

Genesis 22:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

Analysis

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know tha... 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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

וְאַמְרָה	תְּשַׁלֵּחַ	אֵל	יְדָךְ	אֵל	כִּי עַר	אֵל
And he said	H408	Lay	not thine hand	upon	the lad	H408
H559		H7971	H3027	H413	H5288	
תַּעֲשֶׂה	לֵאמֹר	מֵאַתְּמָה	כִּי	עַתָּה	יְדָעַתִּי	כִּי
neither do thou	H0	any thing	H3588	unto him for now	I know	H3588
H6213		H3972		H6258	H3045	
אֲלֹהִים	אַתָּה	אֵל	כִּי	אֲתָּה	אֲלֹהִים	אֲתָּה
that thou fearest	God	H859	seeing thou hast not	withheld		H853
H3373	H430		H3808		H2820	
בְּתַךְ	אַתָּה	אֵל	יְחִידָךְ	מִמְּבֵן	אַתָּה	בְּתַךְ
thy son	H853	thine only	H4480			
H1121		H3173				

Additional Cross-References

James 2:18 (Parallel theme): Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

1 Samuel 15:22 (Parallel theme): And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Romans 8:32 (Parallel theme): He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Genesis 26:5 (Parallel theme): Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (References God): There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (References God): Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Romans 5:8 (References God): But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Matthew 19:29 (Parallel theme): And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Genesis 22:2 (Parallel theme): And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Acts 9:31 (Parallel theme): Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.