

Genesis Chapter 47 Commentary

1 ¶ Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

Joseph told his family, in chapter 45, that they would live in the land of Goshen. Pharaoh had told Joseph to send for them and furnish them with the best of the land of Egypt, which was Goshen for them. Although Joseph had Pharaoh's previous commandment for Israel to occupy the land of Goshen; he would not let them be settled there until he had Pharaoh's blessing of the move. This would remove any doubt, from the Egyptians, that Joseph was showing favor to his family above the Egyptians. We are sure there were those, who were jealous of Joseph, and who desired his position of power. Joseph is making sure he has a clean slate when examined by others.

This is a good example for the Christian, and a commandment of God, to be blameless, living lives that are holy and pure, as seen in:

- ***Php 2:13-16; 13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 14 ¶ Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."***
- ***2Pe 3:13-14; 13 "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."***

2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. 3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers. 4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

We notice; Joseph's brethren do as he has told them to do in the previous chapter. This is a lesson to us; we are to be prepared and ready to give an answer to those who inquire of us, especially of the things of Christ. This is why we have the bible, which Christ has prepared for us, ahead of our time. Thorough study of God's word of truth, accompanied by the Holy Spirit leading, is what we need to enable us to give the ready answer, seen in: ***1Pe 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"***

Remember also; the nation Israel shall be here a long time as God told Abram, before his name was changed to Abraham, in: ***Ge 15:13-14; 13 "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."***

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: 6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

Joseph has prepared his brethren, and they requested of Pharaoh to sojourn in the land of Goshen. Pharaoh acknowledges; I have said "***in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell***" therefore, I grant your request and command that your family dwell in the land of Goshen.

Pharaoh also orders Joseph; if any of your brethren are good administrators and overseers, place them over my cattle as well, that my flocks and herds may receive the best of care and prosper under their care. Why would Pharaoh request this? Pharaoh knows how God has blessed Joseph, and thereby God has blessed Egypt. Pharaoh therefore expects Joseph's brethren to have the blessings of God in all they do, and expects to gain therefrom.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

We see that Jacob blesses Pharaoh upon meeting him and at his departing from his presence. This is an example to us in Old Testament scripture, that we find in New Testament scripture of how to treat those in authority over us: ***1Ti 2:1-4; 1 ¶ "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."***

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? 9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

Why the question about his age? Historians tell us; the Egyptians did not live nearly as long as the Canaanites.

Notice Jacob expresses that his time on the earth is a pilgrimage. God's people in the NT are sometimes called pilgrims and strangers. Thus, we should always remember, this world is not our home, we are just passing through.

- ***Heb 11:12-13; 12 "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country."***
- ***1Pe 2:9-12; 9 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 11 Dearly beloved, I beseech***

you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

"*Have not attained unto the-life of my fathers*" Jacob was at present 130 years old (Ge 47:9) and lived one hundred and forty-seven years; Isaac his father lived one hundred and eighty years; and Abraham, his grandfather, lived one hundred and seventy-five years.

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

Jacob blesses Pharaoh again upon departing. Jacob found peace in Pharaoh and prayed for him, as an example for us as we find in NT scripture in: *Mt 10:11-15; 11 "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."*

We also have scripture to follow, when we are not received with love and kindness, seen in: *Mr 6:11 "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city."* Where we are not received in love and gladness, there is to be no parting blessing.

11 And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, 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 nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

As Joseph is providing the place of sustenance for his family, in the best of the land that Egypt has to offer, we see the beautiful picture of; Christ Jesus providing the Church of Grace in the world today, which is the best place in the world for God's people to live and have sustenance.

13 ¶ And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

Why was there a famine in "*the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan*"? God is orchestrating things on the earth to bring to fruition what he has said will happen in: *Ge 15:13-14; 13 "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."*

This helps us to understand; things do not always go like we would like them to in our own lives, in nature; but rest assured, God knows what is best for us in the long term. Think about the words of this hymn, Columbus, in the Sacred Harp book, page 67:

- *Verse 1: O once I had a glorious view, Of my redeeming Lord; He said I'll be a God to you, And I believed his word. But now I have a deeper stroke, Than all my groanings are, My God has me of late forsook--He's gone I know not where.*
- *Verse 6: What shall I do? Shall I lie down, And sink in deep despair? Will He forever wear a frown, Nor hear my feeble prayer? No, He will put his strength in me, He knows the way I've strolled, And when I'm tired sufficiently, I shall come forth as gold.*

14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. **15** And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. **16** And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. **17** And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year. **18** When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: **19** Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.

Obviously, the people of Egypt did not believe the dreams and interpretation of them. Had they believed, they would have laid up stores for themselves, as Joseph laid up stores for Egypt. So, it is with those who are not born again. They do not give a thought for eternity and do not lay up stores. God's people are commanded to lay up stores in heaven, seen in: **Mt 6:19-21; 19** *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Herein, we see the state of a sinner brought to repentance, how? Remember that Joseph is a type and figure of Christ. These people who have come to the end of themselves and having nothing to offer but their lives and property (all they possess) come to Joseph asking for life and bread, and pledging servitude.

