

Genesis 48:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Beth-lehem.

Analysis

And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet ... 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

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Blessing Ephraim and Manasseh emerge from this passage?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

וְאֲנִי י'	לְבִי א	מִפָּדָן	יָמָתָה	עַל י	רַחֵל ל
H589	And as for me when I came	from Padan	died	H5921	Rachel
	H935	H6307	H4191		H7354
אֶרֶץ	כְּנָעַן	בְּדֶרֶךְ	וְעַד	כְּבָרָת	
by me in the land	of Canaan	in the way	when	yet there was but a little	
H776	H3667	H1870	H5750	H3530	
אֶרֶץ	לְבִי א	אֶפְרַת	וְאֶקְבְּרָהָ	שָׁם	
by me in the land	And as for me when I came	of Ephrath	and I buried her	H8033	
H776	H935	H672	H6912		
בְּדֶרֶךְ	אֶפְרַת	וְהָוָא	כִּי יֵת	לְחֵם:	
in the way	of Ephrath	H1931	H0	the same is Bethlehem	
H1870	H672			H1035	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 2:18 (Parallel theme): In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Genesis 35:9 (Parallel theme): And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him.