

GENESIS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 47 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we have seen, this has been a very interesting chain of events for Joseph. His brothers who envied him and hated him sold him into slavery at the age of 17. They wanted to get rid of this dreamer of dreams, and they did!

As a slave down in Egypt, in the house of Potiphar who was the captain of the execution squad for Pharaoh, Joseph was placed in charge of everything in Potiphar's house because Potiphar trusted Joseph. In fact, this pagan master saw the hand of God upon Joseph and thus, he was blessed because Joseph was blessed.

Things were going well until Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him but he kept refusing her advances. Day in and day out this went on until one day she grabbed his garment and Joseph fled, leaving his garment in her hand. Because she did not get what she wanted, she accused Joseph of trying to rape her. Now Potiphar, knowing his wife and knowing Joseph, he knew something was wrong, that Joseph would never do that and yet his wife, well she must have had been loose. You see, the reason I say that is because Potiphar did not put Joseph to death but placed him in prison, he had to do something and that is the least he could do!

While in prison Joseph once again served faithfully and is placed in charge of the other prisoners, including two new ones, the butler and baker for Pharaoh. You see, one of them was trying to kill Pharaoh and he was not sure which one and thus, he placed them both in prison until he could figure it out.

There in prison the butler and baker have a dream and they don't understand it. Joseph, seeing the change in their countenance, asks them what is wrong and they explain about the dreams they had and they didn't understand what they meant. They knew it was important but why? Joseph gives glory to God and tells the butler that in three days he will be released and restored before Pharaoh. The baker, well, in three days he too would be released but he will be put to death. He also tells the butler that when he is released to remember him before Pharaoh, let him know that he did nothing wrong and should be released from prison.

But the butler forgets for 2 full years, he forgets until Pharaoh has 2 dreams and no one could interpret them for him and he too knew they meant something important. It is then that the butler remembered Joseph and how he interpreted their dreams and he tells Pharaoh, who calls for Joseph to be brought before him. Joseph once again gives glory to God and interprets these dreams for Pharaoh. He tells Pharaoh that these two dreams are speaking of the same event. That there will be seven years of bountiful harvest followed by seven years of severe famine. And Joseph tells Pharaoh that he needs to find someone who can oversee the collecting of grain during the bountiful years of harvest to prepare for the famine years. And Pharaoh, recognizing that the Spirit of the living God was upon Joseph, that he was a wise man, places him as second in charge over all of Egypt and in charge of collecting the grain during the bountiful years of harvest and then dispensing the grain during the years of famine!

Back in the land of Canaan God is also working on the hearts of Jacob and his sons. As the famine hits Canaan Jacob sends 10 of his 11 remaining sons down to Egypt to buy some grain but there was trouble when they got there. Joseph recognized them but they did not recognize him and he accuses them of being spies. He wasn't out for revenge but restoration and before they could be restored before God, they would have to repent.

Thus, Joseph keeps Simeon locked in prison until they return back with Benjamin, their youngest brother. The only problem is that when they returned home all the money they brought to buy the grain was back in their sacks. Thus, the man down in Egypt would not only see them as spies, but also as thieves! Again, God is working, turning up the heat upon them. And Jacob, when he sees and hears all that is going on refused to let Benjamin go back to Egypt with them and thus, he is writing Simeon off, he would stay in prison down in Egypt forever or become a slave. And Jacob sees all that is happening to him is working against him when in reality, God was using it for good!

But the famine continues on and the food they got in Egypt is gone and they needed more grain, more food. So Jacob tells his sons to go back to Egypt and get more grain, but Judah refuses unless Jacob lets Benjamin go with them. Israel now, not Jacob places this in the hands of God and His will to be done. Thus, Jacob or Israel is growing!

So the 10 sons go back to Egypt and they tell the steward of Joseph all that happened regarding the money being back in their sacks, they are terrified of what the man will do to them now. But the steward tells them God is in control and that he had placed the money back in their sacks. Another problem taken care and they are once again on their way home with Simeon and Benjamin. The only problem is that Joseph told his steward to place his silver cup in the bag of Benjamin, which he did. And as they started their journey, the steward caught up with them and accused them of stealing this cup!

But they are innocent and thus, they tell the steward that if he finds the silver cup in any of their sacks, then that person should be put to death. They didn't know that it was in the sack of Benjamin! But the steward tells them no, the one the silver cup is found in will be a slave to the man, to Joseph!

When the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack their hearts sank. But, instead of returning home they went back to Egypt to intercede for their brother before the man and this time, Judah was willing to sacrifice his life for the life of Benjamin, that he would be set free. It is now time for Joseph to reveal himself to them, he sees their brokenness and how their hearts have changed and he tells them that he is their brother, the one they sold into slavery years earlier! Yes, they meant it for harm but God was going to use it for God and He did! You see, God is working at many levels here. He is working in the brothers of Joseph as they were broken and repented and they then were restored!

