

Genesis 35:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

Analysis

And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abra... 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא	וַיָּעֲקֹב	אֶל	וַיִּצְחָק:	אָבִיו	מַמְרֵי	אֶת
came	And Jacob	H413	and Isaac	his father	unto Mamre	H0
H935	H3290		H3327	H1	H4471	
	הָאֲרָבָה	וְהָיָה	חֵבְרוֹן	אֲשֶׁר	גָּר	שָׁם
unto the city of Arbah	H1931	which is Hebron	H834	sojourned	H8033	
H7153		H2275		H1481		
אֲבְרָהָם	וַיִּצְחָק:					
where Abraham	and Isaac					
H85	H3327					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 13:18 (Parallel theme): Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Genesis 23:19 (References Abraham): And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 18:1 (Parallel theme): And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;

Genesis 23:2 (References Abraham): And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

Joshua 15:13 (Parallel theme): And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

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