

Genesis 43:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

Analysis

And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's mon... 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. How should this truth about Feast shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּהִי י' H1961	כִּי H3588	בָּ אָנוּ H935	אֶל H413	הַמָּל וְ H4411	וַנִּפְתְּחָהּ H6605
And it came to pass when we came to the inn that we opened					
אֶת H853	אֲמִתְּחַת ו' H572	כֶּסֶף נֹו וְהֵן ה' H2009	אִישׁ H3701	וְכָפֹ' י' H6310	
of his sack money and behold every man's was in the mouth					
אֲמִתְּחַת ו' H572	כֶּסֶף נֹו H3701	בְּמִשְׁקָל ו' H4948	וְנָשָׁב H7725	אֶת ו' H853	
of his sack money in full weight and we have brought it again					
בְּיָדֵינוּ: H3027					
in our hand					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 43:12 (Parallel theme): And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight:

