

Genesis 45:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

Analysis

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me... 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 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Joseph Reveals Identity emerge from this passage?
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

אַל	וְעַפְתָּה	הָאָ	כַּעַזְבֵּן	תַּעֲזַב	וְאַל	אָלָר	וְאַל	כַּעַזְבֵּן	יְנִיחַם	מְנִיחַם
H6258	H408			H6087		H408		H2734		H5869
Now therefore be not grieved					nor angry			with yourselves		
כִּי	הַבָּה	אַתָּה	מִכְרָתָה	מִ	לִמְחִיתָה	הַ	שְׁלָמָם	בְּ		
H3588	H4376	H853	H2008	H3588	H4241		to preserve life	did send		H7971
that ye sold										
אֶלְהָה	יְמִ	לְפָנֵיכֶם:								
me hither for God	me before you									
H430		H6440								

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 50:20 (References God): But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Job 1:21 (Parallel theme): And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Luke 23:34 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Genesis 47:25 (Parallel theme): And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

2 Corinthians 2:11 (Parallel theme): Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 2:7 (Parallel theme): So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

1 Samuel 1:19 (Parallel theme): And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

2 Samuel 12:12 (Parallel theme): For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

2 Samuel 17:14 (Parallel theme): And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.