

Genesis 25:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

Analysis

But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from ... 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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

בְּנוֹ	הַפִּילְגָּשִׁים	אִשָּׁר	אֲבֹרָה מִ	נָתַן	אֲבֹרָה מִ
But unto the sons	of the concubines	H834	had Abraham	gave	had Abraham
H1121	H6370		H85	H5414	H85
מִתְנָת	וַיִּשְׁלַח מִ	יָמַע ל	יִצְחָק מִן	בְּנוֹ	בְּעוֹד נוֹ
gifts	and sent them away	H5921	from Isaac	But unto the sons	H5750
H4979	H7971		H3327	H1121	
וְ	קִדְמָה:	אֶל	אֶרֶץ	קִדְמָה:	
while he yet lived	eastward	H413	country	eastward	
H2416	H6924		H776	H6924	

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 21:14 (References Abraham): And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

Judges 6:3 (Parallel theme): And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;

Acts 14:17 (Parallel theme): Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

