

BOOK OF GENESIS

GENESIS 47

VERSES 1-12

1 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 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."

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

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Verse 2— Why does Joseph choose only FIVE brothers to present to Pharaoh?

Verse 4— The brothers say they've come "to live here for a while" (gûr)—the same word used for Abraham (12:10) and Isaac (26:3) as sojourners. They don't claim permanent residence. Why?

Verse 6— Pharaoh offers "the best part of the land" and even asks for skilled shepherds to manage his livestock. How does Joseph's faithfulness in Pharaoh's service now benefit his entire family? What does this teach about how our integrity affects others?

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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.

VERSES 13-26

13 There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt

Verse 7— Jacob BLESSED

Pharaoh—this is stunning! The elderly shepherd blesses the most powerful ruler on earth. The lesser is blessed by the greater (Heb 7:7). Jacob, the covenant-bearer, has spiritual authority that transcends political power. Think Genesis 12:3 – what is being fulfilled here?

Verse 11— "The district of Rameses"—this is an anachronism (the city Rameses wasn't built until the Exodus era). Either this is editorial updating for readers, or it refers to the general region. The point: Joseph gives his family the BEST land.

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Vv. 13-26— This section is controversial. Is Joseph wise or exploitative? Does he save Egypt or

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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 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

enslave it? The text is morally ambiguous.

Verse 14— Joseph collects all the money in exchange for grain. He's consolidating wealth for Pharaoh. Is this shrewd economics or exploitation of desperation?

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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.

Verse 19— The people OFFER themselves: "Buy us and our land." They're not forced—they choose slavery over death. But is a choice made under duress truly free?

Verse 21— "Joseph reduced the people to servitude"—the Hebrew is debated. Some translations say "moved them to cities" (reorganizing population), others "made them slaves." Either way, their freedom is curtailed. How does this foreshadow Israel's coming slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1)?

Verse 24— The 20% tax seems reasonable compared to ancient standards (often 30-50%). Joseph provides seed and lets them keep 80%. The people THANK him: "You have saved our lives!" (v. 25). They view this as salvation, not oppression. Does their gratitude justify the system?

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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.

Verse 25— "We will be in bondage to Pharaoh"—the same word (‘ābādîm) will describe Israel in Exodus 1:13-14. The Egyptians willingly accept the status Israel will later suffer unwillingly. Ironic reversal!

KEY NOTE: This passage creates deliberate moral tension. On one hand, Joseph SAVES Egypt—the people don't starve, he provides seed, the system works. They thank him! On the other hand, Joseph creates a centralized economic system where Pharaoh owns everything and everyone. This is intentional narrative irony: Joseph builds the very system that will enslave his own descendants. The Israelites will cry out under Egyptian bondage (Ex 1-2), but Joseph helped CREATE that bondage. This doesn't make Joseph villainous—it shows the tragedy of compromise. Joseph serves Pharaoh faithfully, enriching Egypt's king, but he's building a throne that will crush his own people. The Bible

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doesn't condemn Joseph here, but it presents the consequences soberly. The 20% tax (v. 24) becomes permanent law (v. 26), still in effect when Genesis was written. Economic policies outlive their creators. The exception for priests (vv. 22, 26) shows political pragmatism—Joseph doesn't challenge the religious establishment. But this exception will matter in Exodus: Pharaoh's magicians will oppose Moses because they're part of the protected class. Genesis 1-3 connection: God gave humans dominion over creation (1:28), not over each other. Here, humans own other humans. Land ownership concentrates in one person (Pharaoh), violating the creation mandate to fill and cultivate the earth. The system "works" economically but fails morally. It's ANTI-Eden: instead of abundance for all, scarcity for most and excess for one. This foreshadows Pharaoh's tyranny in Exodus and critiques all systems where power and wealth concentrate at the top while the masses serve. The people's words—"You have saved our lives" (v. 25)—will be tragically

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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.

ironic when their descendants cry, "We're dying under Pharaoh's oppression!" (Ex 1:11-14).

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Verse 27— Contrast: While Egyptians lose property and freedom (vv. 20-21), Israel GAINS property and multiplies. The covenant promise is being fulfilled IN Egypt: "be fruitful and increase in number" – what does this echo?

Finally – consider how Israel prospers while Egypt serves. This creates tension that will explode in Exodus 1.

Verse 28— Jacob lived 17 years in Egypt—the same number of years Joseph lived with Jacob before being sold (37:2). God gives Jacob the same amount of time WITH Joseph that he had WITHOUT him. What does this teach us about redemption?

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Verse 29— "Put your hand under my thigh"—this is the same oath Abraham required of his servant (24:2). It's a solemn covenant gesture, possibly connected to descendants/seed. Jacob binds Joseph with the strongest oath possible. Why is burial location so important to Jacob? Think Genesis 49:29-32; 50:13.

Verse 31— "Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff"—this image is quoted in Hebrews 11:21 as an example of faith. Jacob, though dying, worships in faith. The staff symbolizes his journey—from fleeing Esau with only a staff (32:10) to leaning on it in old age. His whole life was pilgrimage, and he ends it in worship. The text shifts from "Jacob" to "Israel"—when he worships in faith, he's called by his covenant name.