

Genesis 48:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Analysis

The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the... 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
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

הַמְלָאָךְ	לְ	הַגָּאֵל	אֶת	יְמִכָּל	בְּעֵ	בְּעֵ	אֶת	יְבָרֶךְ
The Angel	which redeemed		H853	H3605	me from all evil	H7451	bless	H853
H4397	H1350				H1288			
אֲבָתִים	וְ	וַיְקָרֵא	בְּהָם	וְשָׁם	וְשָׁם	וְשָׁם	אֲבָתִים	
the lads	be named	H0	and let my name	H8034	and let my name	H8034	of my fathers	H1
H5288	H7121							
אֶבְרָהָם	וְ	וַיַּצְعַק	וְיִצְחָק	וְלֹא	בְּלִבְנָה	בְּלִבְנָה	בְּלִבְנָה	
Abraham	and Isaac		and let them grow	H1711	into a multitude	H7230	in the midst	H7130
H85	H3327							
בָּאָרֶץ								
of the earth								
H776								

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 34:22 (Redemption): The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Genesis 48:5 (Parallel theme): And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

Genesis 49:22 (Parallel theme): Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

Joshua 17:17 (Parallel theme): And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only:

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