

Genesis 30:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.

Analysis

Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my se... 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

תָּנָה	אֶת	נָשִׁי	וְאֶת	יְלִדֵי	אֲשֶׁר	עָבַדְתִּיבְּ:
Give	H853	me my wives	H853	and my children	H834	which I have done
H5414		H802		H3206		H5647
אֶתְּךָ	בְּהֵן	וְאֵלֶיךָ	כִּי	אֶתְּךָ	יָדָעְתָּ	אֶת
H853	H0	H1980	H3588	H859	for thou knowest	H853
					H3045	my service
						H5656
אֲשֶׁר	עָבַדְתִּיבְּ:					
H834	which I have done					
	H5647					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 29:30 (Parallel theme): And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Hosea 12:12 (Parallel theme): And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.

Genesis 31:31 (Parallel theme): And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.

Genesis 31:26 (Parallel theme): And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword?

Genesis 31:6 (Parallel theme): And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

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