

Genesis 25:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

Analysis

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dw... This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

Historical Context

The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Abraham's Death emerge from this passage?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?

3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

אִישׁ	צָדִיק	אִישׁ	צָדָל	בְּנָעָר	יָמִים	יָהִי	וְיָהִי	עָשָׂה	וְעָשָׂה	אִישׁ	וְאִישׁ	וְאִישׁ	וְאִישׁ	וְאִישׁ
grew	And the boys			H1961		and Esau		a man		was a cunning		hunter		a man
H1431		H5288				H6215		H376		H3045		H6718		H376
of the field	and Jacob					a man		was a plain		dwelling		in tents		
H7704		H3290				H376		H8535		H3427		H168		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 11:9 (Parallel theme): By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Genesis 21:20 (Parallel theme): And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

Genesis 10:9 (Parallel theme): He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

Psalms 37:37 (Parallel theme): Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Job 1:1 (Parallel theme): There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Job 1:8 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Genesis 27:40 (Parallel theme): And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

Genesis 6:9 (Parallel theme): These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Genesis 46:34 (Parallel theme): That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

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