's future plans for him.

God will also allow us to wrestle with him over adversities in our lives so as to strengthen our faith also.