

Genesis 18:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

Analysis

Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack o... 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

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. How should this truth about Intercession for Sodom shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

וְאַל	יְחִסֵּר	בְּמֵשׁ	יְמִין	בְּצִדְיקִים	לִפְנֵי
H194	Peradventure there shall lack	H2572	of the fifty	H6662	righteous
	H2637				H2568
אַשְׁחַת	לִפְנֵי	כָּל	בָּעֵיר	אָמָר	לֹא
I will not destroy	and five	H853	all the city	And he said	H3808
H7843	H2568	H3605	H5892	H559	
אַשְׁחַת	אֶרְבֶּעָה	יְמִין	אֶרְבֶּעָה	וְאַתָּה	לִפְנֵי
I will not destroy	If I find	H518	there forty	H705	H2568
H7843	H4672	H8033			

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