

# GENESIS

## 46:1-47:12

### Genesis 46:1-47:12

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 28th July 2024 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

**Reading:** 1 Peter 4:1-6

### Introduction

This morning we're going to study another 46 verses of the first book in the Bible; Genesis. A book where we see the beginning of everything. And today, as we study all of chapter 46 and some of 47, we're going to see signs of a nation emerging — and that is the nation of Israel. Indeed, by the time we get to chapter 47, we'll see Israel referred to as *they*, as we read about how *they* had great possessions there in Egypt and grew and multiplied exceedingly. This isn't a confusing set of pronouns, rather, Moses was referring to a nation, and no longer a man.

But first, to recap, we left off last time with Joseph having sent his brothers home to break the good news to his father, Jacob, and tell him to move to Egypt. At first, Jacob's heart stood still as he wrestled with the reality of the situation, that not only was his son alive, who he thought dead, but he was actually second in command of the most powerful nation on earth at that time. But, as he saw the carts that Joseph had sent to carry him, it started to sink in that this was all true — and he said *"It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."*

### Overview

### Overview of chapter forty six

- **v1-7** — Israel leaves for Egypt under God's guidance
- **v8-27** — The names and number of people who went
- **v28-34** — Israel reunited with Joseph in Egypt

However, as we start chapter forty six this morning, we'll see some healthy hesitation from Jacob as he worships God, before — in verses 8-27 — we'll see a list of names of all those of his family who went with him to Egypt. Then, in verses 28-34 we'll reach another emotional moment as he is finally reunited with Joseph, and they begin to settle in the land.

### Overview of chapter forty seven

- **v1-12** — Joseph, his brothers, and Jacob before Pharaoh
- **v13-26** — The severity of the famine in Egypt
- **v27-31** — Israel grows and multiplies exceedingly

As chapter 47 starts, Joseph and five of his brothers go before Pharaoh, who not only agrees for them to stay in the land, but to live in the best of it — before Joseph finally brings his father, Jacob, before Pharaoh too. And that's as far as we'll get this morning. But as we'll see next week, the remainder of the chapter records quite how severe the famine became in Egypt (with the Egyptians giving their livestock and land in exchange for food), and then the final 4 verses note how Israel, now as a nation, prospered in the land.

## Chapter forty six

So then, picking up this true story at the beginning of chapter 46, having just read that Jacob told his sons that he will go to Egypt, we read:

### Genesis 46:1

So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

Jacob and his family, then, pack up their tents in Hebron — or Kirjath Arba as it was known — and they travel some 30-40 miles south-west to Beersheba, the *well of the sevenfold oath* as Abraham had named it following the dispute with Abimelech in chapter 21. This was the same place Jacob had set off from on his journey to Haran back in chapter 28. But what's notable is not so much *where* Jacob now was, but what he now *did*. And that is he worshipped God.

Consider for a moment what had just happened in this man's life. He had just found out his son, who he was certain was dead, was in fact alive. And his response wasn't to say "well, that's lucky!" as if it were some small, coincidental thing. Nor did he blame either his *sons* for his agony over the years, or *God* for permitting these things to happen. But, rather, he responded in worship to God. Indeed, he must have been desperate to see Joseph, but he wasn't too busy to stop here to worship.

But more than that, based on the following verses, it seems that in the midst of his worship he was seeking God's reassurance that going to Egypt was the right thing to do. And that was wise, for remember that Abraham had got in trouble by going down to Egypt, and God had specifically warned Isaac (in chapter 26) to not go there. But now, we read, God was going to make clear to Jacob not only that he should go, but that He would be with him.

And how wonderful an example is that? For Jacob had reached a point where he wouldn't make such a significant move without knowing God was OK with it, without knowing that God would be with him. Let us learn from that — for so often we change jobs, spend huge sums of money, or make big decisions such as who to date, who to marry, where to live, where to go to uni, where to go to church, how to spend our time (even in ministry), without even so much as asking God what *He* would have us do in those situations.

