

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

אָחֶת	תִּשְׁאֵל	אֲשֶׁת	בַּמְקֹם	אֲנָשָׁה	לְאַמְתָּה	רַ	אֲנָשָׁה	יִרְאָה	כִּי	אָנָּה	אָנָּשָׁה	יִבְרָגֵן	מִרְאָה	תִּ		
asked	H376	of the place	H4725	She is my wife	H802	and he said	H559	She is my sister	H269							
H7592		H4725		H802		H559		H269								
אָנָּשָׁה	יִרְאָה	כִּי	אָנָּה	אֲשֶׁת	לְאַמְתָּה	רַ	אֲנָשָׁה	יִרְאָה	כִּי	אָנָּה	אָנָּשָׁה	יִבְרָגֵן	מִרְאָה	תִּ		
H1931	H3588	for he feared	H3372	and he said	H559	She is my wife	H802	She is my sister	H2026							
מִרְאָה	תִּ	סְטוּבָה	תִּ	רַבְקָה	הִ	עַל	בַּמְקֹם	אֲנָשָׁה	לְ	מִרְאָה	הִ	תִּ	סְטוּבָה	תִּ		
to look upon	H1931	because she was fair	H2896	me for Rebekah	H3588	of the place	H5921	Rebekah	H7259		to look upon	H4758				

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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