

Genesis 37:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

Analysis

And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.... This passage is part of the Joseph narrative, a masterfully crafted account demonstrating God's sovereign providence working through human choices and circumstances to accomplish His redemptive purposes. The Joseph cycle shows how God transforms evil intentions into instruments of salvation.

Central themes include divine providence orchestrating events toward redemptive ends, the testing and refinement of character through suffering and success, forgiveness overcoming betrayal and injustice, and the preservation of God's covenant people through famine. Joseph's rise from slavery to second-in-command of Egypt illustrates how God exalts the humble and uses seeming disasters for ultimate good.

Theologically, these chapters reveal:

1. God's meticulous sovereignty over all events, even evil human actions
2. suffering as preparation for future service rather than punishment
3. forgiveness as reflecting divine character and enabling reconciliation
4. God's covenant faithfulness across generations ensuring the survival and blessing of His people
5. how present suffering gains meaning when viewed from the perspective of God's larger purposes.

Joseph's words "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (50:20) epitomize biblical theodicy and providence.

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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How should this truth about Sold into Slavery shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

יָדַל	וְיַעֲשֵׂה	יְהִי	לְמִלְחָמָה	וְיֹאמֶר	לְאַחֲרֵי	לְאַחֲרֵי	לְאַחֲרֵי
dreamed	And Joseph	a dream	and he told	it his brethren	him yet the more		
H2492	H3130	H2472	H5046	H251			H3254
וְיָשַׂרְךָ	אַתָּה						
and they hated		H853					
H5750		H8130					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 28:12 (Parallel theme): And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

John 17:14 (Parallel theme): I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Genesis 42:9 (Parallel theme): And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

Joel 2:28 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Daniel 4:5 (Parallel theme): I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Genesis 37:4 (Parallel theme): And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Amos 3:7 (Parallel theme): Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Numbers 12:6 (Parallel theme): And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

1 Kings 3:5 (Parallel theme): In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.