Friends, Sunday morning services are not visiting hours for God, where we come and talk to Him and hear from Him at church and then have no contact with Him the rest of the week. No, no. We are to have a *relationship* with Him, seeking His will in *all* we do. Especially when it is something that we *want* to do. Here, it seemed like there was only *good* news ahead for Jacob — a reunion with his son, and provision for the whole family. Yet, he only went to Egypt *once* he had reassurance from God that He would be with him. We read:

**Genesis 46:2**

Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am."

Once again we see where Jacob is acting in faith he is referred to as Israel. And what submission we have here — not "what do you want?" or "not now!". But rather, "here I am".

**Genesis 46:3-4**

So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."

So then, God reassures Jacob that he should go to Egypt — that not only is this in God's *permissive* will, but God actually *wants* him to go, for while there He is going to turn Israel the man into Israel the nation. And it would happen quickly, for as soon as chapter 1 of Exodus we read "*And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.*"

So God kept that promise to Jacob. We also read here that God promised to bring Jacob up again, and indeed both his *body* would be buried back in Canaan, and Israel the *nation* would eventually dwell in the Land of Canaan. And God's third promise would also come to pass, that Joseph would close Jacob's eyes in peace at death — and indeed Jacob would *not* see death until many years later, sat in the presence of Joseph. God keeps His promises.

**Genesis 46:5**

Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

So acting in faith now, Jacob heads for Egypt along with his family. And we read:

### **Genesis 46:6-7**

So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

And next we'll get some detail on exactly who went down to Egypt. But let's pause for a moment and note verse 6, for remember the instruction Pharaoh had given to Joseph for his brothers... he said *"Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours."* Yet, Jacob and his sons brought all they had with them.

This is a small detail, but I just wonder if this is why we read in verse 30 that Jacob was ready to die when he finally came before Joseph in Egypt? Was it that the journey to Egypt had taken longer than necessary because they were moving house, and not only herds and people? Certainly when *our* focus is turned to our material goods, it has a habit of weighing us down, causing us to walk with the the Lord more slowly. We should at least ponder that.

### **Genesis 46:8-12**

Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

So then, these are the first four of Leah's children and their sons, who were born before any other of Jacob's sons. And Moses makes specific note that Er and Onan died before this point in time, so would not be counted in the total number of people who travelled.

Now, as a quick side note; if you compare the list of names here with other records in the Bible, you'll sometimes see slight differences — but that's because it wasn't uncommon, as it isn't today, to have folks known by more than one name, as I've mentioned before. Such as John is known as Tig. Or the other Jon, as Gunny. Or my cousin Dave, who is known as Frank.

Next, Moses continues recording those who travelled from Canaan to Egypt, but before recording the families of Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher (who were the next in line born through Leah and Rachel's maids), he concludes the list of Leah's children, writing:

### **Genesis 46:13-15**

The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, were thirty-three.

Now Leah is mentioned here of course as the mother of these children, yet she is not counted in those that travelled down to Egypt — and it's not until chapter 49 that we find out why. For there we read (in verse 31 of that chapter) that Jacob said "there I buried Leah", referring to the cave of Machpelah back in Canaan. But since Jacob never returned to Canaan after this trip to Egypt, she must have died before this point.

Dinah, Leah's daughter, is mentioned here, as is one of Jacob's granddaughters later on. And so the girls are mentioned in this list, but this is a family with predominantly boys. And one other name that might have caught your attention is one of Issachar's sons, called Job. And it is likely that this is the Job that we read of in the book of Job in the Bible, which would fit timing wise with both Eliphaz the Temanite, one of Esau's sons, who was one of Job's friends, and also with Moses having written the book of Job at around the age of 55 after the events of that book had occurred, making it the oldest written book in the Bible.

Having recorded Leah's children and their children, Moses moves to the children of Leah's maid, Zilpah. We read from verse 16 on:

#### **Genesis 46:16-18**

The sons of Gad were Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. The sons of Asher were Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel. These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons.