Now Joseph tells them to gather together their things back home and to return to Egypt bringing with them their father Jacob and all their family, and that is just what they do. Jacob can't believe that Joseph is alive and before making the journey out of Canaan he stops in Beersheba to make sure the Lord wants him to go down to Egypt. And there the Lord does instruct him not only to go to Egypt but that one day He would bring them back into the Land of Canaan, into the Promise Land!

As we closed last time we read in Genesis 46:31-34, **“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. 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.”**

Joseph is telling them what to say to Pharaoh and that is where we will pick up our study tonight in Genesis chapter 47, starting in verse 1 as Israel and the children of Israel are going to meet with Pharaoh and let's jump in and see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word!

GENESIS 47**VERSES 1-4**

1. Goshen is located in the northeastern section of the Egyptian Delta and is called “the land of Goshen” or the “country of Goshen.” It was also called the district of Rameses and Moses calls it that because that was its name during his day. And Joseph’s brothers did what they were told. They said they were shepherds. They weren’t lying. And this was important because the Egyptians did not look favorably on shepherds; they in fact looked down upon them, it was an abomination to them and thus, they separated themselves from shepherds. This was a blessing to the children of Israel for it kept them as one and they were not assimilated into the Egyptian culture. And so they ask for the fertile land of Goshen.

VERSES 5-6

1. Not only does Pharaoh give them the best land, but also he tells Joseph if there are any in his family that are competent, then let them be in charge of his herds. Why would he do that? Because he saw how Joseph worked, the integrity of his life and how that God blessed him and thus, to Pharaoh, this would be a good deal!

VERSES 7-10

1. Now this is interesting to me. The lesser, Jacob or Israel, blesses the greater, Pharaoh. You see, to the Egyptians Pharaoh was a god, the human embodiment of Ra or the sun god. But Pharaoh saw how the God of Joseph was living and powerful and thus submitted to the blessings that Jacob gave as they meet and as they departed! Folks, let those around you see that the God you serve is living and powerful and loves them so that they may receive the blessing of salvation into their lives by faith in Christ!

2. Jacob must not have looked too good because Pharaoh asks him **“How old are you?”** That was not a complimentary question and Jacob responds back by telling him that he is 130 years old and life has been hard for him, it has been difficult. Yes, some of these things he brought on himself but life is tough in general. Also, he tells Pharaoh that his life is not going to be as long as his father Isaac’s, who lived to be 180 years old, (Genesis 35:28). He was not going to live as long as his Grandfather Abraham who lived to 175 years old, (Genesis 25:7-8). It is as the Psalmist said, **“So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.”** The Living Bible puts it like this, **“Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should.”** Our days are numbered and some have it harder than others, but in the end, there is that rest we have with the Lord as we are with Him and we receive our eternal bodies that will never fade away and that no one will ask us, **“How old are you?”** because we look so worn and torn!

3. Now this is important for us to understand. Jacob realized that his father and grandfather and he himself were on a pilgrimage. You see, this was not their home. Not even the land of Canaan, but heaven! In Hebrews 11:9-10 we are told of the faith of Abraham as Paul says, **“By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”**

Look at the example of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They lived in a land that God gave them but they lived in tents, not homes because the only land that Abraham owned was the burial plot for his wife Sarah. In fact, that word **“dwelt”** in verse 9 of Hebrews chapter 11 is the Greek word PAROIKEO, (par-oy-keh'-o) and it describes a “resident alien” or a person who lives in a place but doesn't have permanent status there. In other words, they saw this present experience as a pilgrimage, and thus, they **“ . . . waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”** Hebrews 11:10.

4. Why don't we as Christians fit in? We don't fit in because this is not our home. We are aliens and strangers just passing through. Paul said in Philippians 3:20, "**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.**" Thus, the way we talk, the way we dress, the things we do, how we work, what we watch is just evidence to show that we are not of this world, we are from above. And because of that, the world comes against us, they try to put out our light, and many times we as Christians compromise our faith so we can fit in, blend in with the world! That is a big mistake. Think of it like this, a boat cannot function outside the water. But when you put a boat in the water it functions beautifully. But if water gets in the boat, it is sunk. We as Christians are to function in this world but if the world gets in us, we too will be sunk! We are in this world but not of this world or as Paul said in II Timothy 2:3-5, "**You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.**" We must we fight the good fight of faith and not give in!

Isn't it interesting that they did not worry about houses, buildings, the latest four-legged drive camel, the three-legged ones never really caught on, but they looked ahead to a future city built by God, which is eternal! What a lesson for us, not to let the things of this world entangle us. Jesus made that point in Matthew 6:19-24 as He said, **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”** Where is your treasure? What kingdom are you building up? Because wherever it is, whatever it is that is where your heart will also be, your passion in life! May it be the Lord.

