

Material for Further Reflection

Jacob

- Read Genesis 28 and reflect on the story. Reflect further in conjunction with some of Sack's ideas from *Vayetzeh* Light in Dark Times pp 31-34 (see bibliography).

P 31 What is it that made Jacob-not Abraham, Isaac or Moses-the true father of the Jewish people?

P31 'Jacob was the man whose greatest visions came to him when he was alone at night, far from home, fleeing from one danger to the next'. Gen 28. 12-17

P 34 Jacob faced: rivalry of Esau, resentment of Laban, tension between his wives and children, early death of Rachel, and loss for twenty two years of his favourite son, Joseph'.

P 34 'To try, to fall, to fear, and yet keep going, that is what it takes to be a leader. That was Jacob, the man who at the lowest ebbs of his life had his greatest visions of Heaven'.

- Read Genesis 32: 22-32

Use the quotations from Magonet to enrich your appreciation of this story. They are from his book in bibliography. See Chapter 8 pp. 28-31 Jacob Meets Esau Genesis 32.4 ff.

P28 'In the night before the encounter, Jacob had another fight, with a man who wrestled with him until dawn. This unknown man, elsewhere called a *mal'ach*, the Hebrew word used for a divine messenger, might have really been someone sent by God. But he could also represent an inner struggle within Jacob himself, as he wrestled with his fear and guilt about the past'.

P 29 'It is as if the past about which Jacob felt so much guilt, had never happened. Esau had simply accepted it and gone on to lead his own successful life'.

P 31 '[...] the focus on Jacob should not blind us to the significance of Esau. For it is esau who manages to transform his justifiable anger into something else; [...] to be able to accept with generosity, and maybe even with love, the brother who had wronged him.'

'[...]forgiveness and reconciliation are possible'.

- **Nicodemus**

Read about Nicodemus in John's Gospel and trace his change of attitude towards Jesus. See 3.1, 7.50, 19.39.

Being Still

Please do be in touch with your local church for support with this. You are welcome to join the Centering Prayer group at Alabare. Please contact Keith Thomasson for more details. Email: K.thomasson@alabare.co.uk Phone: 07500788148

References

Web References

<http://www.contemplative.org/cynthia-bourgeault/>

<https://home.cern/about/physics/dark-matter>

Google Images

Literature

Paul Bradbury 2016 *Stepping into grace: Moving beyond ambition to contemplative mission* Abingdon BRF

Lisa Rendall 2015 *Dark Matter and the Dinosaurs* London: Penguin Random House UK

John Lewis-Stempel 2017 *The Secret Life of the Owl* London: Doubleday

Jonathan Magonet 2013 *A Rabbi Reads the Torah* London SCM Press

Jonathan Sacks 2015 *Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly reading of the Jewish Bible* New Milford CT and Jerusalem Israel Maggid Books

Suggestions for further reading

Barbara Brown Taylor 2011 *Learning to Walk in the Dark* Norwich: Canterbury Press

Ian Adams 2017 *Some Small Heaven: a Spiritual Path through Advent* Norwich: Canterbury Press

St John of the Cross *Dark Night of the Soul*