

Genesis 24:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

Analysis

And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening,... 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 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
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

וַיַּעַשׂ	הַגִּמְלִים	מִחוּץ	לְעִיר	אֶל	בְּאֵר	הַמַּיִם	לְעֵת
And he made	his camels	without	the city	by	a well	of water	at the time
H1288	H1581	H2351	H5892	H413	H875	H4325	H6256
עַרְבַּיִם	לְעֵת	צֵאתָ	הַשְּׂאֲבֹתָ:				
of the evening	at the time	that women go out	to draw				
H6153	H6256	H3318	H7579				

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 9:11 (Parallel theme): And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

Exodus 2:16 (Parallel theme): Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

John 4:7 (Parallel theme): There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.