

## The Book of Genesis

### Chapter 47

**47:1-2 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." He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh. (NIV)**

#### Duality of the Role

Joseph now implements the plan proposed at the end of the last chapter. As we have seen throughout the story of Joseph, this dual accounting of events has emphasized the duality of the role of Joseph. Not only did Joseph fulfill a necessary physical role for that time in history, but he also provided a prototype of the future Saviour of the world.

**47:3-6 Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?" "Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were." They also said to him, "We have come to live here awhile, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen [implying that there was still sufficient pasture land in Goshen]." Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, 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 them in charge of my own livestock ["mikneh," meaning "property of any kind" which could include livestock]."(NIV)**

#### Location

Since shepherds were detestable, and since Pharaoh indicated he needed some with "special ability," it is most likely the property he had in mind was not herds used for meat, but probably herds used for dairy purposes, where special skills in cheese-making would be needed. He could likewise use men skilled in the care and training of his horses.

**47:7-9 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed [TAN: "greeted"] Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty [in 1686 B.C.]. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers [Isaac lived 180 years, Abraham lived 175 years]."(NIV)**

**47:10 Then Jacob bade Pharaoh farewell, and left Pharaoh's presence. (TAN)**

**47:11-12 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. Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children. (NIV)**

## Rameses

Since the first Pharaoh named Ramses would not rule for almost another 350 years, it is evident that this designation is a later editorial update.

## Focusing on Joseph

From this point until 50:15, there is no interaction with Joseph's brothers in the story line. The main focus now is Joseph, his sons and Jacob's blessings.

**47:13 There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine. (NIV)**

## Building Egypt

Moses now shows how Egypt became such a great power under Joseph's rule.

**47:14 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.**

The Pharaoh now controlled all the precious metals throughout the region.

**47:15-16 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 used up." "Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone." (NIV)**

This was the wisest decision that could be made. Since the people did not have grain for themselves, they certainly did not possess feed for their livestock. By using their animals for barter, both the people and the livestock were spared.

**47:17-25 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. (NIV)**

This was the sixth year of the famine [1683-1682 B.C.].

**47:18-19 When that year was over, they came to him the following year and said, "We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. 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." (NIV)**

This was the last, or seventh, year of the famine [1682-1681 B.C.] because the people ask Joseph for seed, which would be needed to sow a crop the following year.

**47:20-21 Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end.**

This action simplified the distribution of grain for the final year of the famine.

**47:22 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. (NIV)**

The religion of Egypt was established by law and supported by the state.

**47:23-25 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. 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." "You have saved our lives," they said. "May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh." (NIV)**

Joseph now allowed them to go back to the land they sold, where they became tenants of Pharaoh, giving him 20% of their harvest for their lease.

### Christ-Type

The focus on Joseph is once again that of Savior. He first saved Israel, and is now praised for saving Egypt. The Egyptians [representing humanity-at-large] now gladly offer themselves to Joseph and Pharaoh [representing Christ and the Father] as slaves for the remainder of their lives in exchange for the favor [grace] that has saved them.

**47:26-28 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. Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number. Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. (NIV)**

The famine had been over for 12 years by this time [1669 B.C.]. Now the story focuses back on Joseph's family.].

**47:29-30 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 [REB: "give me your solemn oath"] that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 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. (NIV)**

### Making the Oath

Israel's request is similar to the one that Abraham had made to Eliezer (24:2) when he sent him to find a wife for Isaac from his own family. Now Jacob wanted to be buried with his own family. This request meant that Joseph was to hold the mark of circumcision of his father at the time he made the oath.

To be buried in the land of promise was critical to Israel's expression of faith in the promise God had made to him. He wanted to rest with his fathers, looking forward to the time of the rest that would mark his actual inheritance of the land.

***47:31 'Swear that you will,' said Jacob. So he gave him his oath, and Israel bowed in worship by the head of his bed*** [NIV: "worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff"]. (REB)

Jacob was most likely bedridden at this time.