VERSES 11-12

1. Keep in mind that they were not Egyptians and yet Pharaoh gave to them the best of the land and possessions. You see, God is in control and His plans and purposes will come to pass in spite of us or He can work through us and use us for His glory!
2. Also, who are the brothers of Joseph and Jacob looking to? They are looking to Joseph and thus, we do see the dreams that God gave to Joseph come to pass!

VERSES 13-14

1. The people bought grain during this famine but their resources of money would not last forever and we will see what Joseph does to rectify that problem.

2. Just a little side note here. The Pharaoh during the time of Joseph was probably Sesostris I.

VERSES 15-26

1. During times of national crisis it seems that the people transfer their wealth, their possessions to the government, and that is what we see here. Now please understand that Joseph is not being unfair. He received their livestock, their herds for food, their land for food and the people had nothing else to give, but Joseph didn't leave them out in the cold. He gave them seed to grow and then put an annual tax on the produce of the land of 20%, they kept 80% for themselves. Folks, we would rejoice with a 20% flat tax – I think Joseph was very fair and he saved not only the Egyptians, not only his own family, but also many others from many other nations!

VERSE 27

1. What we see here is God is growing a nation or birthing a nation. You see, from those 70 people who entered the land, in just 430 years they would come out with over 2 million people – a nation is born!

VERSES 28-31

1. Jacob had poor eyesight, he had to be carried to Egypt he was so frail, and yet, he lived for another 17 years in Egypt with his son Joseph. In Joel 2:25 we are told, “**So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten . . .**” The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**And I will restore or replace for you the years that the locust has eaten . . .**” Those 17 years that Jacob lost with Joseph have been restored! I struggled with the years I wasted before I was saved and the Lord showed me this verse that comforted my heart. Yes, those were wasted years where I could have been serving the Lord but the Lord has said that He will restore those wasted years as I walk with Him and I believe He has in my life and He will do the same in your life!

2. Jacob knows he is going to die and thus, he does not want to be buried in Egypt, that is not his home. He wants to return to the land of Canaan, the Promise Land and Joseph swears to his father that he will do what he has asked. Joseph will bring him to Canaan and bury him there.

GENESIS 48VERSES 1-4

1. Jacob remembers years earlier when he had the encounter with God at Bethel or Luz and now, he is passing on those promises of God that were given to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. God said that He would make them fruitful, He would multiply them and they would bless other nations – the covenant that God had made.

2. One other point here and that is of Jacob, he is weak, he can hardly stand and yet, when he heard Joseph was coming he strengthened himself. Folks, ministry is tough but if you are willing to go that extra mile, God will give you the strength you need!

VERSES 5-7

1. We see here Jacob adopt the two sons of Joseph and in doing this he is giving to Joseph the birthright or the double portion of the inheritance. Reuben and Simeon seemed to have been disqualified for their actions and Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph! Reuben slept with his father's concubine, Genesis 35:22 and Simeon murdered the Shechemites, Genesis 34. And Joseph was the son of his beloved wife Rachel and thus, he extends the birthright to him. Now does that make it the 14 tribes of Israel instead of the 12 tribes of Israel?

Not at all! You see, it all depends on how they are listed and there are 20 different ways of listing the tribes in the Old Testament. The simplest way is leaving out the tribe of Levi, they were the priestly tribe and they did not inherit any land, the Lord was their portion. Also, Joseph is not listed, he is replaced by his two sons and thus, you have the 12 tribes of Israel. And that is how the Bible speaks of them, the 12 tribes of Israel!

VERSES 8-12

1. Notice the respect that Joseph has for his father Jacob. Joseph is an adult, married with children and yet he bows before him. Now Israel's eyesight was poor, and he may have seen shadows or outlines of two young figures with Joseph but he is not sure who they are. Thus, Joseph tells him that these are his two sons. And as poor as Israel's eyesight was, as we are going to see, spiritually speaking he could see clearly. Folks, don't let your physical ailment cloud your spiritual eyes!

VERSES 13-14

1. The right hand was the place of honor, of strength. Thus, since Manasseh was the firstborn he should get the blessing of the firstborn and Ephraim was the second born, and he would also get a blessing, but not of the firstborn. And we do see this in the Scriptures where the right hand is the place of power, honor and-so-on. In Exodus 15:6 we are told, **"Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces."** It is associated with God's strength. In Psalm 16:11 we are told, **"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."** It is associated with His power. In Psalm 20:6 we are told, **"Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand."** It is associated with His help. Thus, where is Jesus seated? In Mark 14:62 we are told, **"Jesus said, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'"** The right hand of the Father we see Jesus seated, the place of power!

2. Now Israel crosses his hand and places his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh. Just the opposite of how it should be. Is this old man confused, making a mistake? Not at all!

