

Genesis 31:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

Analysis

And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my ... 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Jacob's Flight from Laban emerge from this passage?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַן	וַיֹּאמֶר	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ
answered	And Laban	and said	unto Jacob	These daughters	
H6030	H3837	H559	H413 H3290	H1323	
וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ
These daughters	and these children	and these children	and these cattle		
H1323	H1121	H1121	H6629		
וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ
and these cattle			and all that thou seest		
H6629	H3605	H834	H859 H7200	H0	H1931
וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ
These daughters	is mine and what can I do		this day	or	
H1323	H4100 H6213		H428 H3117	H176	
וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיֵּלֶךְ
and these children	which they have born				
H1121	H834 H3205				