

Genesis 24:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

Analysis

And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous... 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How should this truth about Servant's Faith shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵשֶׁ	מְשֻׁמָּא	הַ	לְ	שָׁמַר	וְשָׁמַר	עַתָּה	לְזַעַם	בַּהֲצָלִים
And the man	wondering		H0	at her held his peace		to wit		had made
H376	H7583			H2790		H3045		H6743
וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם	וְהַזְעֵם
לֹא:	אָמַר	דָּרְכֵי	וְ	יְהִי	הַ	לֹא:	אָמַר	דָּרְכֵי
whether the LORD	his journey	or				H3808		
H3068	H1870	H518						

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 24:12 (References Lord): And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

Psalms 107:43 (References Lord): Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Luke 2:51 (Parallel theme): And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Luke 2:19 (Parallel theme): But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.