

Genesis 47:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

Analysis

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, a... 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 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּשְׁב	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּאֶרֶץ	מִצְרַיִם	בְּאֶרֶץ	גֹּשֶׁן
dwelt	And Israel	in the country	of Egypt	in the country	of Goshen
H3427	H3478	H776	H4714	H776	H1657
וַיְהִי	וַיִּכְרַס	בָּהּ	וַיִּכְרַס	וַיִּכְרַס	מְאֹד:
and they had possessions		therein and grew	and multiplied	and multiplied	exceedingly
H270	H0	H6509	H7235	H7235	H3966

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 46:3 (References Egypt): And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

Exodus 1:7 (References Israel): And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Acts 7:17 (References Egypt): But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

Psalms 107:38 (Parallel theme): He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

Psalms 105:24 (Parallel theme): And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

Zechariah 10:8 (Parallel theme): I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.

Genesis 26:4 (Parallel theme): And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

Deuteronomy 26:5 (References Egypt): And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:

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