

Genesis 47 - Jacob's Family Before Pharaoh; The Stages of the Famine; Jacob's Final Request

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(4) Life of Joseph (Gen 37:1—50:26)

(C) Jacob and Joseph's brothers go to Egypt (Gen 42:1—47:26)

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(a) Joseph's vow to Jacob (47:27-31)

Genesis 47

(d) Jacob's descendants dwell in Egypt (Gen 46:28—47:28)

(ii) Interviews with pharaoh (47:1-10)

(a) With Joseph's brothers (47:1-6)

1 Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen."

1 Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen."

1 After this, Joseph went to inform Pharaoh. "My father and brothers have come here from Canaan," he said, "and they've come with their flocks, herds, and everything else they have. I settled them in the Goshen territory!"

1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

2 And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.
2 He took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.
2 He brought along five of his brothers to present before Pharaoh.
2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.
- Joseph selected five (unnamed) brothers of the 11

3 Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" So they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers."
3 Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" So they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers."
3 Pharaoh asked his brothers, "What are your occupations?"
"Your servants are shepherds," they replied, "both we and our ancestors."
3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.
- Just as Joseph suspected he would, Pharaoh asked the brothers about their occupation

4 They also said to Pharaoh, "We have come to reside in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen."
4 They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen."
4 We've come to live for a while in this region, since there is no pasture back in Canaan for your servants' flocks. May your servants please live in the Goshen territory?"
4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you.
5 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you.
5 Then Pharaoh replied to Joseph, "Now that your father and your brothers have come to you,
5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among

them, then put them in charge of my livestock."

6 The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock."

6 Egypt is at your disposal, so settle your father and brothers in the best part of the land! Let them live in the Goshen territory. If you learn that any of them are especially skilled, put them in charge of my livestock."

6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

- Here is further evidence that the Pharaoh at the time was a Semitic Hyksos ruler and not Egyptian, as this would not have been offered if he were a native Egyptian

(b) With Jacob (47:7-10)

7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

7 Later, Joseph brought his father Jacob to Pharaoh and introduced him. Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

- From an Egyptian perspective, the Pharaoh was higher; from a Jewish perspective, the Patriarch was higher

8 And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many years have you lived?"

8 Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many years have you lived?"

8 "How old are you?" Pharaoh asked Jacob.

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?

9 So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my living abroad are 130; **few** and **unpleasant** have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their living abroad."

9 So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning."

9 "I'm 130 years old," Jacob replied. "My years have turned out to be few and unpleasant, but I haven't yet reached the age my ancestors did during their travels on earth."

9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

- "...few" - not few in number, but rather short in timespan, meaning the "calamities" in his life came and went quickly
- "...unpleasant" - does not mean sins, but rather calamities
- Abraham lived to age 175; Isaac lived to age 180

10 So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.

10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and then left the throne room.

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

- Jacob and Pharaoh never met again

(iii) The settling of the family (47:11-12)

11 Now Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them property in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of **Rameses**, as Pharaoh had ordered.

11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.

11 Joseph settled his father and brothers, assigning them their own land in the best part of Egypt (in the territory of Rameses), just as Pharaoh had ordered.

11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

- "...Rameses" - a section of the land of Goshen; in fact, the better part of Goshen, today known as Wadi Tumilat, a valley 30-miles long, extending from the Eastern Nile to Lake Timsah
- The Rameses of the Nineteenth Dynasty, who came later, may have been named after this particular land
- The city of Rameses was earlier known as Tanis, and before that, it was known as Avaris
- Goshen was a place where fish were in abundance (Num 11:5)
- Ps 78:12 states that this was called "the field of Zoan" and was one of the outlet channels of the Nile leading to the Mediterranean Sea
- So the Household of Jacob settled in the land of Goshen, the best part of Egypt, and more specifically in the land of Rameses, the best part of Goshen
- This was not taking advantage of Pharaoh's generosity; this was at Pharaoh's request

12 Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their little ones.

12 Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to their little ones.

12 Joseph provided food for his father, his brothers, and all of his father's household, proportionate to the number of young children.

12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

The Course of the Famine

This passage reverts back to the first year of the famine to describe its various stages and affect on the Egyptian economy and population.

(iv) Joseph's administration in the midst of famine (47:13-26)

(a) Buying of livestock (47:13-17)

13 Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.

13 Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.

