



The Life of Jacob

Genesis 32:22-32, 33:1-5, 35:10-11

"All hands on deck! All hands on deck! All hands on deck!" Ripply Waters called outside of Captain Billy Ocean's cabin at five A.M. the next morning.

Moments later, Captain Billy Ocean rushed out onto the deck in his bathrobe, glancing up for a moment to notice that the moon was still high in the sky. "Holy guacamole! What is it? What's going on at this early hour, Ripply Waters?"

"I just couldn't wait, Captain!" Ripply exclaimed.

The Captain looked around, confused and trying to figure out what the problem was that required him to be on deck so early in the morning. "Wait? Wait for what?"

"Last night, Esau threatened Jacob's life and Jacob ran away and I just gotta find out what happened!" Ripply explained hurriedly.

Captain looked at Ripply and then shook his head. "Ah, is that all? I thought you were transferin' off the Caribbean Queen right away or somethin'."

"Captain, I ain't going nowhere until I find out what happened to Jacob!"

Captain Billy smiled. "So, the Bible is so exciting that you just gotta hear how the story ends? Well, let's get out our Traysure map, right now!" He walked over to the Treasure Chest, lifted the lid and removed his Bible. "Let's see if Jacob gets a miracle. Now, as you may remember, Jacob tricked Isaac..."

"I know! I know!" Ripply interrupted. "Jacob tricked Isaac and stole Esau's blessing and Esau threatened to kill Jacob and Jacob ran away but what happens next? The suspense is killing me!"

"Well, Jacob left for quite a while, long enough to start a family. But one night he wrestled with a mysterious stranger all night long." Captain explained.

"Wait," Ripply stopped him, "didn't Jacob know we're not supposed to talk to strangers?"

"Aye, but Ripply, this was not that kind of stranger. Some folk think it was an angel, some think it was the Lord Himself!" Captain Billy sat down on the top of the Treasure Chest and opened his Bible to Genesis 32. "The Bible tells us that Jacob wrestled with a mysterious man until daybreak. 'When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched...'"

Ripply leaned against the ship rail nearby. "That feller just touched his hip and threw it out of its socket?"

"Aye," the Captain agreed. "But Jacob still wouldn't let go of him unless that feller blessed him. The feller asked Jacob his name. 'Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'"

"Maybe the stranger was God! Did he bless him?" Ripply asked.

"He did."

"Wow," Ripply exclaimed. "That Jacob's got guts! He would do anything to get God's blessing! He ain't afraid of nothin' and he never gives up, does he!! What happened next?"

Captain Billy read from Genesis 33, "Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men..."

"Uh-oh, Spaghettios!" Ripply interrupted. "So, there's Jacob with a twisted hip and Esau was comin' at him with a whole army! What did he do?"

"Jacob put all of his family in a safe place," the captain said and then continued reading. 'He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.' So then the Bible says that Esau ran towards Jacob..."

"Yeah, yeah?" Ripply prodded.

"He threw his arms around his neck...!"

"Yeah, yeah?" said Ripply.

"And he kissed him." Captain finished with a grin.

"What?!" Ripply yelled. "You mean he killed him, right?"

"Nope, he kissed him."

Ripply's face looked confused. "He kissed him? Wow! So, Esau didn't hurt Jacob? I thought he was so angry at his brother that he threatened to kill him."

"He was." Captain Billy agreed. "But God had promised to protect Jacob so he changed Esau's heart."

"Woah!" Ripply slapped the top of the rail. "So the brothers were reunited and the family was back together again. Jacob really is blessed."

"Aye, God had given Jacob a beautiful family, reunited him with his twin brother and kept his promise to protect him. God had blessed him so much that Jacob built an altar to worship and thank the Lord!" the captain said.

"Wow! I guess Jacob got all the blessings one feller could get!" Ripply said as he wiped the salty spray from a nearby wave off of his face.

"You might think that, but God wasn't quite finished. The Bible says, after Jacob went home God appeared to him and blessed him again."

"Again! Boy, God sure loves that crazy heel catcher!" Ripply exclaimed.

"Heel Catcher was his old name." Captain Billy explained then continued reading. "God said to him, 'Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel.' So he named him Israel. And God said to him, 'I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body.'" Captain Billy Ocean looked up at Ripply. "God had promised to make Abraham the father of many nations. And who was Abraham?" he asked.

"Jacob's Grandpa!" Ripply answered. "So, this was part of God's plan! God was fulfilling His promise through Isaac and now Jacob!"

"Exactly! God always keeps His promises! In fact, to this day people refer to our God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!"

"You mean Israel!" Ripply corrected.

"Aye, we'll learn more about Israel next week..." Captain agreed.

Ripply stood up and saluted the Captain. "I don't want to miss that! Permission to stay aboard, Sir?"

Captain Billy also stood up and returned the salute. "I'm thinking God just might have a plan for you aboard this ship...permission granted!"

Ripply jumped in the air and shouted, "Yippee! Thank you, Cap'n!" Then he danced across the deck and went below to the crew cabin to share the good news, as well as the rest of Jacob's story, with Matey.