

Genesis 43:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?

Analysis

And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is ... 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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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. How should this truth about Feast shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁאַל ל	לָהֶם	הַשָּׁל וְ	אָמְרָתָם	הַשָּׁל וְ
And he asked		them of their welfare	and said	them of their welfare
H7592	H0	H7965	H559	H7965
אָבִיךָ	הַזֶּקֶן	אָשָׁר	אָמְרָתָם	הָעוֹד נֹ
Is your father	the old man		and said	Is he yet alive
H1	H2205	H834	H559	H2416

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 42:13 (Parallel theme): And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.

Exodus 18:7 (Parallel theme): And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent.

1 Chronicles 18:10 (Parallel theme): He sent Hadoram his son to king David, to enquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer had war with Tou;) and with him all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass.

Genesis 41:16 (Parallel theme): And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Genesis 42:11 (Parallel theme): We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.

Genesis 37:14 (Parallel theme): And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

1 Samuel 25:5 (Parallel theme): And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

1 Samuel 17:22 (Parallel theme): And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

Judges 18:15 (Parallel theme): And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

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