

Genesis 40:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

Analysis

And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I ... 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

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

כִּי כִּי פַּרְעָה בַּיּוֹם תָּאַלְּמָן אֶת הַעֲנָבִים יְמִינְךָ
cup And Pharaoh's was in my hand and I took the grapes
H3563 H6547 H3027 H853 H6025

תָּאַשְׁתָּם כִּי כִּי פַּרְעָה בַּיּוֹם תָּאַתְּ לִי כִּי כִּי
and pressed H853 H413 cup And Pharaoh's and I gave H853 cup
H7818 H3563 H6547 H5414 H3563

עַל כִּי פַּרְעָה: כִּי כִּי
hand And Pharaoh's
H5921 H3709 H6547

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 10:5 (Parallel theme): And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

2 Chronicles 9:4 (Parallel theme): And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers

also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

Proverbs 3:10 (Parallel theme): So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Genesis 40:21 (Parallel theme): And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

Genesis 49:11 (Parallel theme): Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

Leviticus 10:9 (Parallel theme): Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: