

Genesis 24:52

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.

Analysis

And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing ... 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 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Isaac's Marriage emerge from this passage?
2. How should this truth about Servant's Faith shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	רָאָה	שָׁמַע	עַבְדְּךָ	וַיָּבֹא	אֲבְרָהָם	אֶת
H1961	H834	heard	servant	And it came to pass that when Abraham's		H853
		H8085	H5650	H85		
דְּבָרָיו	וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה	אֶת	רַצָּה	לַיהוָה		
their words	he worshipped	bowing himself to the earth		the LORD		
H1697	H7812	H776		H3068		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 24:26 (Worship): And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

Genesis 24:48 (Worship): And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

Psalms 95:6 (Worship): O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

1 Chronicles 29:20 (Worship): And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king.

2 Chronicles 20:18 (Worship): And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

