

Genesis 29:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.

Analysis

And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD ha... 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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. How should this truth about Children shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

וַתְּהַר	לֵאָה	וַתֵּלֶד	בֵּן	וַתִּקְרָא	שְׁמוֹ	רְאוּבֵן	כִּי
conceived	And Leah	and bare	a son	and she called	his name	Reuben	Surely
H2029	H3812	H3205	H1121	H7121	H8034	H7205	H3588
אָמְרָה	כִּי	רָאָה	יְהוָה	בְּעֵינַי	כִּי	עַתָּה	
she said	Surely	hath looked	the LORD	upon my affliction	Surely		H6258
H559	H3588	H7200	H3068	H6040	H3588		
וַיֶּהְיֶה	אִישִׁי:						
will love	my husband						
H157	H376						

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 4:31 (References Lord): And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Exodus 3:7 (References Lord): And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Deuteronomy 26:7 (References Lord): And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:

Psalms 106:44 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

Psalms 25:18 (Parallel theme): Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

Genesis 42:22 (Parallel theme): And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.

Genesis 31:42 (Parallel theme): Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

Genesis 42:27 (Parallel theme): And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth.

Luke 1:25 (References Lord): Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

1 Samuel 1:11 (References Lord): And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.