

Genesis 49:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.

Analysis

O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for... 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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Jacob's Blessing/Prophecy emerge from this passage?
2. How can we apply the principles from this passage to contemporary challenges in family, work, or church?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

Interlinear Text

בָּסָדִים	אֵל	אַל	בְּקָבָלְךָ	מִ	נֶפֶשׁ	וְ	תָּבָא	אֵל	בָּסָדִים
not thou into their secret	H408	come	O my soul	unto their assembly	H408				
H5475		H935	H5315	H6951					
תִּקְרַעַת	כְּבָדָךְ	כְּבָדָךְ	כְּ	בְּאֶפְתָּמָם	רָגֵו	רָגֵו	אֵישׁ	אֵישׁ	
be not thou united	mine honour	H3588	for in their anger	they slew	a man	H2026	H376		
H3161	H3519		H639						
וּבָרַצְתָּם	עֲקָרְתָּו	שׂוֹרָה							
and in their selfwill	they digged down	H6131	a wall						
H7522			H7794						

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 34:30 (Parallel theme): And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

Psalms 26:9 (Parallel theme): Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:

Psalms 16:9 (Parallel theme): Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Psalms 57:8 (Parallel theme): Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

Psalms 64:2 (Parallel theme): Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

Jeremiah 15:17 (Parallel theme): I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.

Jeremiah 4:19 (Parallel theme): My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

2 Corinthians 6:14 (Parallel theme): Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Luke 12:19 (Parallel theme): And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.