

Genesis 34:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

Analysis

These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the la... 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

בָּאָנָשׁ יִם	שְׁלָמִים	הַמִּלְחָמָה	אַתָּה נָנוֹת	לְיִשְׁבָּה ۱
H376	H428	are peaceable	H1992	with us therefore let them dwell
		H8003		H3427
בָּאָנָשׁ יִם	שְׁלָמִים	הַמִּלְחָמָה	אַתָּה נָנוֹת	לְיִשְׁבָּה ۱
in the land	and trade	in the land	behold it is large	enough
H776	H5503	H853	H2009	H3027
לְפָנֶיךָ מִן	בָּנָתִים יְנֻנוּ	נִקְחָה	לְנֶשֶׁת יְמִים	אַתָּה לְנֶשֶׁת יְמִים
for them	their daughters	let us take	to us for wives	to us for wives
H6440	H853	H1323	H0	H853
בָּנָתִים יְנֻנוּ	לְקַמְּמָה:	נִתְּתֵנָה		
their daughters	and let us give	H0		
H1323	H5414			

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