

Genesis 24:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

Analysis

And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the ca... 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּבֹא	וְאֵשׁ	בַּאֲשָׁר	בְּיַתָּה	בְּבַבְּ	וַיְמַלֵּא	לְגַמְלֵל	וְיִתְגַּלֵּל
came	And the man	into the house	and he ungirded	for the camels	and gave		
H935	H376	H1004	H6605	H1581			H5414
תְּבָנָה	וְמִסְפָּא	לְגַמְלֵל	וְמַעַם	לְרַחַץ	לְבָגֵל	וְבָגֵל	
straw	and provender	for the camels	and water	to wash	feet	feet	
H8401	H4554	H1581	H4325	H7364	H7272	H7272	
וְאַנְשָׁים	אֲשֶׁר	אֲתָנוּ:					
and the men's							
H582	H834	H854					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 43:24 (Parallel theme): And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

Judges 19:21 (Parallel theme): So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

Genesis 18:4 (Parallel theme): Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:

1 Timothy 5:10 (Parallel theme): Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints'

feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Genesis 19:2 (Parallel theme): And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

Luke 7:44 (Parallel theme): And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

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