

Genesis 26:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

Analysis

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say,... 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Isaac's Life emerge from this passage?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

אָחִי תִי	לֹאמֶר	אִשְׁתִּי	הַמָּקוֹם	אֲנִשִׁי	וַיִּשְׁאַל־וֹ
She is my sister	and he said	She is my wife	of the place	H376	asked
H269	H559	H802	H4725		H7592
אֲנִשִׁי	יִהְרֹג־נִי	פֶּן	אִשְׁתִּי	לֹאמֶר	יִרָא
H376	should kill	H6435	She is my wife	and he said	for he feared
H2026			H802	H559	H3372
הוא:	מִרְאֶה	טוֹב־ת	כִּי	רִבְקָה	עַל
H1931	to look upon	because she was fair	H3588	me for Rebekah	H5921
	H4758	H2896		H7259	H4725

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 29:25 (Parallel theme): The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Genesis 12:13 (Parallel theme): Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

Genesis 20:2 (Parallel theme): And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

Genesis 24:16 (Parallel theme): And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

Colossians 3:9 (Parallel theme): Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Ephesians 5:25 (Parallel theme): Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

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