

Genesis 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

Analysis

Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hi... This passage belongs to the primeval history section (Genesis 1-11) which establishes universal truths about God, humanity, sin, and divine purposes before focusing on Abraham and Israel. These chapters answer fundamental questions about human origins, the spread of wickedness, God's judgment, and the preservation of a righteous remnant.

Recurring patterns emerge: human sin escalating from individual disobedience to societal corruption, divine patience followed by judgment, gracious preservation of a remnant, and covenant promises ensuring redemptive purposes continue. The genealogies connect historical persons, demonstrate the fulfillment of divine promises (blessing and multiplication), and trace the line leading to Abraham and ultimately Christ.

Key theological themes in this section include:

1. sin's destructive progression affecting all humanity
2. God's righteous judgment while preserving mercy
3. human pride and autonomy opposing divine sovereignty
4. cultural development as both blessing and potential idolatry
5. God's sovereign plan advancing despite human rebellion.

These narratives provide the necessary context for understanding God's calling of Abraham and the covenant promises through which all nations will be blessed.

Historical Context

The primeval history (Genesis 1-11) parallels ancient Near Eastern traditions including Sumerian King Lists (pre-flood longevity), Akkadian flood traditions (Atrahasis, Gilgamesh), and Mesopotamian city foundation myths. However, Genesis demythologizes these traditions, presenting monotheistic history rather than polytheistic mythology. The genealogies connecting Adam to Noah to Abraham provide historical framework absent in pagan myths.

Archaeological evidence confirms ancient urbanization (chapter 4's cities), agricultural development, metallurgy, and musical instruments emerging in Mesopotamia's early history. The Babel account reflects Mesopotamian ziggurat construction (stepped pyramid temples), particularly in Babylon. Linguistic diversity requiring explanation was obvious to ancient peoples, making the Babel narrative culturally relevant.

For Israel in covenant with Yahweh, these chapters explained their relationship to surrounding nations. All peoples descended from Noah, but Israel descended from Shem through Abraham—chosen for blessing all nations. The flood demonstrated God's justice and mercy: judging wickedness while preserving the righteous. This pattern would recur throughout Israel's history, assuring them that God's covenant faithfulness endures despite judgment on the wicked.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

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. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

הֵן H2005	גֵּבַר שָׁפַת Behold thou hast driven me out H1644	אֵת י H853	הַיּוֹם this day H3117	מֵעַל and from H5921	וּמִפְּנֵי יָךְ from the face H6440
הָאֲדָמָה of the earth H127	וּמִפְּנֵי יָךְ from the face H6440	אֶסְתִּיר ר shall I be hid H5641	וְהָיָה ה and it shall come to pass H1961		
וְאֶנִּי and I shall be a fugitive H5128	וְגֵבֶר and a vagabond H5110	בָּאָרֶץ in the earth H776	וְהָיָה ה and it shall come to pass H1961		כָּל H3605
כֹּל מְצֹא י that every one that findeth me H4672		וְהָרְגָנִי shall slay me H2026			

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 35:19 (Parallel theme): The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.

Psalms 143:7 (Parallel theme): Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

Proverbs 28:1 (Parallel theme): The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Deuteronomy 28:65 (Parallel theme): And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

Jeremiah 52:3 (Parallel theme): For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Matthew 25:46 (Parallel theme): And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Numbers 35:21 (Parallel theme): Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.

Numbers 35:27 (Parallel theme): And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:

2 Thessalonians 1:9 (Parallel theme): Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;