

Acts 7:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

Analysis

Stephen recounts Joseph's story to show God's sovereign providential care through adversity. The famine affecting 'all' Egypt and Canaan demonstrates God's control over nature to accomplish His purposes—bringing Jacob's family to Egypt where they would multiply into a nation. The 'great affliction' served God's redemptive plan, teaching that suffering often precedes deliverance in God's economy. Our fathers found 'no sustenance,' pointing to human helplessness and divine provision.

Historical Context

The seven-year famine (Gen. 41-42) occurred around 1700 BC during the Hyksos period of Egyptian history. Such famines in the ancient Near East resulted from failed Nile floods, which provided Egypt's agricultural irrigation. Canaan depended on rainfall, making it vulnerable to drought. Stephen's audience knew this Genesis account intimately.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of famine to relocate His people demonstrate His sovereignty over natural events for redemptive purposes?
2. What does this account teach us about God's providence working through seemingly tragic circumstances?

Interlinear Text

ἦλθεν δὲ λιμὸς ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν Αἰγύπτου καὶ
there came **Now** **a dearth** **over** **all** **G3588** **the land** **of Egypt** **and**
G2064 G1161 G3042 G1909 G3650 G1093 G125 G2532

Χανάαν καὶ θλῖψις μεγάλη καὶ οὐχ εὗρισκον
Chanaan **and** **affliction** **great** **and** **no** **found**
G5477 G2532 G2347 G3173 G2532 G3756 G2147

χορτάσματα οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν
sustenance **G3588** **fathers** **our**
G5527 G3962 G2257

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