

Genesis 24:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

Analysis

And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may tu... 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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

אֶת	וְאִמְרָתְךָ	בְּעֵשׂוֹךְ	וְאִם	וְעַתָּה	
H854	H571	H2617	H6213	H6258	H518
	and truly	kindly	deal	And now if ye will	
				H3426	
לִּי	וְאִם	לֹא	וְאִם	וְאִם	וְאִם
H0	H518	H3808	H0	H518	H518
	me and if not tell			me and if not tell	
				H5046	
שְׂמֵאלָא:	עַל	אֵל	יְמִין	עַל	וְאִפְנֵי
H8040	H5921	H176	H3225	H5921	H6437
to the left	or	to the right hand		me that I may turn	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 47:29 (Parallel theme): And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:

Joshua 2:14 (Parallel theme): And the men answered her, Our life for your's, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

Proverbs 3:3 (Parallel theme): Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

Genesis 32:10 (Parallel theme): I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

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