

Genesis 25:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

Analysis

And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.... 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 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

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

וַיַּקְרֹשׁ יְהוָה אֶת־יְלָדָהּ וְיָמָנָה אֶת־שְׁבָא וְיָמָנָה אֶת־דְּדָן וְיָמָנָה אֶת־בָּנָי דְּדָן וְיָמָנָה אֶת־בָּנָי דְּדָן
And Jokshan begat H853 Sheba H853 and Dedan And the sons and Dedan
H3370 H3205 H7614 H1719 H1121 H1719

וְיָמָנָה אֶת־אַשּׁוּר וְיָמָנָה אֶת־לְטוּשִׁים וְיָמָנָה אֶת־לְעָמִים
H1961 were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim H805 H3912 H3817

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 25:13 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword.

Job 6:19 (Parallel theme): The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

Jeremiah 25:23 (Parallel theme): Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners,

Jeremiah 49:8 (Parallel theme): Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him.

Ezekiel 27:6 (Parallel theme): Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim.

Ezekiel 27:20 (Parallel theme): Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.

1 Kings 10:1 (Parallel theme): And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

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