

Genesis 35:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

Analysis

And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.... 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 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

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. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיוּ	יָמֵי	יִצְחָק	מֵאָה	שָׁנָה:	וּשְׁמֹנֶיִם	שָׁנָה:
H1961	And the days	of Isaac	were an hundred	years	and fourscore	years
	H3117	H3327	H3967	H8141	H8084	H8141

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 25:7 (Parallel theme): And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

Genesis 50:26 (Parallel theme): So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Genesis 47:28 (Parallel theme): And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.