

Genesis 26:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Analysis

Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.... 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?

2. How should this truth about Abimelech shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

בְּכִלִּי	וַיִּשְׁמַר	מִשְׁמֶרֶתִּי	אֲבֹרָכָה	שָׁמַע	אֲשֶׁר	עַל־קִב
my voice	and kept	my charge	that Abraham	obeyed		Because
H6963	H8104	H4931	H85	H8085	H834	H6118
וְתוֹרָתִי	חֻקֹּתַי	מִצְוֹתַי				
and my laws	my statutes	my commandments				
H8451	H2708	H4687				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 22:18 (Parallel theme): And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 22:16 (Parallel theme): And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

Matthew 7:24 (Parallel theme): Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Hebrews 11:8 (References Abraham): By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

James 2:21 (References Abraham): Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

Galatians 5:6 (Parallel theme): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (Parallel theme): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Genesis 12:4 (Parallel theme): So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 18:19 (References Abraham): For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Genesis 17:23 (References Abraham): And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

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