VERSES 15-16

1. Israel gave the blessing to both sons but Ephraim; the son of the right hand received the greater portion of the blessing. Both were blessed but Ephraim was the greater tribe, even to the point of having the name Ephraim represent the Northern Kingdom of Israel, all 10 of those tribes! (Isaiah 7:8, 17, 11:13).

2. In this blessing we see two fascinating points. The words, “**fed me**” are the Hebrew word RAAH, which is the first time we see God spoke of as a shepherd. That is what the word RAAH means.

Phillip Keller, in his book, A Shepard Looks At Psalm 23 speaks of his life experience as a shepherd and he says this. “I recall quite clearly how in my first venture with sheep, the question of paying a price for my ewes was so terribly important. They belonged to me only by virtue of the fact that I paid hard cash for them. It was money I earned by the blood and sweat and tears drawn from my own body during the desperate grinding years of the depression. And when I bought that first small flock I was buying them literally with my own body which has been laid down with this day in mind. Because of this I felt in a special way that they were in very truth a part of me and I a part of them.

There was an intimate identity involved which though not apparent on the surface to the casual observer, nonetheless made those thirty ewes exceedingly precious to me. But the day I bought them I also realized that this was but the first stage in a long, lasting endeavor in which from then on, I would, as their owner, have to continually lay down my life for them, if they were to flourish and prosper.

Sheep do not ‘just take care of themselves’ as some might suppose. They require, more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care. It is no accident that God has chosen to call us sheep. The behavior of sheep and human beings is similar in many ways . . . Our mass mind (or mob instincts), our fears and timidity, our stubbornness and stupidity, our perverse habits are all parallels of profound importance. Yet despite these adverse characteristics Christ chooses us, buys us, calls us by name, makes us His own and delights in caring for us.”

- Phillip Keller, A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23, pp. 20-21

That truly is the heart of God for us and thus, that blessing of God shepherding over them must have been a great comfort and brought them great joy as it should do with us!

We also see the word, “**redeemed**” or GAAL, (gawal) in the Hebrew. It speaks of a kinsman redeemer, someone who can buy or purchase us back. Here we see a beautiful picture of Christ who has come to release us from the bondage of sin that has us entangled with no way out except through Christ. He bought us back, purchased us with the shedding of His blood, His death on the cross of Calvary! He is our kinsman redeemer!

It is the pre-incarnate Christ who has taken care of him and spared him from evil. The writer of Hebrews takes both of these ideas into its verses when Paul says, **“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

Hebrews 13:20-21.

VERSES 17-20

1. Joseph thinks his dad is making a mistake, he is old, he can't see and thus, Joseph tries to help him out but Israel knew exactly what he was doing. He makes Ephraim receive the blessing of the firstborn as Jeremiah 31:9 tells us, **“They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.”**

VERSES 21-22

1. Here we see the passing on of the torch you might say, from Israel to Joseph. Of this Spurgeon tells us, “If Abraham dies, there is Isaac; and if Isaac dies, there is Jacob; and if Jacob dies, there is Joseph; and if Joseph dies, Ephraim and Manasseh survive. The Lord shall never lack a champion to bear his standard high among the sons of men. Only let us pray God to raise up more faithful ministers day and night. We have plenty of a sort, but, oh, for more that will weigh out sixteen ounces to the pound of gospel in such a way that people will receive it. We have too much of fine language, too much of florid eloquence, and little full and plain gospel preaching, but God will keep up the apostolic succession, never fear of that. When Stephen is dying, Paul is not far off. When Elijah is taken up, he leaves his mantle behind him.” Each of you are that person that God can and will use, if you let Him!

2. Joseph did get a double portion because the blessing went to his two sons. Now, in regards to this ridge of land that Israel took from the Amorites, we don't know when this took place. But Israel gave it to Joseph and over 430 years later the descendents of Joseph would occupy this land!

3. Look at how Jacob, or I should say Israel has grown. In this we see the completed and wonderful work regarding Jacob's recognition of God's presence in his life, a 147 years of God working!

- ***I am with you*** (Genesis 28:15): God gives the young believer every possible assurance of His presence and grace.
- ***I will be with you*** (Genesis 31:3): God expects the growing believer to trust He will be with us, even when we only have the promise of His presence.
- ***God . . . has been with me*** (Genesis 31:5): God gives a glorious testimony to the mature believer, able to say how God has been with us, even when we haven't felt His presence in the way we wished.
- ***God will be with you*** (Genesis 48:21): God gives the mature believer the opportunity to encourage others with the promise of God's presence.

4. I want to close this evening with this. Israel told Joseph that God would bring them back into the land one day that He had promised to them, the land of Canaan. Folks, God is coming back to take us home one day and what God has promised us He is more than able to bring to pass! Thus, let us be **“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”** Titus 2:13-15.