So among these descendants is the only granddaughter born to Jacob before this move to Egypt. Next, Moses records the children of Rachel. Verse 19 says:

#### **Genesis 46:19-22**

The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. The sons of Benjamin were Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all.

And so we learn that Benjamin had the most sons out of any of his brothers, with 10 sons — and I can't help but chuckle that the last one was called Ard, for I can imagine his wife saying by that point "This is hard" and him getting the wrong end of the stick. Sorry!

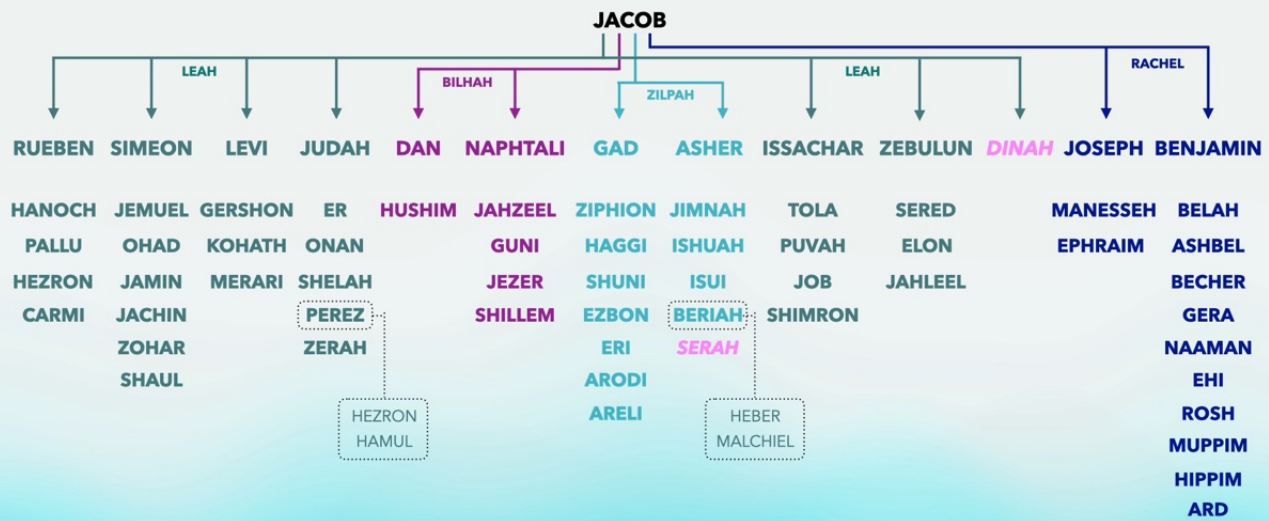
Next, like Moses had listed Leah's maid's sons after her own, now he lists Rachel's maid's sons after *her* own, even though they were born before. We read:

#### **Genesis 46:23-25**

The son of Dan was Hushim. The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all.

And so the family tree looks like this:

# Israel moves to Egypt



And this helps us see how vast in number this family had already become by just the second generation — only Dinah had no children recorded, with all her brothers apart from Dan having multiple children. We even see in this record that some of Jacob's great-grandchildren are recorded too. This might be a little small to see, depending on where you're sitting, but you can take a closer look after the service this morning, or in the study notes that will go on our web site along with the recording of this study.

Next, Moses gives us the total number that moved to Egypt:

## Genesis 46:26-27

All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

And you might wonder, *why do we have this detail here?* Well, first, this helps us understand the scale of Jacob's family at this point. It wasn't an insignificant number of people to move, or for Pharaoh to *agree* to move into the land. As we *read* here, there were at least 66 that made the journey at this point. And I say at *least*, because there are some other numbers the Bible gives us.

Of course, we just *read* that in total there were 70 that then lived in Egypt — comprising the 66 that came *with* Jacob, plus Jacob himself, Joseph and Joseph's sons. But we're also told here that this number didn't include his son's wives. Then, in Stephen's sermon in Acts chapter 7, he notes that there were 75 that came to Egypt at this point — which I believe was most likely including Jacob's son's wives, with some perhaps having also died before this moment (though a couple of Bible commentators think that number includes Joseph's grandsons instead).

