

Genesis 18:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

Analysis

And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall... 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

אָרֶן אָמָר	לְאָדָם הָיָה תֹּאמֶר	אָרֶן אָמָר
And he said	be angry	Oh let not the Lord
H559	H2734	H136
		and I will speak
		yet
		H389
לְאָרֶן אָמָר בְּעֵבֶר וְאַשְׁחַת יְה	בְּעֵבֶר וְאַשְׁחַת יְה	לְאָרֶן אָמָר בְּעֵבֶר וְאַשְׁחַת יְה
but this once	shall be found	Peradventure ten
H6471	H4672	H6235
		H3808
I will not destroy	Peradventure ten	And he said
H7843	H6235	H559

Additional Cross-References

Judges 6:39 (Parallel theme): And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

Matthew 7:7 (Parallel theme): Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: