

Genesis 31:55

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

Analysis

And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and... 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

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How should this truth about Covenant at Mizpah shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וְשֶׁכֶּה	לָבָן	בַּבֹּקֶר	וַיִּנָּשֶׁק	לְבָנָיו	וְלִבְנוֹתָיו
And early	Laban	in the morning	and kissed	his sons	and his daughters
H7925	H3837	H1242	H5401	H1121	H1323
וַיְבָרֶכֶת	אֶתְּךָ	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיָּשָׁב	לָבָן	לְמִקְוֵאוֹ
and blessed			and returned	Laban	unto his place
H1288	H853	H1980	H7725	H3837	H4725

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 31:28 (Parallel theme): And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing.

Genesis 18:33 (Parallel theme): And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Genesis 30:25 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

Psalms 76:10 (Parallel theme): Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Proverbs 16:7 (Parallel theme): When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Genesis 31:43 (Parallel theme): 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?

Genesis 28:1 (Blessing): And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

Genesis 24:60 (Blessing): And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Genesis 33:4 (Parallel theme): And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

Deuteronomy 23:5 (Blessing): Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.