But beyond family, it's possible, even likely, that Jacob had servants that made the journey too — for remember he had inherited his father and grandfather's wealth, of which we know Abraham had over 300 trained servants. So, you might wonder, is there any evidence of that? Well, there is at least one such piece of art from the tomb of Tomb of Khnumhotep II that possibly, even probably depicts the Israelites journey into Egypt, which you can see here:

# Israel's migration to Egypt?



Image via NebMaatRa

A couple of distinctive features of the Semites that are depicted here are the lighter tone of skin (compared to the Egyptians), and beards, which was of course a notable contrast to the clean shaven Egyptians. And there's certainly more we could dig into there, and (for those interested) I have an article I'd happily share with you from the Armstrong Institute for Biblical Archaeology:

**The Hyksos: Evidence of Jacob's Family in Ancient Egypt?**  
Some uncanny parallels among the Semitic rulers of Lower Egypt—right down to their individual names

There could perhaps be a tendency to view Jacob's family—his sons, etc.—as more or less an insignificant group of middle-class people who simply existed within the orbit that was ancient Egypt. But even from the point of view of the Hyksos, they were, in their own right, a powerful force to be reckoned with.

Such was the strength and influence of patriarchal kin groups like this in Canaan—containing vast numbers of shepherds, retailers and other workers—that the king of the Philistines was the patriarch Isaac and his Genesis 35:11. And Isaac, if you recall, was a patriarch with only one son named Isaac and Jacob.

How else the total destruction of the then notably powerful Canaanite city Shechem at the hands of only two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, in what is recorded as a battle between brothers, but in all not one mentioned were Isaac and Jacob.

In the same vein, the patriarch Abraham had just "trained men, born in his house" (Genesis 14:12)—before he had any sons of his own—when he refused to bow back a coalition of armies attacking Canaan. And the not a single hand no hand combat between him, but in all not one mentioned were Isaac and Jacob.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons were no mere nomadic nomads or migrants for the time. No such as that James Jordan, in his book The Rise of Egypt could have numbered as many as a million individuals. Other than the "Semitic" "Hyksos" (see History of the Old Testament, Vol. 11, page 146).

All this only the work with the proven point of the Hyksos a civilization in their own right, living within Egypt's borders in Egypt. Perhaps it's also to see an occasion—and why Memphis speaks of Hyksos during their time—was in the Egyptian fielding hundreds of thousands of footmen. These were "Semitic" or "Hyksos" (see History of the Old Testament, Vol. 11, page 146). It's also possible—especially in the case of the Hyksos—being over a population generally estimated for this period as being around a million "more and mightier than us" (Genesis 14:12, King James Version).

Of course, all this does not mean that all Hyksos were necessarily Semitic, full-blood descendants of Jacob's kin. Archaeologists have indeed revealed evidence of some degree of "multiculturalism" among their community within Egypt. But again, the Bible itself reveals that at the time of the Hyksos, along with the Israelites, a "mixed multitude" went up also with them (Exodus 12:38). The same degree also contains provisions for those of other nations seeking to become part of the "immigration of Israel."



## The Hyksos: Evidence of Jacob's Family in Ancient Egypt?

Some uncanny parallels among the Semitic rulers of Lower Egypt—right down to their individual names

<https://armstronginstitute.org/835-the-hyksos-evidence-of-jacobs-family-in-ancient-egypt>

So then, the first reason Moses recorded these names is to show clearly the scale of what was going on — that it was indeed Jacob's *entire* family that moved to Egypt. And of course, even if a particular name is not significant to us, it surely is to God — for each human being has an intrinsic value not determined by their culture, but by their Creator.

Secondly, though, let us not forget that the folks listed in this passage were the ancestors of each and every Jew in the Bible — from Moses and Matthew who were Levites, King Saul and the apostle Paul who were Benjamites, to Samson who was a Danite, and to David and Solomon who were from the tribe of Judah. Indeed every biological Jew in the world today is descended from this family of Jacob.