How is it that a sinner, comparatively, is brought to the end of themselves? Well, here we see that God has caused a great famine to be spread over the land and the only source of life is through Joseph. But you say, we live in a land of plenty and there is no famine in our nation today. That is true in nature, but there is a spiritual famine and that is what brings the sinner to repentance as seen in: **Am 8:11** *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:"*

You must understand, the born-again sinner can see that there is a famine in their life. They can now see and understand, there is nothing that they can do to save themselves, and they are destined to eternal death in the lake of fire. Now they can come to Jesus, who has given them salvation and eternal life, and Christ will provide them with the bread of life. Now, they desire "***of hearing the words of the LORD***" to hear the Saviour say: ***Mt 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."***

"***and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.***" We notice also; they asked for seed to plant, that the land may be fruitful and not desolate. The same should be true in our lives. Notice, these people didn't just want their lives spared by giving them bread, they also wanted seed to plant, that the land might be fruitful, and they may have continued sustenance for themselves and their children. We should want seed, the word of God, to sow, that the gospel of Christ would go forth, and there be a fruitful land of Christianity, and our churches prosper and grow, with the Holy Spirit providing sustenance for ourselves and our progenitors.

Our Christian life should be a life lived in a manner to bring glory, honor, and praise, to God's name, and it should change the lives of others around us, demonstrated and commanded in scripture in:

- ***Mt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."***
- ***Eph 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."***

20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's.

In the picture of this famine, we see how God works in the earth to provide for everyone, not only for his own. God in creation and His providence has made provision for all people of the earth, as seen in: ***Mt 5:44-45; 44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."***

However, in application in our lives today, we see that God has made special provision for his chosen people, by giving them the best of the land of Egypt, a picture of the church of Grace today, seen in: ***Ac 2:46-47; 46 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."***

21 And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. 22 Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.

We understand; these priests were Pharaoh's own personal religionist, and Pharaoh's religion was imposed upon Egypt, and wherever Pharaoh ruled. I believe we can safely say that this was the government induced religion of the land of Egypt.

There is a movement, by the satanic forces of evil, to produce a one-world government and a one-world religion. This has happened throughout time as the bible and history records. Readily to mind comes Catholicism on the history side.

Quite honestly, in the big picture, this already exists and always has, how? God has his kingdom on the earth, the church of Grace, and all else in the world is one satanic evil force against that church. What is lacking is the unity of coming together under one world leader to fight against God. There is a prophesy that this will come to fruition in the book of Revelation.

23 Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.

We can discern; this was the seventh year of the famine, because Joseph would not have given out seed to plant if there was another year of famine.

24 And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.

Having bought all the land and given them seed to plant; Joseph directs the people to return to their former places of abode and plant. He tells them to give of their increase one-fifth to Pharaoh as tribute for using the land now owned by Pharaoh.

25 And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

The people, with thankfulness for their salvation, pledge their lives to Pharaoh. This is an example to us that we should make that public confession and pledge our lives to Christ, who is our salvation.

- *Mt 10:32-33; 32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."*
- *Php 2:5-11; 5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.

Through this famine, we see that Joseph has grown into a very good administrator. We see that he deals fairly with a people that could not fend for themselves, yet he looks out for Pharaoh's interest as

well. This lines up with NT scripture as taught by Jesus in: *Lu 20:21-25; 21 "And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? 23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? 24 Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. 25 And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."*

We see that the wisdom, and means which God gave Joseph, was not given to the people of the land of Egypt, or the land of Canaan. How? If God had granted them such wisdom and means they would have laid up stores for themselves. This gives us a picture of ourselves today in our depraved state of sinfulness. Man, who has not been born-again, will not and does not seek God, Christ, salvation, or forgiveness of sins. We cannot, by our wisdom or own strength, remove ourselves from the debt of sin we owe, nor can we present ourselves sufficient before God.

We see that the people sold themselves, and all they had, to Joseph in order to preserve their lives. This is a picture for us to live by today. Our preservation is in Christ, only, and we must be totally dependent unto Christ for our salvation and sustenance of life, here and in eternity.

This applies equally to our natural and spiritual sustenance. We have nothing, in nature, to preserve our lives, that was not granted to us by God. We have nothing, in spirit, that can preserve and sustain our lives, that does not come from God.

27 ¶ And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

"and grew, and multiplied exceedingly" God is fulfilling His promise to Abraham now.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. 29 And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: 30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. 31 And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

- *Matthew Henry's Commentary: "The comfort Jacob lived in (Ge 47:27-28); while the Egyptians were impoverished in their own land, Jacob was replenished in a strange land. He lived seventeen years after he came into Egypt, far beyond his own expectation. Seventeen years he had nourished Joseph (for so old he was when he was sold from him, Ge 37:2), and now, by way of requital, seventeen years Joseph nourished him. Observe how kindly Providence ordered Jacob's affairs, that when he was old, and least able to bear care or fatigue, he had least occasion for it, being well provided for by his son without his own forecast. Thus God considers the frame of his people."*

In verses 28-31: we see that Israel is still looking for the fulfillment of God's promise to him in: **Ge 46:2-4; 2 "And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said,**

Here am I. 3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

We understand, prophetically; this was not only a promise to Israel, Jacob as a man, but a promise to the nation Israel. Joseph is the one, to whom Israel exacted the promise, take me to the promised land out of Egypt. Christ is the one, who has promised to remove us from the earth to the Promised Land, in the eternal heaven. Praise God for our Saviour and the surety of our salvation and eternal life in Christ!