

Genesis 13:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

Analysis

And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and th... This passage is part of the Abrahamic narratives which shift from universal human history to God's particular covenant people. The Abraham cycle (Genesis 12-25) demonstrates God's sovereign election, covenant faithfulness, and the development of faith through testing and promise fulfillment.

Central themes include God's unconditional covenant promises (land, descendants, blessing to nations), the call to faith and obedience, the testing of faith through delays and impossibilities, the contrast between divine promises and human schemes, and God's gracious persistence despite human failures. Abraham emerges as the father of faith whose trust in God's promises becomes the model for all believers (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11).

Theologically, these narratives establish:

1. salvation by grace through faith rather than works
2. covenant as God's gracious initiative binding Himself to His people
3. the necessity of patient trust when promises seem impossible
4. the consequences of attempting to fulfill God's promises through human effort
5. the pattern of divine testing producing mature faith.

The Abraham cycle foreshadows Christ as the ultimate seed through whom blessing extends to all nations (Galatians 3:16).

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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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 this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

וְיָהִי	וְיָהִי	רֵעַ	רֵעַ	מִקְנָה	מִקְנָה	אֶבֶן	אֶבֶן
H1961	And there was a strife	H996	and the herdmen	cattle	of Abram's	H996	
	H7379		H7462	H4735	H87		
רֵעַ	מִקְנָה	לְוַת	וְיִצְחָקִי	וְיִפְרָץִי	וְיִשְׁכַּנְתִּי	וְיִשְׁכַּנְתִּי	וְיִשְׁכַּנְתִּי
and the herdmen	cattle	of Lot's	and the Canaanite	and the Perizzite	and the Perizzite	H227	
H7462	H4735	H3876	H3669	H6522			
בָּאָרֶץ	בָּאָרֶץ						
dwelled	then in the land						
H3427	H776						

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 26:20 (Parallel theme): And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is our's: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

Genesis 12:6 (Parallel theme): And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

James 3:16 (Parallel theme): For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

Genesis 34:30 (Parallel theme): And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather

themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

James 4:1 (Parallel theme): From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Galatians 5:20 (Parallel theme): Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

1 Peter 2:12 (Parallel theme): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

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