

Genesis 34:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

Analysis

And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and eve... 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 this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
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

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|-------------------|------|----------------|------|-----------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------------|-----|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| וַיִּשְׁמַע | וְ | בֶּן | וְ | שָׁכֹן | וְ | אֶל | חִמּוֹר | וְ | אֶל | וְ | יָצַא | וְ | כָּל | כָּל | כָּל | כָּל | כָּל | כָּל | |
| hearkened | H413 | And unto Hamor | H413 | | H7928 | his son | H3605 | all that went out | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H8085 | | H2544 | | | H1121 | | H3318 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| שׁ עַר | וְ | עִירּוֹן | וְ | לִפְתַּח | וְ | לִפְתַּח | וְ | כָּל | וְ | כָּל | וְ | כָּל | וְ | כָּל | וְ | כָּל | וְ | כָּל | |
| of the gate | | of his city | | was circumcised | | H3605 | and every male | H3605 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H8179 | | H5892 | | H4135 | | H2145 | | H2145 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| עִירּוֹן | וְ | שׁ עַר | וְ | עִירּוֹן | וְ | שׁ עַר | וְ | יָצַא | וְ | | | | | | | | | | |
| all that went out | | of the gate | | of his city | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H3318 | | H8179 | | H5892 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 23:10 (Parallel theme): And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying,

1 Corinthians 7:19 (Parallel theme): Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.