

# Genesis 21:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:

## Analysis

**And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto...** 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

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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

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

## Interlinear Text

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אַבִּימֶלֶךְ	לְאִם	רָ	פָּה	וְאַ	בְּעֵת	תִּהְיֶה	וְ	אַיִלָּה
H1961	<b>And it came to pass at that time</b>			H1931	<b>saying</b>		<b>that Abimelech</b>	
		H6269			H559		H40	
וְפִיכָּל	שָׁרֵךְ	אַבָּא	וְ	אֶל	אַבְרָהָם	לְאִם	רָ	אַבְרָהָם
<b>and Phichol</b>	<b>the chief captain</b>	<b>of his host</b>		H413	<b>unto Abraham</b>	<b>saying</b>		
H6369	H8269	H6635			H85	H559		
אֱלֹהִים	עַמְּךָ	בְּכָל	אַשְׁר	אַתָּה	עָשָׂה:			
<b>God</b>	H5973	H3605	H834	H859	<b>is with thee in all that thou doest</b>			
H430					H6213			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 26:26** (Parallel theme): Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

**Genesis 26:28** (Parallel theme): And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;

**Genesis 20:2** (References Abraham): And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

**Joshua 3:7** (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

**Hebrews 13:5** (Parallel theme): Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

**Isaiah 8:10** (References God): Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

**Romans 8:31** (References God): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

**1 Corinthians 14:25** (References God): And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

**Revelation 3:9** (Parallel theme): Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

**Isaiah 45:14** (References God): Thus saith the LORD, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God.