

Genesis 26:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

Analysis

For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Phil... This passage belongs to the Jacob narratives which demonstrate God's sovereign election overriding human merit and the transformation of a deceiver into Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. The Jacob cycle shows how divine purposes advance through flawed individuals whom God graciously transforms.

Key themes include God's sovereign choice ("the older shall serve the younger"), the consequences of deception and family dysfunction, exile and return patterns, wrestling with God leading to blessing, and covenant renewal across generations. Jacob's character development from manipulative deceiver to mature patriarch demonstrates sanctification's lifelong process.

Theologically significant aspects include:

1. divine election based on grace not merit (Romans 9:10-13)
2. God's faithfulness to covenant promises despite human unfaithfulness
3. discipline as evidence of divine love and means of transformation
4. generational patterns of sin requiring divine intervention to break
5. prayer and wrestling with God as legitimate expressions of faith.

Jacob's limp after wrestling God symbolizes how divine encounters leave permanent marks, transforming our approach to life and dependence on God rather than our own cunning.

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Isaac's Life emerge from this passage?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?

3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

לֹא יָהִי H1961	וּמִקְנֵה הַ H0	צֹאן H4735	וּמִקְנֵה הַ H4735	בָּקָר H1241
	For he had possession	of flocks	For he had possession	of herds
וְעֲבָדָה H5657	וְרַבָּה H7227	וַיִּקְנָא H7065	אֵת H853	פְּלִשְׁתִּים: H6430
of servants	and great store	envied		and the Philistines

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 4:4 (Parallel theme): Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

Genesis 37:11 (Parallel theme): And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

Psalms 112:3 (Parallel theme): Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

Job 5:2 (Parallel theme): For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

Job 42:12 (Parallel theme): So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

Job 1:3 (Parallel theme): His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Proverbs 10:22 (Parallel theme): The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Proverbs 27:4 (Parallel theme): Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

Genesis 12:16 (Parallel theme): And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

Genesis 13:2 (Parallel theme): And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

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