

Genesis 43:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

Analysis

And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin... 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

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

בָּאָ יְשַׁׁחַלֵּחַ	לִפְנֵי	בְּפָנָים	לְכָמָן	יְתִתְ	שְׁמַעַן	אָלָה
And God	Almighty	give	H0	you mercy	before	the man
H410	H7706	H5414		H7356	H6440	H376
בְּנִים יְיַעַדְתָּ	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	בְּנִים יְיַעַדְתָּ
that he may send away	H0	H853	brother	your other	H853	and Benjamin
H7971			H251	H312		H1144
שְׁכַלְתִּי	פָּאֵשׁ	רַגְלֵי	שְׁכַלְתִּי	פָּאֵשׁ	רַגְלֵי	שְׁכַלְתִּי
H589	If	I be bereaved	I be bereaved	H7921	H7921	
	H834					

Additional Cross-References

Esther 4:16 (Parallel theme): Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Genesis 17:1 (References God): And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Acts 21:14 (Parallel theme): And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

Nehemiah 1:11 (Grace): O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Psalms 119:41 (Parallel theme): Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word.

Psalms 100:5 (Grace): For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Proverbs 16:7 (Parallel theme): When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Genesis 22:14 (Parallel theme): And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Isaiah 49:13 (Grace): Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

Acts 7:10 (Parallel theme): And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.