

Pentecost 19 C

Genesis 32:22-30

22 The same night [Jacob] arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."



Wrestling with God

Rev. Dr. S. Ware

Wrestling with God

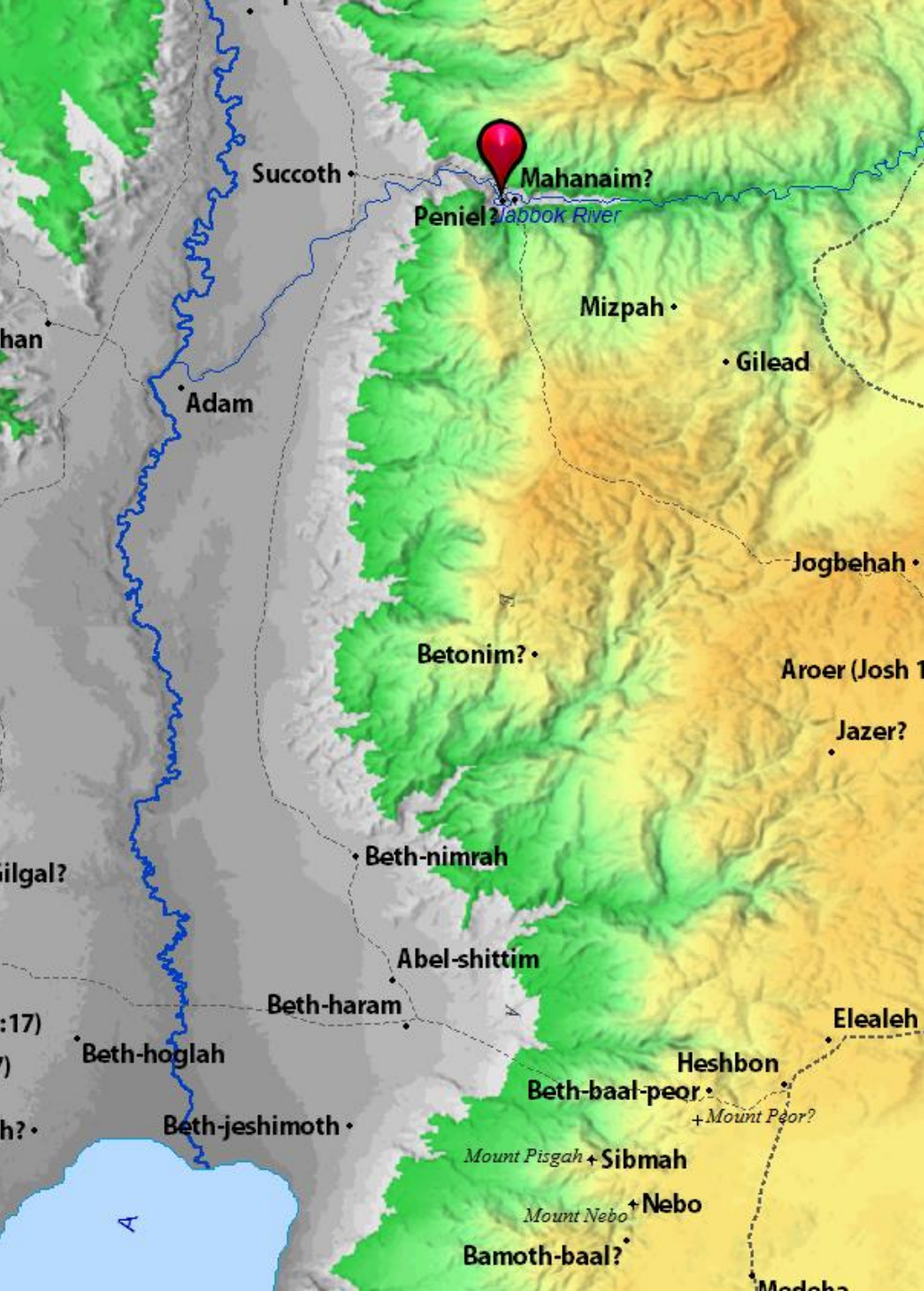
- (Genesis 32:24) ... a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day
- (28) “...you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed”
- (30) “... I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered”



Jacob Wrestles an Angel; Eugene Delacroix, 1861>>
Saint Sulpice, Paris

- (Genesis 25:26) יַעֲקֹב (Jacob) = “grasps the heel”
- (25:29) Tricks Esau into selling his birthright
- (27:1ff) Tricks Isaac into giving him the blessing of the birthright
- (30:25ff) Cunning use of natural elements and reproductive cycles of his goats to cause his flocks to grow and flourish at the expense of his father-in-law Laban





- (31:3) Jacob decides to return home
- (32:6-7) Hears that Esau coming to meet him with force of 400 men
- (32:27) יעקב = Jacob, “grasps the heel,” deceiver, trickster
- (32:28, 35:10) ישראל = Israel, “wrestles with God”

“Prince of God”

Matthias Grunewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*>>
Unterlinden Museum, FR (1516)

- (Gen 32:30) פְּנוֹאֵל = Peniel, “face of God”
- (32:28, 35:10) יִשְׂרָאֵל = Israel, “wrestles with God”; also “prince of God”
- “God of Jacob” 50+ times in Scripture; “God of Israel” 100+ times
- “Jacob” and “Israel” appear in the same verse 80+ times after this story
- (Ezra 3:11) “His love toward Israel endures forever”
- (Psalm 98:3) “He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel”



Wrestling with God

- Not “wrestling *against* God”
- Wrestling against our sinful nature
- Wrestling to understand and submit

