

## Studies in Genesis – Chapter 47

### Introduction:

1. As we have repeatedly observed in prior studies, the book of Genesis, beginning with chapter 12, contains a history of God's dealings with Abraham and with his descendants.
2. Between chapter 12 and chapter 47, 215 years had passed. Much had occurred during that time. The principle thing to keep in mind is the fact that God was working behind the scenes, and He had not forgotten his promises to Abraham. Abraham's descendants would ultimately inherit the land of Canaan; a "*great nation*" would descend from the loins of Abraham, and from that nation would eventually come the particular "seed" through Whom all nations would be "*blessed*," Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16, 29.
3. In our last study we considered the events recorded in chapter 46, including:
  - a. God repeated the promise to Jacob which He initially had made to his grandfather, Abraham, Genesis 12:2; 46:1-3.
  - b. Because of the famine in the land of Canaan, and because of the influence of Joseph, Jacob and his family moved from Canaan to live in the land of Egypt, Genesis 46:5-27. It was a complete move; **all** of Jacob's household moved to Egypt.
    - (1) Chapter 46 gives a listing of each of Jacob's sons, and his sons' sons who moved to Egypt.
  - c. Jacob and his family were reunited with Joseph, and settled in the land of Goshen, the best of the land, and which was most suited to the needs of the Israelites. Goshen was suitable for flocks and herds; it was isolated from the Egyptians in general, and it was contiguous to Canaan.

### Discussion:

#### I. A Brief Outline of Genesis, chapter 47.

- A. Joseph Presented five of his brothers and his father to Pharaoh, Genesis 47:1-12.
- B. Joseph Dealt Wisely with the Egyptians as the Famine Continued, Genesis 47:13-26.
- C. Joseph Vowed to Jacob that He would bury him in the land of Canaan, Genesis 47:27-31.

#### II. A Closer Look at Genesis, chapter 47.

- A. Joseph Presented five of his Brothers and His Father to Pharaoh, Genesis 47:1-12.
  1. Joseph went and told Pharaoh that his family and their flocks were in the land of Goshen, v. 1.
    - a. Their settling in Goshen, "*the best of the land*," was in keeping with the promise Pharaoh made to Joseph before his family had left Canaan, Genesis 45:17-20.
    - b. It was also in keeping with the plans Joseph announced to his family after their arrival in Goshen, Genesis 46:31.
  2. Joseph took five of his brothers, and presented them to Pharaoh, Genesis 47:2.
    - a. Before this, Joseph had advised his brothers on what to say when they met Pharaoh, Genesis 46:33,34. Effort was made to show proper respect for the king and obtain his favor.
  3. The conversation between Pharaoh and Joseph's brothers, Genesis 47:3,4.
  4. The words of Pharaoh to Joseph, Genesis 47:5,6, reiterating the promise he made in Genesis 45:18-20.
  5. Joseph brought his father to meet Pharaoh, Genesis 47:7, and "*Jacob blessed Pharaoh*."
    - a. Consider the contrast between Jacob and Pharaoh!
    - b. Yet, in a sense, Jacob was greater than Pharaoh! Cf. Genesis 14:19; Hebrews 7:7.
  6. The conversation between Pharaoh and Jacob, Genesis 47:8,9.
    - a. "*How old are you*," v. 8?
    - b. One hundred and thirty years, "*few and evil*" were his days. "*Evil*" could be rendered "wretched," or "unhappy." Consider these facts: Jacob had struggled with his brother while still in the womb, 25:21-26. His parents were prejudicial, 25:28. He deceived his father in obtaining the blessings, and then had to leave his family because of Esau's hatred, 27:1-46. He planned to marry Rachel, but got Leah instead, 29:18-28. His father in law repeatedly cheated him, 31:7. His only daughter, Dinah, was violated at Shechem, 34:1-4. His favorite wife, Rachel, died at an early age, 35:16-19. He had a very dysfunctional family, Genesis 37. For 22 years he had believed a lie regarding Joseph. Now, at age 130, lest the family starve to death, he has had to pull up roots and move from Canaan to Egypt!
  7. The family was situated in the best of the land, and provided for by Joseph 47:9-12.
- B. Joseph Dealt Wisely with the Egyptians as the Famine Continued, Genesis 47:13-26.
  1. The money used to purchase grain was given to Pharaoh, Genesis 47:13,14.

2. When the money was exhausted, the people brought their livestock in exchange for bread, vs. 15-17.
3. The next year, as the famine continued, the people exchanged their land for the food, vs. 18-20
  - a. Observe: Joseph did not start a government give-away program to prop up people who refused to work; the people in Egypt were able to eat, and yet maintain their self respect.
  - b. The priests were an exception to the land exchange, vs. 22. This is “the earliest account we have of an established religion supported by the State,” Adam Clarke.
4. Joseph gave the people seed to sow the land, and the people were to give one fifth back to Pharaoh, v. 24. The people voiced their appreciation to Joseph for having “*saved*” their lives, v. 25,26.
  - a. It was a managed national economy, but we have to remember that those were desperate times!
- C. Joseph Vowed to Jacob that he would bury him in the land of Canaan, Genesis 47:27-31.
  1. Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and “*multiplied exceedingly*,” 47:27.
    - a. Since Genesis 12, some 215 years had passed; yet the family was still relatively small when they arrived in Egypt. Note Genesis 46:27. Now the promise of Genesis 12:2 is being honored.
  2. Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years, reaching the age of 147, and death was approaching, 47:28,29.
    - a. **Note:** Joseph had been cared for by Jacob for 17 years when he was sold by his brothers, Genesis 37:2; Now, as he neared the conclusion of his life, Jacob was cared for by Joseph for 17 years.
  3. Jacob requested Joseph to swear to him that he would not bury him in Egypt, 47:29-31.
    - a. Placing one’s “*hand under*” the “*thigh*,” 47:29, was a customary practice when a person swore with an oath. Cf. Genesis 24:1-3,9.
  4. After Joseph swore to Jacob, or “*Israel*,” “*Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed*,” 47:31.
    - a. “*Bowed*” is from the Hebrew *shachah* which signified not only to bow, but also to worship, which often included bowing or prostration.

### III. Practical Applications to be Obtained from this Chapter.

- A. Life on earth is short.
  1. Jacob regarded his days as “*few and evil*,” Genesis 47:9. He lived to age 147; His grandfather died at age 175, Genesis 25:7; His father, Isaac died at age 180, Genesis 35:28,29. But these years were “*few*” when compared to the lives of people before the flood, Genesis 5. But **even their** years were “*few*” when compared to eternity! Cf. Job 14:1; James 4:13,14.
- B. Life is a pilgrimage.
  1. Jacob spoke of “*the days of the years of my pilgrimage*,” Genesis 47:9.
  2. A pilgrim is a traveler, one who has no current abode. Such was the life of Jacob. He fled from Haran to Padan Aram. Later he returned to his own country, going to Succoth, then to Shechem, then to Bethel, then to Bethlehem, then to Hebron. Now he has left Canaan and settled in Egypt. Jacob was like so many others, who were described as “*strangers and pilgrims on the earth*,” Hebrews 11:13.
  3. Christians are also strangers and pilgrims, I Peter 2:11. “This world is not our home!”
- C. Hard times help us to establish Priorities.
  1. The famine became so great that the Egyptians were willing to surrender their money, their livestock, and even their land in order to obtain food upon which to survive. Yet they voiced their gratitude to Joseph and even said “*we will be Pharaoh’s servants*,” Genesis 47:25.
  2. Mere “*things*” don’t mean much when a person is starving! But in good times people can become so enamored with “*things*” that they forget God! Let us obey such scriptures as Matthew 6:20,33 and Colossians 3:2, remembering that “*we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*,” I Timothy 6:7!
- D. God’s people are a blessing to others!
  1. Joseph proved to be a blessing to Pharaoh, to the Egyptian people, and to his own family.
  2. Jacob twice blessed Pharaoh.
  3. Christians are “*lights*” in the midst of darkness, Philippians 2:15.
- E. God-fearing Children Come to the aid of their Needy and Aged parents.
  1. What would have happened to Jacob were it not for Joseph?
  2. Note I Timothy 5:4,8.

### Conclusion:

1. God-fearing people in Old Testament days desired a “*heavenly country*,” Hebrews 11:16; so it is today!  
--Bobby Witherington, July 1, 2012

