

# Genesis 25:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him:  
and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

## Analysis

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**And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob....** 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

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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

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?

3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

## Interlinear Text

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לֵאמֹר	וַיִּשְׁבַּע	לְיַעֲקֹב:	וַיִּשְׁבַּע	לִי	כִּי הַיּוֹם	וַיִּשְׁבַּע	לֵאמֹר
said	And Jacob	Swear	H0	to me this day	Swear	H0	
H559	H3290	H7650		H3117	H7650		
וַיִּמְכֹּר	אֶת	בְּכֹרֶתוֹ	לְיַעֲקֹב:				
unto him and he sold	H853	his birthright	And Jacob				
H4376		H1062	H3290				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 12:16** (Parallel theme): Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

**Hebrews 6:16** (Parallel theme): For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

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

**Mark 6:23** (Parallel theme): And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

**Genesis 24:3** (Parallel theme): And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: