

The Bible predicts that God's people will face the time of Jacob's trouble—an intense period of suffering and soul searching. This is that dreadful period just before the Second Coming of Christ in which the people of God will pass through severe trials. The earth will be in a state of agitation and religious confusion. Human probation will be closed, and the Spirit of God will be fully withdrawn from the earth. The mark of the beast will be enforced, and every earthly support will be cut off. The faithful will be hunted like wild beasts because of their fidelity to God's law. As God's people flee from the large cities, they will wrestle with God day and night for deliverance and victory. Thankfully, they will overcome Satan's calculated attacks and maintain their allegiance to God in earth's final hour! They will obtain the victory, and God's character will be fully vindicated before the universe. Let's study and learn What God Says About..."The Time of Jacob's Trouble."

TROUBLE ON THE HORIZON

1. **What troublous period will begin when Michael stands up?**
   "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." *Daniel 12:1*

   Note: *The time of trouble has three phases: the little time of trouble—the period when the Sunday Law is passed and the Loud Cry is given (Psalm 119:126; Revelation 14:8; 18:1-4), the time of trouble—the period when probation has closed and the seven last plagues begin to fall, and the time of Jacob's trouble—the period when the death decree is enforced. Religious, political, social, environmental, and economic conditions will intensify during each phase. This study is not intended to dissect each phase of the time of trouble. Rather, it focuses on the intense experience of God's people during the time of Jacob's trouble.*

2. **What great day does Jeremiah refer to in Jeremiah 30:5-7? What assurance is given to the overcomer?**

[5]"For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. [6]Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? [7]Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even _____ _____ _____ _____ _____; but _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Jeremiah 30:5-7*

Note: *God's people will experience the time of Jacob's trouble after the close of human probation. While no one knows the exact time when probation will close, one thing is certain, the time of Jacob's trouble will occur prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. This spiritual struggle will be a time of intense, soul searching that will lead God's people to agonize with God to ensure that every known sin is confessed. God's people will emerge from this trying ordeal victorious, just as Jacob did.*

3. **In their generations, what three men had to stand before God for themselves during intense times of trial?**

"Though these three men, _____, _____, and _____, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD." *Ezekiel 14:14*

Note: *While the context of this passage does not specifically refer to the time of Jacob's trouble, it does reveal that in a time of crisis we must endure the test as individual Christians. As influential and righteous as Daniel, Job, and Noah were in their generations, they had to stand for themselves before God. Their faith experiences were not transferrable to others. Like them, we will all be tried as if there were not another person in the world.*

JACOB'S TROUBLE — THE BACKGROUND

Note: *Jacob's trouble came as a result of his own sin of impatience, deception, and distrust of God's Word. It was understood that the one who possessed the birthright would be the progenitor of the coming Messiah. In other words, Christ—the Redeemer of the world, would come through the line of the son who possessed the spiritual blessing of the birthright. At the birth of Isaac and Rebekah's twin sons, Esau and Jacob, God told Rebekah that "the elder shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23)—that is Esau's descendants would serve Jacob's descendants. However, Isaac was determined that Esau, who had no spiritual inclinations, would receive the*

birthright. Rebekah was determined that Jacob, who valued spiritual things, would receive the birthright. Hence, Jacob and Rebekah took matters into their own hands and worked in concert to secure the birthright and blessing. First, Jacob got Esau to sell his birthright in exchange for a bowl of red pottage (Genesis 25:29-34). Secondly, Rebekah instructed Jacob to deceive his father, Isaac, in order to receive the blessing, and Jacob did so (Genesis 27:5-30). Esau was infuriated and intended to kill Jacob after learning that Jacob received the blessing by deception. Hence, Rebekah told Jacob to flee from home to her brother Laban's house until Esau's anger abated (Genesis 27:42-45). Jacob's sin resulted in him being a fugitive for twenty years. Years later, he would have to retrace his steps, return home, and meet Esau face to face.

ESAU HATES JACOB AND VOWS TO KILL HIM

4. Jacob took away or cheated Esau out of what two things?

"And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my _____; and, behold, now he hath taken away my _____. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" *Genesis 27:36*

5. Regarding the blessing, how did Esau feel about Jacob? What did Esau plan to do after Isaac died?

"And _____ _____ _____ because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I _____ _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 27:41*

THE LONG ROAD HOME

Note: *Jacob spent twenty years at Laban's house. After serving seven years for Rachel, Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah—Laban's eldest daughter. After fulfilling the week of marriage festivities, Jacob married Laban's youngest daughter, Rachel—the one he loved. He then served Laban another seven years (Genesis 29:16-30). Over the course of Jacob's stay, Laban deceived Jacob and changed his wages ten times (Genesis 31:7). Altogether, Jacob served Laban fourteen years for his two daughters and six years for his cattle (Genesis 31:41). Laban sought to benefit and enrich himself through Jacob's service. He observed how his own property increased and was intent on keeping him around. However, Laban and his sons eventually became envious because Jacob's prosperity was greater than Laban's. Jacob was now fearful that Laban's sons would do him*

harm in order to secure what they felt was their father's. As Jacob observed that Laban's countenance had now changed toward him, God instructed Jacob to depart. Jacob would have left much earlier, but he feared coming in contact with Esau. Jacob's trying circumstances were a direct result of the sin of his deception years earlier. Often, unwise decisions tend to trouble us and have long lasting effects for extended periods of our lives.

6. God instructed Jacob to return to the land of whom? What promise did God make to Jacob?

"And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of _____ _____, and to _____ _____; and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 31:3*

7. According to Genesis 32:1, who met Jacob when he was returning to the Land of Canaan?

[1]"And Jacob went on his way, and _____ _____ _____ _____ met him. [2]And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim." *Genesis 32:1, 2*

Note: *As Jacob and his company traveled, God sent two bands of angels to protect them. One band was before the travelers, and the other followed behind them. To Jacob, this was an assurance that God would protect them throughout their journey to Canaan as well as when he would encounter his brother Esau.*

8. Who did Jacob send before him to give a message to Esau?

"And Jacob sent _____ before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom." *Genesis 32:3*

9. Jacob sent a message to his brother Esau that he might find what in his sight?

[4]"And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: [5]And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find _____ in thy sight." *Genesis 32:4, 5*

Note: *When the message was sent to Esau, Jacob instructed the messengers to use the phrases, "my lord Esau" and "thy servant Jacob." In humility, Jacob was trying to communicate to Esau that he had changed, and that he was not returning to secure the inheritance or temporal wealth that Esau had laid claims upon. He hoped that this would quell any tension with Esau prior to his return home.*

THE THREAT OF ESAU AND HIS ARMY

10. The messengers told Jacob that Esau was approaching with how many men in his army?

"And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and _____ _____ men with him." *Genesis 32:6*

11. How did Jacob feel when he learned of the approach of Esau and His army? Into how many bands did Jacob divide his company?

[7]"Then Jacob was _____ _____ and _____: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into _____ _____; [8]And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape." *Genesis 32:7, 8*

Note: *Jacob was terrified when he was informed of the approach of Esau and his army of four hundred men. Jacob knew that he and his helpless company were in no position to defend themselves. Furthermore, he was confronted with the fact that it was his own sin and course of action that put him and his company in harm's way. Recognizing his need of divine intervention, he would appeal to God—the only person that could provide deliverance.*

JACOB PRAYS AND PREPARES A PRESENT

12. Jacob's prayer for deliverance reveals that he primarily fears that Esau will kill whom?

[11]"Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite _____, and _____ _____ with _____ _____. [12]And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." *Genesis 32:11, 12*

Note: *Just as Jacob prayed for deliverance in Genesis 32:9-12, God's people will send up agonizing cries that God will deliver them as the wicked armies, marshaled by Satan, approach them in the closing scenes of earth's history. Prayer and firm reliance upon God Almighty will be our only defense.*

13. In an effort to appease Esau, what did Jacob prepare for him?

17"And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? 18Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is _____ _____ sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us." *Genesis 32:17, 18*

14. Regarding the present, Jacob hoped that Esau would do what?

19"And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. 20And 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 _____ of me." *Genesis 32:19, 20*

Note: *In Genesis 32:13-21, Jacob chose animals of his flock to be a present for Esau. He gave them to his servants, instructed them to put space between each herd, and directed them to give the present to Esau when they encountered him. He was hoping that Esau would accept his present and that his anger would be turned away before they met face to face.*

15. Jacob sent his family across what brook?

22"And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford _____. 23And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had." *Genesis 32:22, 23*

