

THE COMPATIBILITY OF  
FAITH, REASON AND FEAR  
Genesis 32:1-21

## INTRODUCTION

In Genesis 32:1-21, Jacob finally is leaving Laban behind. Good riddance! But as he prepares to return to his homeland, Jacob expects Esau to be waiting. When they last saw each other 20 years earlier, Esau was intending to kill Jacob. Jacob is fearful at the thought of meeting Esau again, and his survival instincts kick in. This study provides insight into **The Compatibility of Faith, Fear and Reason.**

## DIGGING DEEPER

Some say faith and fear cannot coexist - that fear is the result of not having enough faith. Others challenge faith as being opposed to reason or logic (a God-given capacity to pursue truth). Therefore they conclude that faith, fear and reason are mutually exclusive. But are they? God does not want a Christian to be gripped by fear, condemned for “not having enough faith”, or opposed to reason – **John 20:30-31. Acts 17-19.** Read through Genesis 32:1-21. Jacob’s thoughts and actions reveal **The Compatibility of Faith, Fear and Reason.** From this study, we will also consider an important aspect to our Christian walk – **Reconciliation With a Brother.** Dig in!

*Pray for wisdom and understanding, and let’s begin.*

I. Genesis 32:1-2. Mahanaim – two camps. Jacob sees angels (Scripture always identifies angels as powerful, masculine and kind of surly - not effeminate). Living in the physical world, Jacob is aware of the spiritual realm. Angels were sent by God to equip and encourage him. **Hebrews 1:14.**

II. Genesis 32:3-8. Jacob’s fear and distress. Humbly and with good intention, Jacob sends messengers to prepare Esau to receive him. He poses no threat to Esau, and wants nothing from him. But news arrives that Esau is coming with 400 men. Not even knowing why Esau is coming, Jacob becomes greatly afraid and distressed – guilty conscience perhaps? He now assumes his life is threatened by Esau. Motivated by fear, he goes into survival mode. Even knowing God’s great faithfulness in the past, Jacob takes his eyes off the Lord. Can you relate, beloved? *Selah*

III. Genesis 32:9-12. Jacob’s faith and prayer. Consider this prayer of Jacob carefully. The best way to cope with stress and fear is honest prayer. **Psalm 18:1-3, Psalm 40:11-13.** Having to face a deceptive past and guilty conscience, Jacob asks God to deliver him. And the Lord will answer a humble and desperate heart. **Matthew 15:21-28.**

IV. Genesis 32:13-21. Jacob’s reasoned plan. Some are critical of Jacob’s planning, thinking he is reverting to his old ways. But he does not change direction and run away from Esau. Rather, using his reason, Jacob faces his fear. Approaching in humility and respect, preparing a gift for his brother whom he has offended, he is doing the best he can to make things right. Jacob desires to be reunited with Esau – being RECONCILED. Give him credit. **Proverbs 15:33, Proverbs 18:19.**

**Reconciliation is making peace between enemies.** As Christians, we now have peace with God by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin. **Romans 5:1-2 & 6-11, Colossians 1:21-23. Hallelujah!** Now the Lord wants us to live in harmony and peace with each other. But too often relationships in the church are broken. Hard feelings, unforgiveness, bitterness, envy, and even hatred exist between brothers and sisters. *“My brethren, these things ought not to be so.” James 3:10 & 17-18.*

How about you, beloved? Is there something between you and a brother (or sister)? Is reconciliation needed? *Selah!*

**CONSIDER .....** **Reconciliation With A Brother.** Here are some keys to reconciliation with others in the church.....

- Don’t avoid this situation, but try to make things right with humility **Matthew 5:21-25a**
- Don’t judge people by their past – Jesus changes people. Nebuchadnezzar, Peter, Saul of Tarsus, you! **Matthew 7:1-2**
- Don’t allow past disappointments chip away at your faith. Pick up your shield! **Ephesians 6:16**
- Don’t be afraid that your past sin makes reconciliation impossible. Be set free! **Isaiah 1:19, Psalm 130:3-4**

*First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:24*

## PRAY .....

- For the upcoming Blood Drive at the church – that those that come in would experience the love of Jesus as they enter!
- For Faith, Family and Friends Day – for good weather, a great attendance, and the moving of the Holy Spirit!
- that any area of fear in your life would be put in the faithful hands of Jesus!
- for the Lord to reveal any area in your life that you may need to reconcile with friends, family or co-workers.
- for reconciliation in the hearts of our government officials.