But third, and most significantly of course, the reason we are given the details of this family, and specifically the sons and grandsons of Judah, is that this was the line through to Jesus, our Saviour (as Matthew records in chapter 1 of his gospel, noting the line came through Judah, Perez, and Hezron). Jesus was the promised Seed spoken of to Abraham, first promised to Adam and Eve back in the garden of Eden after the fall.

Now, having noted who went to Egypt, Moses next records what happened as they arrived there, speaking of Jacob:

**Genesis 46:28**

Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen.

Why Judah? Well, perhaps after all had been revealed to Jacob, it had become clear that Judah was a good leader with a good heart — after all, he was one of two brothers who had tried to save Joseph from death when he was sold. But he was also the man who had promised Benjamin's safe return, then was willing to lay down his life that Benjamin might go free. Whatever the reason, Judah was clearly trusted by Jacob here. And we read on:

**Genesis 46:29**

So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

And just picture this moment — it had been 20 years since they last saw each other. And no doubt both thought this moment would never come.

**Genesis 46:30**

And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."

Jacob then was ready to die, for his heart was happy. But just maybe, as mentioned earlier, perhaps he was also exhausted by the journey which had been made longer by the moving of all their possessions which Pharaoh said to leave behind, as well as the people and their herds. Again, a little reminder of how tiring the acquiring and maintaining of possessions can be!

But also, remember how *Isaac* thought his days were at an end when he was 138, only to live another 42 years — well, here, Jacob would live another 17 years in Egypt alongside Joseph. He also had longer to live than it seems he thought. Now, with his family in Egypt, Joseph immediately started putting plans in place for his family's future together in the land. We read:



**Genesis 46:31**

Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me.

So what is going on? Well, here we have Joseph — who we already know is a type or model of Christ — going to the one on whose right hand he sits, to intercede for his brethren. Exactly as Jesus intercedes on our behalf to God, on whose right hand He sits!

And Joseph continued explaining to his brothers what he was intending to say to Pharaoh:

**Genesis 46:32-34**

And the men are shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.' So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, What is your occupation?' that you shall say, 'Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

Why would Joseph give this detail to his brothers in advance? And why would he intend to bring up a detail to Pharaoh that would make his family an abomination to the Egyptians? Well, as for the advance nature, I can only presume that Joseph didn't want there to be any misunderstanding amongst his family at the point he took his brothers before Pharaoh. But as for what he said, this was done with a single intent — to keep the Israelites separate from the Egyptians.

You see, when these brothers were first at Shechem back in chapter 34, and Hamor's son had taken advantage of their sister in the worst possible way, Hamor proposed that they became a singular group of people. We *read* there:

**Genesis 34:8-9**

But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves.

And had that happened it would have been disastrous — not only for Jacob's family, not only for the nation of Israel, but for you and I — for that was yet another attempt by Satan to corrupt the line through to Jesus. The line through to the promised Seed that was promised to Abraham.

So then, here in Egypt, what Joseph is doing is incredibly important. By highlighting they are a shepherding family, the Egyptians would not want to enjoy their company, let alone intermarry with them. And thus, this small number of people (in comparison to the number of Egyptians) would remain a distinct people, set aside for God's purposes, free from compromise.

And God will still work in that way today. That is, if you are living your life as a Christian should, there will be people that simply don't want to hang around with you. And there will be people who don't want to be friends with you or even date you, because you won't have sex outside of marriage, and because you hold fast to a Biblical view of marriage, a Biblical view of gender — that there are only men and women — and because you don't want to party, get drunk, take drugs, or cheat your employer like they do. Peter warned of this in his first letter, saying:

### 1 Peter 4:3-4

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

So don't be surprised when that happens. Of course, we are not to be offensive ourselves. We are to be kind. We are to speak the truth in *love*. But we are not to compromise to the extent that no-one around us can even tell that we're a Christian. We are not to water down what we believe, or adjust how we act to make our faith more palatable. Let me put it another way; if you think your faith in Christ (when properly expressed) will be offensive to no-one, then you have completely misunderstood what Christianity and the message of the Bible is.

