

Hosea 12:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

Analysis

Jacob's struggle: 'He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God.' References Genesis 25:26 (Jacob grasping Esau's בָּנָעַ, aqev, heel) and Genesis 32:24-28 (wrestling with God). In womb: scheming beginning early; as adult: gaining שָׁמַךְ (sarah, power/prevailing) with God. This demonstrates Jacob's character: striving from birth, ultimately transformed through divine encounter. Natural strength fails; supernatural wrestling succeeds. Only yielding to God brings true victory. Christ embodies true Israel, succeeding where Jacob's descendants failed.

Historical Context

Hosea uses Jacob narrative to address Israel (Jacob's name): their forefather's struggle with God models both their character (striving, scheming) and potential (prevailing through encounter with God). Jacob's story emphasizes that blessing comes through struggle and transformation (name changed to Israel, Genesis 32:28). The prophet challenges descendants: will they continue Jacob's early scheming or embrace his later transformation? Church history shows similar pattern: God's people often characterized by striving until transformative divine encounter produces yielding. This demonstrates that spiritual victory requires moving from self-effort to God-dependence.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Jacob's progression from heel-grabbing schemer to God-wrestler model necessary spiritual transformation?
 2. What does Jacob 'having power with God' through wrestling teach about persistent prayer and struggle in faith?

Interlinear Text

בְּבָטֶן	בְּבָטֶן	אַתָּה	עַקְבָּה	אַתָּה	בְּבָטֶן	וּבְאוֹנָגָן
in the womb	by the heel	H853	He took his brother	and by his strength		
H990	H6117		H251		H202	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 25:26 (Parallel theme): And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

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