13 Meanwhile, there continued to be no food throughout the land, because the famine remained very severe. As a result, both Egypt and Canaan languished under the effects of the famine.

13 And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

14 And Joseph collected all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan *in payment* for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

14 Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

14 So Joseph kept on accumulating all the money that was to be found throughout Egypt and Canaan in exchange for the grain that was being purchased. He stored the money in Pharaoh's palace.

14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

- The first stage of the seven-year famine was the depletion of cash held by the public

— The public's cash was depleted because the only way to eat was to buy grain from Joseph, since there was no harvest

— Joseph did not keep any of the large sums of money he received daily for himself, but rather gave all of it to Pharaoh to be placed in the royal treasury

15 When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph saying, "Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For *our* money is gone."

15 When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For *our* money is gone."

15 After all the money had been spent throughout Egypt and Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and demanded, "Give us food! Why should we die right in front of you? Our money is spent!"

15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth.

- The money held by common Egyptians was fully depleted, transferred to the royal treasury

16 Then Joseph said, "Give up your livestock, and I will give you *food* for your livestock, since *your* money is gone."

16 Then Joseph said, "Give up your livestock, and I will give you *food* for your livestock, since *your* money is gone."

16 "You can surrender your livestock," Joseph replied. "I'll feed them in exchange, since your money is gone."

16 And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

- Since the public had no more money, Joseph allowed them to pay for grain with livestock

17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.

17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.

17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph traded food in exchange for horses, various flocks and herds, and donkeys. He fed them with food in exchange for their livestock during that year.

17 And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.

- This was all during the first year of the famine
- By the end of year one (of seven), all the cash and livestock belonged to Pharaoh and the royal treasury

(b) Buying of land (47:18-26)

18 But when that year ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord the fact that our money is all spent, and the livestock are my lord's.

There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.

18 When that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.

18 The following year, they came to him and reminded him, "We won't hide from you, your Excellency, that we've spent all of our money, and that our livestock all belong to you.

There's nothing left to trade with you, your Excellency, except our bodies and our territories.

18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands:

- Now into the second year of the famine...
- The third stage of the famine affected personal property (land); with their money and livestock gone, and six years remaining in the famine, the people begin to get desperate
- The only things they had left were themselves and their real estate

19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

19 So why should we and our land die right in front of you? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. Give us seed, so we can survive and not die, and so the land won't stay desolate."

19 Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.

- The people came to Joseph with an offer to avoid their present danger: sell themselves (as slaves) and their land to Pharaoh in order to receive seed so they could try to plant, in spite of the harvest

20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's.

20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's.

20 So Joseph purchased all of the Egyptian territory for Pharaoh. Every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine's effect was so severe. That's how Pharaoh came to own the land.

20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.

- Joseph obviously agreed to their proposal, and ended up purchasing all the land of Egypt (except land of the priests, v22)

21 As for the people, he relocated them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other.

21 As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other.

21 Then Joseph transported the people to cities from one end of Egypt to the other.

21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.

- Rural life was over at this point, and Joseph coordinated moving everyone into the cities
— The reason for this was that the people no longer owned the land, and the land was not producing anyway due to the famine

— Slowly, the land became no longer the private property of the individuals, but the property of Pharaoh

22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, because the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land.

22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land.

22 However, he did not purchase land belonging to the priests, because the priests held an allotment, previously provided to them by Pharaoh, from which they lived. That's why they did not sell their land.

22 Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.

- The land sale did not include the priests of Egypt, as they had received a royal grant of land; this was their means of sustenance

— The priests were a very powerful class in Egypt at the time, and were therefore exempt from these new developments in the country

23 Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, today I have purchased you and your land for Pharaoh; now, *here is* seed for you, and you may sow the land.

23 Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, *here is* seed for you, and you may sow the land.

23 After this, Joseph addressed the people. "Pay attention," he said. "I've bought you and your land for Pharaoh today, in exchange for seed for you. Now go sow the land.

23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.

- After removing the people from the land, with their new legal residences in the cities, Joseph now provided seed and allowed them to return to the land, not as owners, but for the purpose of working the land.

24 At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food, and for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

24 At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

24 When harvest season arrives, you are to provide a fifth of the harvest to Pharaoh. The remaining four fifths are to be for your use, for seed, and to feed you, your households, and your little ones."

