

Genesis 47:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:

Analysis

And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now... 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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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 Jacob's Last Days shape our daily decisions and priorities?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵינֵךְ יְהִי מֵאָמֵן וְאָמַר
and said הָיָה H559 הָיָה H518 הָיָה H4994 unto him If now I have found
מֵאָמֵן הָיָה H4672 grace H2580 in thy sight H5869

עַמְדִי	וְעַשׂ יְתָ	וְיִרְכֵּן	בְּפַתְתַּח	בְּדַבָּר	בְּנֵא	שִׁים
put	H4994	I pray thee thy hand	H8478	under my thigh	and deal	H5978
H7760		H3027		H3409	H6213	

בְּמִצְרַיִם: תִּקְבְּרָנִי אֶל אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶת־מֹשֶׁה בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
in Egypt pray I not to thee to me bury with me kindly and truly H408 H4994 H6912 H4714

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 24:49 (Parallel theme): And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

Genesis 24:2 (Prayer): And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

Deuteronomy 31:14 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the

tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

1 Kings 2:1 (Parallel theme): Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

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