

GENESIS

Chapter 47

Jacob's Family Settles in Goshen

So Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, “My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan. They are now in the land of Goshen.” 2 And from among his brothers he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh. 3 Pharaoh said to his brothers, “What is your occupation?” And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants are shepherds, as our fathers were.” 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. And now, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.” 5 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6 The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.” 7 Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and stood him before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8 And Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many are the days of the years of your life?” 9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning.” 10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from the presence of Pharaoh. 11 Then 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 commanded. 12 And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

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)

land of Goshen. 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 *sojourning*. 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)

have not attained 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)

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 Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine. 14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And 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. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone.” 16 And Joseph answered, “Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone.” 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. 18 And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. 19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.” 20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's. 21 As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other. 22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land. 23 Then Joseph said to the people, “Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. 24 And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones.” 25 And they said, “You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh.” 26 So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's. 27 Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. 28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years. 29 And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place.” He answered, “I will do as you have said.” 31 And he said, “Swear to me”; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

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

the famine was very 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 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)

47:29 *put your hand under my thigh*. The family ties of family kinship are being stressed. (CSB)

47:30 *let me lie with my fathers*. 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 *bowed himself upon the head of his bed*. 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)