24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

- Here is the lease agreement: Pharaoh must receive 20% of all the produce. The remaining 80% was to be used for seed to replant, and to feed their families.

— This was now a feudal system: the Egyptians because the serfs of Pharaoh

— There was clear loss of ownership, but they were permitted to return to the land because they were leasing it for the purpose of working it

— In a word, the people survived but they (except the priests) were in bondage to Pharaoh

25 So they said, "You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves."

25 So they said, "You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves."

25 "You've saved our lives," they replied. "If it pleases you, your Excellency, we'll be Pharaoh's slaves."

25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

- The people realized that Joseph's adept management of the economy actually saved their lives; they were not at all bitter over his actions, even though they had lost everything, including their sovereignty, due to the famine

— Out of gratitude, the people saw the offer as a favor to them, and they agreed

26 Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, *valid* to this day, that Pharaoh was to have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.

26 Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt *valid* to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.

26 So Joseph crafted a statute concerning Egypt that remains valid to this day that Pharaoh should own a fifth of the produce, excluding the land belonging to the priests, which remained outside of Pharaoh's control.

26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.

- The law that Joseph implemented (a 20% tax on all produce payable to Pharaoh) was still in place hundreds of years later when Moses wrote Genesis

— This means that the Pharaoh of the Exodus was still benefitting from the policy of Joseph, although he didn't know Joseph or recognize or appreciate what he had done

— Since Joseph was married to a priest's daughter, Joseph's father-in-law would have been exempt

(D) Guarantee of future covenant preservation (Gen 47:27—50:26)

(a) Joseph's vow to Jacob (47:27-31)

27 Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous.

27 Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous.

27 Israel remained in Egypt's Goshen territory, acquired land there, became prosperous, and his descendants grew very numerous.

27 And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

- Summary of the settlement of Jacob's Household in Goshen

- God blessed him in two ways: material prosperity and numerical prosperity
- This begins to set the stage for the Book of Exodus (Cf. Ex 1:7)

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was 147 years.

28 Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.

28 He lived for seventeen more years in Egypt, until he was 147 years old.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.

29 When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place your **hand under my thigh** now and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness: please do not bury me in Egypt,

29 When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt,

29 As the time approached for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and addressed him. "Please," he asked, "if you're happy with me, make a solemn promise that you'll treat me fairly and kindly by not burying me in Egypt.

29 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:

- Jacob exhorted Joseph to swear that he would bury him where his fathers had been buried

— He referred, of course, to the Cave of Machpelah which had been purchased by Abraham (Gen 23)

— Jacob desired to be buried in the Land that God had promised him. He never possessed the Land, but looks forward to the resurrection

- "...hand under my thigh" - literally, grab my genitals (Cf. 24:2)

— The genitals were considered the source of vital power and emphasized the solemnity of the oath

30 but when I **lie down with my fathers**, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in **their** burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said."

30 but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said."

30 Instead, when I've died, as my ancestors have, you are to carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their tomb."

"I'll do what you've asked," Joseph replied.

30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

- "...lie down with my fathers" - Jacob expected to join Abraham and Isaac in the afterlife upon death

- "...their" - Abraham and Isaac

- The order shows a clear belief in the afterlife: Jacob will "be gathered to his fathers," then Joseph will carry his body to Machpelah

— This shows that being "gathered to his fathers" is not the same as being buried in a cave

31 And he said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel **bowed** *in worship* at the **head of the bed**.

31 He said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed *in worship* at the head of the bed.

31 "Promise me," Israel insisted. So Joseph promised. Then Israel collapsed on his bed.

31 And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

- "...bowed" - he turned over in bed to assume a bowed position; this was an act of worship

- "...head of the bed" - the Masoretic Text, which is the Hebrew Text upon which all translations are based, uses the word *mittah*, which means "bed"

— However, the LXX used a Greek word meaning "staff," so the translators took the word *mittah* to be *mattah*, which means "staff"

— The three letters for both the word "bed" and the word "staff" are exactly the same; the only difference is in the vowel pointings, but these Hebrew vowel pointings were put in about 900-1000 AD.

— So one is a mistranslation of the other. The question is: Which was the original reading? Heb 11:21 clearly sides with the LXX, describing Jacob as having worshipped, leaning up on the top of his staff

— Therefore, in this section Jacob was leaning upon his staff, which he kept near to assist him in movement because apparently his old age had weakened him greatly