

Genesis 39:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

Analysis

And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; a... 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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Joseph and Potiphar's Wife emerge from this passage?
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

וַיִּתֵּן	שָׂר	בְּיַת	הַסֵּהר	בְּיַד	יֹסֵף	אֶת
committed	And the keeper	of the prison	H5470	hand	to Joseph's	H853
H5414	H8269	H1004		H3027	H3130	
כָּל	הָאֲסִירִים	אֲשֶׁר	בְּיַת	הַסֵּהר	וְאֶת	כָּל
H3605	all the prisoners	H834	of the prison	H5470	H853	H3605
	H615		H1004			H834
עָשׂוּ:	שָׂם	הָיָה	וְהָיָה	עָשׂוּ:		
and whatsoever they did	H8033	H1931	H1961	and whatsoever they did		
H6213				H6213		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 39:4 (Parallel theme): And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.