

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

4-15-20

Genesis 47

Jacob [Israel] Meets Pharaoh - Verses 1-12

¹Joseph 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." ²He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh. ³Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?" "Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were."⁴They also said to him, "We have come to live here for a while, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen." ⁵Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, ⁶and 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." ⁷Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed^[a] Pharaoh, ⁸Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?" ⁹And 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." ¹⁰Then Jacob blessed^[b] Pharaoh and went out from his presence. ¹¹So 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. ¹²Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children.

47:1-6 Joseph's faithfulness affected his entire family. When he was in the pit and in prison, Joseph must have wondered about his future. Instead of despairing, he faithfully obeyed God and did what was right. Here we see one of the exciting results. We may not always see the effects of our faith, but we can be sure that God will honor faithfulness.

47:9-12 "How different is Jacob's descent to Egypt from his grandfather's (ch12)! Both seek out the safety of Egypt because of famine. To save himself Abraham engages in deceit. To save his family Jacob engages in blessing. The Pharaoh at Abraham's visit was only too happy to see Abraham return to his own country. The Pharaoh at Jacob's visit insists that Jacob stay and settle on some choice land. Abraham retreats from Egypt. For Jacob Egypt is his new home. Abraham leaves Egypt alive (and happy to be so!). Jacob will leave Egypt dead."

Joseph and the Famine - Verses 13-26

¹³There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine. ¹⁴Joseph 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 all gone." 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, ^[c] 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.

47:13-26 The earth now becomes a wasteland with no source of food as the famine intensifies. First, the people sell their livestock in exchange for food to the Pharaoh under Joseph's care. Then, in the next year, the people have to give up their land and even themselves just to survive. Pharaoh now owns them and they set up a long enduring system of indebtedness where Egypt gets 1/5 of the produce of the land. People are moved to the cities in great quantity throughout the borders of the land except for the priests who had an allotment from Pharaoh. The people are thankful for this salvation of their lives during this time and willing become Pharaoh's slaves.

Jacob's Last Request - Verses 27-31

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.

47:27 Now Israel lived in Goshen and acquired property in it and the family became fruitful and very numerous. God's chosen people were prospering during a very difficult time period thanks to the LORD's providence and Joseph's obedience. **Application** In our tough economic times in which we live, God still can and will bless His chosen people who stay true to Him and obey what He is telling them to do. It may not even make rational sense sometimes, but God will direct our paths and give us what we need not only to survive, but to thrive!

47:28-31 Jacob lives another 17 years in Egypt to the ripe old age of 147. He had lived a life full of grief and disappointment up until his sojourn down to Egypt, but here in a foreign land the LORD blessed him and took care of him the last portion of his earthly existence. He was revived by the company of his beloved son Joseph, whom he had thought to be dead, and he enjoyed some excellent golden years it appears from the biblical text. He asks Joseph near the time of his passing to bury him back in Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Canaan with his fathers. Joseph agrees to do this in the traditional hand under the thigh oath. Joseph deals with his father in kindness and truth as he was asked to do. God's people, however, are to speak the truth and live the truth. Let your words be as binding as a written contract. Can people count on the words which we say?