

Genesis 24:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

Analysis

But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.... 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
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

אֲמָ	לֹא	אֶל	בֵּית	אָבִי	יְהוָה	וְאֶל	מִשְׁפַּחַתִּי
But	H3808	H413	house	unto my father's	H1980	H413	and to my kindred
H518			H1004	H1			H4940
	וְלָקַחְתָּ	אִשָּׁה	לְבִנִּי:				
	and take	a wife	unto my son				
	H3947	H802	H1121				

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 24:4 (Parallel theme): But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.