Again, we don't want to offend people. But this rejection of *us* because of *what* we believe, *Whom* we believe in, and *how* we live, is actually a healthy thing, for it keeps us from entangling ourselves in friendships and relationships that will lead us away from the Lord. It keeps us from ending up indistinct from the world around us. And that's what Joseph was aiming for here, to keep his family unspotted from the world — of which Egypt is consistently a symbol of.

## Chapter forty seven

Now, having forewarned his brothers, Joseph goes before Pharaoh. We read:

### Genesis 47:1-2

Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen." And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.

And so, in yet another model of Christ, we see Joseph go before the king, interceding for his brethren. And note, that Joseph *always* had access to Pharaoh, just as Jesus has *continual* access to our heavenly Father, of course. But also, see how Joseph presented his brothers to Pharaoh — he didn't speak badly of them at all, didn't bring up their wrong-doing. Likewise, Jesus does not and will not bring us before God speaking of our flaws, our failures, our sin. Rather He presents us as His sanctified bride, for He has already paid for all our sin. And if that wasn't enough, Joseph takes 5 of his brothers — 5 being the number of grace in the Bible. What a picture, huh!

### Genesis 47:3-4

Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers." And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

And so Joseph had spoken to Pharaoh as he said he would. Pharaoh had asked the question Joseph said he would. And now the brothers had responded as Joseph had instructed *them* to do.

### **Genesis 47:5-6**

Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock."

Pharaoh, then, gives Joseph everything he could have hoped for — not only permission to stay in the land, but given the very best of it to nurture their flocks and raise their families in. And I love that final comment by Pharaoh, that if Joseph knew any competent men among them, to put them in charge of his livestock too. Even in Egypt, it seemed good, willing, competent men were hard to find!

Now, interestingly, despite the Egyptian's dislike for shepherding, this Pharaoh had livestock — maybe cows, but maybe sheep too. The Hebrew word is open to that possibility. And certainly, if that were the case, it would fit in with the conjecture or suggestion that this particular Pharaoh was one of the Hyksos kings originating from Arabia, that ruled in Egypt for a while.

### **Genesis 47:7-10**

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty 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 pilgrimage." So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

Meeting Jacob would have been quite something for Pharaoh, for he was 130 years old. Jacob would have had so much more life experience. Yet there is no bragging on the part of Jacob. In fact he says his age is nothing compared to his father and grandfather, who lived to 175 and 180 years old respectively. And he also underlines how his life had not been easy, claiming no credit for his wealth, making no boast of how he tricked his father into giving him the birthright, or how he outsmarted his uncle. Jacob is not self-assured in any way here. He is not proud. There is only humility. And that's a good thing. Commenting on this, J Vernon McGee said:

*In our day we hear so much boasting on the part of many Christians. Sometimes in our own circles, we attempt to applaud certain men for what they have done. We talk about how great they are. Well, if we all told the truth, we would say that we are just a bunch of sinners and we haven't anything to brag about except a wonderful Savior who has been gracious and patient with us down through the years. He is all any of us have to boast about.*

**J Vernon McGee**

And so, Jacob's attitude was right at last, after a lifetime of learning. We even see him blessing Pharaoh — the older blessing the younger. And may that be a reminder that we are, as maturing Christians, to be always seeking to pass on what we have learned to those younger in the faith than us, that we might be a blessing to them.

### **Genesis 47:11-12**

And Joseph situated 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. Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families.

So Jacob's family, then, now to be known as Israel, had come to live in the land of Egypt. And not only did they do that with Pharaoh's permission and blessing, but they were provided for in the most spectacular of ways. Ways that only God could have engineered.

## **Application questions**

Reflecting on this chapter then, let us ask ourselves some probing questions. Let me ask them to you now:

- How much do you involve God in your decisions?
- Are the material things of this world weighing you down?
- Is your relationship with Christ so obvious, some take offence at it?

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