

# Genesis 21:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

## Analysis

**Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, no...** 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**

---

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

---

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How should this truth about Beersheba Covenant shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

## Interlinear Text

---

וְעַתָּה	הַשׁ	בְּעָה	לֵ	בְּאֱלֹהִים	הַ	בָּהּ	אָם
H6258	<b>Now therefore swear</b>	H7650	H0	<b>by God</b>	H430	<b>unto me here</b>	H518
							H2008
			לֵ				וְלֹא־
				לֹא־			לֹא־
					לֹא־		לֹא־
תְּשַׁקֵּן	רָ						
<b>that thou wilt not deal falsely</b>	H8266	H0	<b>with me nor with my son</b>	H5209	<b>nor with my son's son</b>	H5220	
כַּחֲסֵד		אֲשֶׁר		תִּשְׁעַשׂ	עַמְךָ	תִּשְׁעַשׂ	
<b>but according to the kindness</b>	H2617	H834	<b>that I have done</b>	H6213	<b>that I have done</b>	H6213	
וְעַד	וְעַמְךָ	כִּי		אֲשֶׁר	גַּ	גַּ	
H5978	H5973	<b>unto me and to the land</b>	H776	H834	רִתָּה	רִתָּה	
							H0
					<b>wherein thou hast sojourned</b>	H1481	

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Joshua 2:12** (Parallel theme): Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

**Genesis 20:14** (Parallel theme): And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.

