

Genesis 36:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

Analysis

And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons o... 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Esau's Descendants emerge from this passage?
2. How should this truth about Edomite Kings shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

וְתֵךְ	לְדָ	עֲשָׂוָה	בֶּן	וְלְאַלִּיף	ז	פִּילְגָּשׁ	בֵּית	הָ	וְתִמְנָה	עָלָיָה
And Timna	H1961	was concubine		to Eliphaz		son		Esau's	and she bare	
H8555		H6370		H464		H1121		H6215		H3205

עֲשָׂוָה	אֵ	שָׁת	עַד	הָ	בֶּן	וְ	אֵ	לְהָ	עַמְלֵל	קָ	אַת	וְלְאַלִּיף	ז	
to Eliphaz	H853	Amalek	H428		son		of Adah		wife		Esau's			
H464		H6002			H1121		H5711		H802		H6215			

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 14:7 (Parallel theme): And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazazon-tamar.

Genesis 36:22 (Parallel theme): And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna.

Deuteronomy 23:7 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.