

## *Left Alone*

*“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day” (Gen. 32:24).*

In spite of child abuse and neglect laws that address the legal age for children being left alone, the Census Bureau recently reported that nearly seven million school-age children per year are regularly left home alone. It was also stated in the same article that every year over four million children, ages fourteen and younger, many of which are unattended, are in great danger or are injured in the home.

Jacob was not a child, and he wasn't left alone at home. And if there was any abuse or neglect, it was on his part. He had sent his two wives, his two women-servants and all his possessions over the ford Jabbok so if Esau was yet angry with him, he would take all his vengeance out on them before he got to Jacob. In his usual selfish way, he was looking out for himself—ole' number one.

In God's providential grace, however, this extremely self-centered man was left alone. And unlike the above statistics, it wasn't to Jacob's detriment. Oh yes, he did have an unexpected confrontation, and was injured or somewhat incapacitated during the night. But in all reality, the night this man was left alone was the greatest night of his life. His life-changing experience in this time of solitude also brings several lessons to us.

*When we are left alone, we may learn at that point that we are not alone!* At some time in the silent realms of the night, Jacob found himself confronted by “a man.” Later in the account, however, Jacob referred to the visitor as “God” (32:30). This divine appearance seems to be a Christophany, a pre-Bethlehem, or pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. Sometimes when we are left alone, the Lord Jesus uses the occasion to make His presence known.

*When we are left alone, we may learn that we are not alone adequate for the spiritual life!* Jacob had always felt self-confident, shown self-assertiveness, and intimidated others with self-superiority. But for the first time in his life, after his encounter with the living God, he confessed to his heavenly Visitor that he was “Jacob,” nothing but “a deceiver, a beguiler” (32:27). Of course, only God can bring us to the place where we sense our inaptness to serve Him and man.

*When we are left alone, we may learn that we can never operate alone again!* From this night forward, Jacob “halted upon his thigh” (32:31). He had to use a walking stick for the remainder of his life. Even in the hour of his death, we are told that, “By faith Jacob . . . worshipped, leaning upon his staff” (Heb. 11:21). Oh, may we be found leaning on the blessed Holy Spirit throughout our spiritual journey. And even in the hour of death, may we still be found leaning on Him!