

Genesis 43:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

Analysis

And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your yo... 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

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Brothers' Second Journey emerge from this passage?
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

וַיִּשָּׂא א	עֵינָיו יו	וַיֵּרָא	אֶת	בְּנֵימִי בן	אָחִיךָ מ	בְּנִי:
And he lifted up	his eyes	and saw	H853	Benjamin	brother	son
H5375	H5869	H7200		H1144	H251	H1121
אִמּוֹ	וַיֹּאמֶר ר	הֲזֶה	אָחִיךָ מ	הַקָּטָן	אֶשְׁרֵךְ	
his mother's	and said	H2088	brother	Is this your younger	H834	
H517	H559		H251	H6996		
וַיֹּאמֶר ר	אֵלַי י	וַיֹּאמֶר ר	אֱלֹהֵי ים	יִחַנֵּךְ	בְּנִי:	
and said	H413	and said	God	be gracious	son	
H559		H559	H430	H2603	H1121	

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.

Numbers 6:25 (Grace): The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: