

Genesis 14:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Analysis

And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him ... 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?

2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

וְבֵרָכְךָ	אֵל ל	עָלֶי וְ	אֲשֶׁר	מִגְ	צָרְ יָדְ
And blessed	God	be the most high	H834	which hath delivered	thine enemies
H1288	H410	H5945		H4042	H6862
בְּיָדְךָ	וַתֵּן	לִי	מַעֲשֵׂה ר	מַכְלִ:	
into thy hand	And he gave	H0	him tithes	H3605	
H3027	H5414		H4643		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 28:22 (References God): And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Malachi 3:10 (Blessing): Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Genesis 24:27 (Blessing): And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.

Luke 18:12 (Parallel theme): I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Psalms 68:19 (Blessing): Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.

Psalms 144:1 (Blessing): Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:

Psalms 44:3 (Parallel theme): For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

Ephesians 1:3 (Blessing): Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Nehemiah 10:37 (References God): And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

Nehemiah 13:12 (Parallel theme): Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.