GENESIS

Chapter 47

**Joseph went and told Pharaoh, “My father and brothers, with their flocks and herds and everything they own, have come from the land of Canaan and are now in Goshen.” 2 He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh. 3 Pharaoh asked the brothers, “What is your occupation?” “Your servants are shepherds,” they replied to Pharaoh, “just as our fathers were.” 4 They also said to him, “We have come to live here awhile, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants’ flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen.” 5 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you, 6 and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock.” 7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, 8 Pharaoh asked him, “How old are you?” 9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers.” 10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence. 11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed. 12 Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to the number of their children.**

**47:4** *sojourn*. The request is first defined as temporary, affirming that Canaan, not Egypt, is their home. (TLSB)

**47:6** *Settle*. Or, “dwell” (same verb as in v 4b). Pharaoh welcomed Joseph’s family to stay permanently.(TLSB)

*best of the land*. Goshen is probably the grazing marshes of northern Egypt. (TLSB)

**47:7** *Jacob blessed Pharaoh*. In Gn, the inferior is blessed by the superior (Heb 7:7). Pharaoh seems to have recognized that having Jacob in Egypt was a benefit. Humans may “bless” God by praising Him. (TLSB)

**47:9** *pilgrimage.* Jacob referred to the itinerant nature of patriarchal life in general and of his own in particular as he hopefully awaited the fulfillment of the promise of a land (see also Dt 26:5). (CSB)

*they do not equal the years of … my fathers.* Abraham lived to the age of 175 (25:7), Isaac to 180 (35:28). (CSB)

130 years is old by our standards, but Abraham died at age 175, and Isaac, at age 180.(TLSB)

*evil*. Jacob’s life was a series of crises; he expresses pessimism elsewhere (cf 43:6; 44:28). (TLSB)

**47:11** *possession*. Pharaoh’s promise (v 6) allowed Joseph to give ownership of land in Goshen to his family. (TLSB)

*best part of the land.* See note on 45:10. (CSB)

*district of Rameses.* The city of Rameses is mentioned in Ex 1:11; 12:37; Nu 33:3, 5. The name apparently refers to the great Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II, who reigned centuries later (the designation here would involve an editorial updating). In addition to being known as Goshen (see v. 27), the “district of Rameses” was called the “region of Zoan” in Ps 78:12, 43 (see note on Ge 44:4). (CSB)

In the region of the land of Goshen, where the city of Rameses would later be built. (TLSB)

*Joseph and the Famine*

**13 There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine. 14 Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, and he brought it to Pharaoh’s palace. 15 When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all Egypt came to Joseph and said, “Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? Our money is used up.” 16 “Then bring your livestock,” said Joseph. “I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone.” 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock.18 When that year was over, they came to him the following year and said, “We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. 19 Why should we perish before your eyes—we and our land as well? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate.” 20 So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh’s, 21 and Joseph reduced the people to servitude, from one end of Egypt to the other. 22 However, he did not buy the land of the priests, because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and had food enough from the allotment Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land. 23 Joseph said to the people, “Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. 24 But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. The other four-fifths you may keep as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves and your households and your children.” 25 “You have saved our lives,” they said. “May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh.” 26 So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt—still in force today—that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Pharaoh’s. 27 Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number. 28 Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. 29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, “If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried.” “I will do as you say,” he said. 31 “Swear to me,” he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.**

**47:13** *Now*. Third year of famine. (TLSB)

*the famine was severe.* After the people used up all their money to buy grain (see vv. 14–15), they traded their livestock (vv. 16–17), then their land (v. 20), then themselves (v. 21). (CSB)

**47:14** The people’s financial resources were depleted. With Pharaoh’s stores of grain, virtually all Egypt’s financial assets were in his hands. Ambrose: “[Joseph] preferred to sell the corn rather than to give it to the hungry … lest if they received it for nothing, they should give up cultivating the ground.… He did not wish to deprive all of them of their property, but to support them in it” (*NPNF* 2 10:55–56). (TLSB)

**47:16** *food*. Grain. (TLSB)

*in exchange for your livestock*. Grazing animals were better able to survive this drought than humans. (TLSB)

**47:18** *following year*. Fourth year of famine. (TLSB)

**47:19** *Buy us and our land*. They asked to become sharecroppers, not common slaves who could be separated from their land. Cf v 24. (TLSB)

**47:21** The NIV text note reading would mean that the Egyptians were to move temporarily into the cities until seed could be distributed to them for planting (see v. 23). (CSB)

*he made servants of them*. So that Pharaoh could deal with his subjects as with his personal slaves and with their possessions as with his own property. (TLSB)

*one end* … *to the other*. Egypt extended along the Nile from the Great Sea to Cush (Ethiopia). (TLSB)

**47:22** The priests of Egypt were civil servants, supported by Pharaoh. (TLSB)

**47:24** *give a fifth to Pharaoh*. The same percentage required during the years of plenty. Sharecropping often would demand a third or more for the landlord. Moreover, the people were guaranteed food during the famine. The terms were merciful. (TLSB)

**47:25** *saved our lives*. Literally so, because of the food provisions. (TLSB)

**47:26** *to this day*. To the time of Moses, who wrote Gn. (TLSB)

*a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh.* The same was true “during the seven years of abundance” (41:34)—but now all the land on which the produce grew belonged to Pharaoh as well. (CSB)

**47:27** *the Israelites … were fruitful and increased greatly in number.* See 35:11–12; 46:3 and notes. (CSB)

**47:29** *put your hand under my thigh.* See 24:2 and note. In both cases, ties of family kinship are being stressed. (CSB)

**47:30** *rest with my fathers.* See note on 25:8. (CSB)

In the family burial place at Machpelah (23:9; 25:8–9). Jacob had not forgotten Canaan. He exacted this promise to help his descendants remember their true homeland, despite current prosperity in Egypt. Joseph shows exemplary obedience, respect, and care for his aged father, which serves as a great example to us today. (TLSB)

*bury me where they are buried.* In the cave of Machpelah (see 50:12–13). (CSB)

**47:31** *worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.* Quoted in Heb 11:21. Compare 48:2 with the NIV text note reading here. (CSB)

Perhaps due to weariness, Jacob could not hold himself upright. Or, he turned to God in prayer, thanking Him for granting his request. *upon the head of his bed*. He bowed toward the top part of the bed, where Joseph was standing, and thus toward him and his scepter—partially because Joseph was the current ruler, and partially because through him God had brought salvation to His people. (TLSB)

**Ch 47** Powerful, wealthy Pharaoh humbly receives the blessing of Jacob, a lowly Hebrew, whose son addresses the famine by centralizing all Egypt’s resources in a sharecropping system. Like Pharaoh, we should realize that spiritual blessings take precedence over temporal ones. People who put earthly security and temporal blessings first often take desperate measures to keep things that death will someday take from them. Just as blessing came to mighty Pharaoh through a lowly shepherd, so also the kingdom of God and His righteousness come to believers in humble forms—an infant in a manger, a man dying on a cross; words, water, bread, wine—yet in them are hidden God’s majesty. • “Be present at our table, Lord; Be here and ev’rywhere adored; Thy creatures bless, and grant that we May feast in paradise with Thee.” Amen. (*LSB* 775) (TLSB)