

Genesis 19:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

Analysis

And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, ... 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Sodom's Destruction emerge from this passage?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁקוּ רַ	עַל	פְּנֵי י	סְדֹם	וְעֹמֶרָה	וְעַל	כָּל	פְּנֵי י
And he looked	H5921	and toward	Sodom	and Gomorrah	H5921	H3605	and toward
H8259		H6440	H5467	H6017			H6440
הָאָרֶץ	הַפְּתוּחָה	וַיִּרְאֵהָ	וַהֲיָה	עָלָה	בָּקִיטָה		
all the land	of the plain	and beheld	H2009	went up	and lo the smoke		
H776	H3603	H7200		H5927	H7008		
הָאָרֶץ	בָּקִיטָה	הַפְּתוּחָה					
all the land	and lo the smoke	of a furnace					
H776	H7008	H3536					

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:9 (Parallel theme): And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

Revelation 9:2 (Parallel theme): And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

Revelation 21:8 (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Revelation 18:18 (Parallel theme): And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

Jude 1:7 (Parallel theme): Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Revelation 19:3 (Parallel theme): And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

Psalms 107:34 (Parallel theme): A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

2 Peter 2:7 (Parallel theme): And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

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