

Genesis 39:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

Analysis

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she sa... 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

וְיָהּ י' H1961	אֲשֶׁת וַתִּשָּׁ א H428	הָאֵל לָהּ H428	הַדְּבָרִים H1697	אֲחֵר H310	וַיָּבֹא H113
And it came to pass after	cast	wife	these things		that his master's
	H5375	H802			H113
שָׁכַבָּהּ H7901	וַתֹּאמֶר H559	עַיְנֶיהָ H5869	אֶל H413	עַיְנֶיהָ H5869	אֶת H853
Lie	and she said	her eyes	upon Joseph		
	H559	H5869	H3130		H853
					אֲדָנָי H113
					that his master's
					H113
					עַמִּי: H5973
					H5973

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 13:11 (Parallel theme): And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.

2 Peter 2:14 (Parallel theme): Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

Ezekiel 16:34 (Parallel theme): And the contrary is in thee from other women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary.

Job 31:1 (Parallel theme): I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

1 John 2:16 (Parallel theme): For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Matthew 5:28 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Ezekiel 16:32 (Parallel theme): But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!

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