

Genesis 33:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

Analysis

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? An... 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 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of 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. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים	פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים	פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים	פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים
And he lifted up	his eyes	and saw	the women	the children	the children	the children	the children
H5375	H853	H5869	H7200	H802	H853	H3206	H3206
אֲשֶׁר פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים	אֲשֶׁר פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים	אֲשֶׁר פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים	אֲשֶׁר פִּילַד יְמִינָה אֶת	בְּנָשִׁים
and said	Who are those	and said	The children	The children	The children	The children	The children
H559	H4310	H428	H0	H559	H834	H3206	H3206
עָבֹדָתְךָ בְּנֵי יְמִינָה אֶת	אֱלֹהִים	עָבֹדָתְךָ בְּנֵי יְמִינָה אֶת	אֱלֹהִים	עָבֹדָתְךָ בְּנֵי יְמִינָה אֶת	אֱלֹהִים	עָבֹדָתְךָ בְּנֵי יְמִינָה אֶת	אֱלֹהִים
hath graciously given	which God	thy servant	thy servant	thy servant	thy servant	thy servant	thy servant
H2603	H430	H853	H5650	H5650	H5650	H5650	H5650

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 127:3 (Parallel theme): Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Isaiah 8:18 (Parallel theme): Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

Genesis 48:9 (References God): And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

Hebrews 2:13 (References God): And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

1 Chronicles 28:5 (Parallel theme): And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

Genesis 30:2 (References God): And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

1 Samuel 1:27 (Parallel theme): For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

Ruth 4:13 (Parallel theme): So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

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