

The BIBLE Story

Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32–33

Jacob took his family and everything he had, and he headed home to Canaan. Jacob was afraid to see his brother Esau again.

What if Esau was still angry? Jacob sent messengers ahead to tell Esau that he was coming. The messengers came back. “Esau is coming to meet you!” they said. “He has a big group of people with him!”

Jacob was very afraid! Was Esau coming to hurt him? Would all those people hurt Jacob and his family? **Jacob made a plan to stay safe. He told part of his family to go one way, and the other part to go another way. If Esau fought one group, maybe the other group could get away.**

Then Jacob prayed. He asked God to keep His promise. “Please rescue me from my brother,” he prayed.

Then Jacob sent gifts to Esau—many animals like goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys. Jacob hoped Esau would be happy with the gifts. Maybe then Esau would forgive him.

That night, a man appeared to Jacob. (The man was God!) The man wrestled with Jacob all night. Jacob would not give up, so the man hurt Jacob's hip.

“Let Me go. The sun is coming up,” the man said.



But Jacob did not let Him go. “I will not let You go unless You bless me,” Jacob said.

“Your name was Jacob,” said the man, “but now your name will be Israel. You wrestled with God and with men, and you have won.”

The man blessed Jacob. The sun came up, and Jacob limped because his hip was hurt.

Now Jacob saw Esau and the big group of people coming toward him. Jacob went to meet Esau. He bowed down to show respect. **Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. Esau was not angry anymore!**

Esau went back to his home, and Jacob traveled a little farther. **Jacob** bought land for his family to live on. He **was finally home in the land God had promised to give him.**

Christ Connection: God changed Jacob’s life and gave him a new name, Israel. By dying and rising from the dead, Jesus made the way for us to be adopted into God’s family. When we are adopted into God’s family, we get a new name, too—children of God. (John 1:12)

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Move with the story:** Act out the story as you tell it. Walk around like you’re traveling, pray, pretend to wrestle someone, walk with a hurt hip, run to hug someone, and travel to your land.
- **Change the atmosphere:** Dim the lights during the night part of the story. Turn on the lights when “the sun comes up.”