Note: *In Genesis 32:22, 23, Jacob and his family reached the brook, Jabbok, and he sent them across. Understanding that God alone was his only help and hope, Jacob decided to remain alone and spend the night in prayer. He planned to place the matter before God with the hope that God would touch Esau's heart and lead Esau not to harm him. Nevertheless, Jacob's primary concern was to repent and confess his sin to God, which he did. Similarly, God's people will place their case in God's hands during the time of Jacob's trouble. However, they will not be afraid of persecution for obeying God's law and refusing to worship the beast and his image (see the study on the Mark of the Beast). Their primary concern will be the vindication of God's character and the fear that they have not repented of every sin.*

JACOB WRESTLES WITH THE ANGEL

16. What did Jacob and the angel do during his night of intense spiritual anguish?

[24]"And Jacob was left alone; and there _____ a man with him until the breaking of the day. [25]And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he _____ with him." *Genesis 32:24, 25*

Note: *Had Jacob not repented prior to his night of wrestling, the guilt and weight of his sin would have crushed him! God's people will be victorious during the time of Jacob's trouble as long as they have repented of every sin and obtained the victory prior to this terrible ordeal.*

17. Jacob said he would not let go except the angel did what?

"And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou _____ _____." *Genesis 32:26*

Note: *At day break, after intense wrestling all night, the angel told Jacob to let him go. Jacob realizing that he had been wrestling with a supernatural being, tightened his grip and clung to him with all his might. Understanding that he was in the arms of God, Jacob longed for the assurance that his sins were forgiven. Therefore, he declared, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." This was not a presumptuous response. If it had been so, he would have been destroyed instantly. Because he had sincerely repented of his sin, he could lean on Christ as the source of his hope and healing. During earth's final hour, believers who experience the time of Jacob's trouble will have a similar experience. In deep soul anguish, they will cling to Jesus with every fiber of their being. They will refuse to let Him go until they have the assurance that God has forgiven their sins.*

JACOB OBTAINS THE VICTORY

18. What did God change Jacob's name to when he prevailed with the angel?

[27]"And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. [28]And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but _____: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." *Genesis 32:27, 28*

19. According to Genesis 32:29, what special thing did God do for Jacob who had now become Israel?

"And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And _____ _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 32:29*

20. Who did Jacob see face to face at the place he called Peniel? What did Jacob say after his marvelous encounter with God?

"And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen _____ face to face, and _____ _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 32:30*

Note: *Clearly, Jacob obtained the victory in his long night of wrestling with God. Furthermore, victory was only achieved because he had previously repented, confessed, and obtained forgiveness for his sin. Had he not done so, it would have been impossible for him to survive one moment in the presence of a holy, just, pure, and sin-hating God.*

NO UNCONFESSED SINS APPEAR

21. According to the apostle Paul, what happened to the sins of those who will be saved at last?

"Some men's _____ _____ _____ _____, _____ _____ _____ _____; and some men they follow after." *1 Timothy 5:24*

Note: *In order to prevent our sins from appearing on heaven's record books after probation closes, our sins must go beforehand to judgment, be covered by the blood, and ultimately blotted out (Psalm 32:1; 51:9; Acts 3:19). Once probation closes, it will be too late to repent, confess, and receive forgiveness (Revelation 22:11). At that critical time, our characters will be fixed for eternity. In order to stand during the time of Jacob's trouble, we must give Jesus our sins during this judgment hour (1 Peter 4:17; Revelation 14:6-12).*

SUMMARY

The time of Jacob's trouble will be an intense period of suffering and soul searching. It is the trying experience that God's people will face immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ. The time of Jacob's trouble has a historical and prophetic application. Historically, Jacob's long night of wrestling with the angel came as a result of his own sin of securing the birthright and blessing through deceitful human efforts. Thankfully, he repented of his sin and prevailed with the angel. Prophetically, God's people will be hated and hunted during the time of Jacob's trouble because of their fidelity to God's law and their refusal to worship the beast and his image. They, like Jacob, will wrestle and cling to God for their lives. Their primary concern will not be persecution for the truth's sake, rather, it will be the vindication of God's character and the fear that they have not repented of every sin. They will refuse to let go of God's hand, obtain the victory, and prevail just as Jacob did.

22. Dear friend, are you willing to repent, confess, and forsake your sins before it's too late? _____

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