

Genesis 30:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.

Analysis

And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take ... 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. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר And she said	לְהַנִּיחַ unto her	וְאַתָּה Is it a small matter	לִזְקֹנֶת and wouldest thou take away	אַת H853
H559	H0	H4592		H3947
אִישׁ H582	לִזְקֹנֶת and wouldest thou take away	אַת H1571	לִזְקֹנֶת mandrakes	בָּנָה: my son's H1121
	H3947	H853	H1736	H5973
וַיֹּאמֶר And she said	בְּנֵי also And Rachel	לִזְקֹנֶת H3651	וְאַתָּה Therefore he shall lie	עֲמָקָם H5973
H559	H7354		H7901	
בָּנָה: with thee to night	לִזְקֹנֶת for	לִזְקֹנֶת mandrakes	בָּנָה: my son's H1121	
H3915	H8478	H1736		

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 16:13 (Parallel theme): Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

Isaiah 7:13 (Parallel theme): And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

1 Corinthians 4:3 (Parallel theme): But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

Ezekiel 16:47 (Parallel theme): Yet hast thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, thou wast corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

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