

## Genesis Chapter 47

Verses 1-6: In the land of Goshen": By informing Pharaoh of where he had located his family (45:10; 46:28), and then by having the family's 5 representatives courteously request permission to reside in Goshen (verses 2, 4), Joseph, wise to court procedures, paved the way for Pharaoh's confirmation and approval (verse 6).

**Genesis 47:1 "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."**

"Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh": After he had been with his father, had had an interview with him, and had taken his leave of him for a time, he came to Pharaoh's court.

"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": Pharaoh had desired they might come, and Joseph now acquaints him that they had come. Not being willing it should be said that they were come in a private manner, and without his knowledge.

Nor to dispose of them himself without the direction and approval of Pharaoh, who was superior to him. And he makes mention of their flocks and herds, and other substance. Partly to show that they were not a mean beggarly family that came to live upon him, and partly that a proper place of pasturage for their cattle might be appointed to them.

"And behold, they are in the land of Goshen": They are stopped at present, until they should have further directions and orders where to settle. And this is mentioned, because it was the place Joseph proposed with himself to fix them in, if Pharaoh approved of it.

**Genesis 47:2 "And he took some of his brethren, [even] five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh."**

"And he took some of his brethren": Along with him, when he left his father in Goshen. The word for "some" signifies the extremity of a thing.

"Even five men": Whom the Targum of Jonathan names as follow, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. But Jarchi will have them to be Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Issachar and Benjamin. But on these accounts no dependence is to be had.

"And presented them, unto Pharaoh": Introduced them into his presence, that he might converse with them, and ask them what questions he thought fit.

Joseph brought news to Pharaoh that his father and brethren had made it to Goshen. This representative number "five" means grace. This had to be so that they would find grace in Pharaoh's eyes.

**Genesis 47:3 "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."**

"And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, what is your occupation?" Which is the question he had told his brethren beforehand would be asked them, and prepared them to give an answer to it (Genesis 46:33).

Which perhaps was a usual question Pharaoh asked of persons that came to settle in his dominions. That he might have no idle vagrants there and that he might know of what advantage they were like to be of in his kingdom, and might dispose of them accordingly.

"And they said unto Pharaoh, thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers" (see Gen. 46:34).

**Genesis 47:4 "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."**

"They said moreover unto Pharaoh, for to sojourn in the land are we come": Not to obtain possessions and inheritances, as if natives, and to abide there always, but to continue for a little time. For they kept in mind that the land of Canaan was given to them as an inheritance, and would be possessed by them, in due time. Therefore, had no thought for the present of continuing here long.

"For thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan": They say nothing of the want of corn for themselves, because they could have it from Egypt, fetching it, and paying a price for it, but of pasture for their cattle.

For the land of Canaan lying higher, was so scorched with the heat of the sun, and parched with drought, that scarce any grass grew upon it. Whereas Egypt, and especially the land of Goshen, lying lower, and being marshy and fenny places near the Nile, had some grass growing on it. Even when the Nile did not overflow to make it as fruitful as it sometimes was.

"Now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen": Which request Joseph, no doubt, directed them to make, it being the spot he had chosen for them in his own mind, and even had promised it to his father.

Which his brethren, by their short stay in it as they came along, saw would be very convenient for them, and was the true reason why Joseph instructed them to be particular in the account of their trade and business. So that Pharaoh might be inclined of himself to propose it to them or however to grant it when requested.

The very thing Joseph told them not to say is just what they said. They not only told Pharaoh that they were shepherds, but they asked him if they could settle in Goshen, after Joseph told them to settle there. At least, they call themselves Pharaoh's servants.

**Genesis 47:5 "And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:"**

"And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph": Who was present at the conversation that passed between him and his brethren.

"Saying, thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee": Which is observed, not for Joseph's information, but to lead on to what he had to say further.

**Genesis 47:6 "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."**

"The land of Egypt is before thee": To choose what part of it he should judge most suitable and agreeable to his father and brethren.

"In the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen let them dwell": As is requested; which was, as Pharaoh here suggests, the best part of the land. The most fertile and fruitful, and the fittest for cattle, being full of pastures through the river Nile and the canals of it. Goshen being the most fertile portion in the land of Rameses (see Gen 47:11).

"And if thou knowest any man of activity among them": Strong in body and of endowments of mind, of great skill, diligence, industry in the management of flocks and herds.

"Then make them rulers over my cattle": Or "rulers of cattle over those that are mine": that is, over his shepherds, to take care that they do their work well and faithfully.

From whence it appears that Pharaoh had flocks and herds and shepherds; and therefore it cannot be thought that the Egyptians in those times abstained from eating of animals, or that all shepherds, without exception, were an abomination to them, only foreign ones that lived on spoil and plunder, and made excursions into their country for such purposes.

The office he assigned to men of skill and industry was like that which Doeg the Edomite was in, who was the chief of the herdsmen of Saul (1 Samuel 21:7).

The Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph; he wanted his people to have the best. He even offered Joseph's brother a job taking care of his cattle.

Verses 7, 10: Jacob blessed Pharaoh": The aged patriarch's salutations pronounced, undoubtedly in the name of God, a benediction on Pharaoh Senusert III (see note on 45:8), for his generosity and his provision of a safe place for Jacob's family. Though Senusert III had ascended to the throne before the famine ended, he honored his father's commitments.

**Genesis 47:7 "And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh."**

"And Joseph brought in Jacob his father": That is, sometime after he had introduced his five brethren, and had gotten the grant of Goshen for them, when he sent, for his father from there, or he came quickly after to Tanis or Memphis, where Pharaoh's court was.

Joseph's wise advice (in 46:33-34), enabled his brothers to express their desires before Pharaoh, and to receive exactly what they wanted. Evidently, Jacob was not intimidated by Pharaoh; and he "blessed Pharaoh" (in verses 7 and 10).

This is amazing in the light of (Hebrews 7:7). Jacob said his days were "few and evil." The word evil does not mean "sinful," but "calamitous, constantly confronted by anger, anguish, distress, and tribulation."

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh": Wished him health and happiness, prayed for his welfare, and gave him thanks for all his kindness to him and his. And he blessed him not only in a way of civility, as was usual when men came into the presence of princes, but in an authoritative way, as a prophet and patriarch, a man divinely inspired of God, in whom had great power in prayer.

The Targum of Jonathan gives us his prayer thus, "may it be the pleasure (i.e. of God), that the waters of the Nile may be filled, and that the famine may remove from the world in thy days".

Patriarchs had the authority from God to bless whomever they would. It was actually a message from God, spoken by Jacob.

**Genesis 47:8 "And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old [art] thou?"**

"And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, how old art thou?" Or, "how many are the days of the years of thy life?", which way of speaking Jacob takes up, and very pertinently makes use of in his answer that follows: Dr. Lightfoot thinks Pharaoh had never seen so old a man before, so grave a head, and so grey a beard, and in admiration asked this question.

**Genesis 47:9 "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."**

"My pilgrimage ... few and evil": Since neither Jacob nor his fathers had actually possessed the land of Canaan, describing life as a sojourning was a fitting evaluation to give. In addition, his years seemed few in contrast to those of the two who had visited Egypt long before him, Abraham and Isaac (175 and 180 years respectively).

And still overshadowed with pessimism, the days were "unpleasant," in the sense of toil and trouble, of many sorrows, distresses, and crises (see note on 48:15).

This was a question so natural to ask an older man. Jacob was 130 years old. Looking back, his life seemed as a vapor. He regretted that his life was not better, like most of us do. He explained that some of his ancestors lived much longer.

But, however long one's days on this earth are, they are very short compared to all of eternity.

**Genesis 47:10 "And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh."**

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh": When he took his leave of him, he blessed him, in like manner as when he came into his presence, by wishing all happiness to him, and giving him thanks for the honor he had done him, and the favors he had conferred on him and his.

**Genesis 47:11 "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."**

"Land of Rameses": An alternative designation for Goshen (46:34; 47:1, 6), with this name perhaps used later to more accurately describe the region for Moses' contemporary readers (see note on Exodus 1:11), regarding the name Rameses ("Raamses" being the alternate spelling in Exodus). This region is also called Zoan elsewhere (Psalm 78:12, 43).

And they were to settle in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses." This posing a problem for interpreters, for the first Rameses dynasty didn't rein until around 1319 B.C. Thus, this expression has been viewed as either an anachronism (a thing belonging or appropriate to a period other than that in which it exists), or a modernization of an older place-name by a later scribe.

It may be that some later scribe, finding here a name that nobody knew anymore, and being very much concerned to have a Bible that everyone could understand, inserted this new form of the name. This city of Rameses was earlier known as Tanis and before that, Avaris. It is not unlikely that the name was being brought up to date.

The land of Rameses was Goshen. Jacob spoke a blessing when he met Pharaoh, and when he left him. Just as Pharaoh had requested Joseph to do, he put his father and brother in the best area for them, Goshen.

**Genesis 47:12 "And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to [their] families."**

"And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and his father's household, with bread": For though there might be in Rameses pasture sufficient for their cattle, yet not corn for their families as the famine was still continuing. During which time Joseph, as a dutiful and affectionate son, and as a kind brother, supplied them with all necessary provision, signified by bread.

"According to their families": According to the number of them, some of his brethren having more and others less in their families": And in proportion to their number he distributed food unto them, so that there was no want. Or "according to the mouth of an infant"; he nourished them like infants.

He put as it were, the bread into their mouths, and fed them with as much care and tenderness as infants are fed. And they had no more care to provide food for themselves than children have; such a full and constant supply was handed forth to them. In this Joseph was an eminent type of Christ, who supplies the wants of his people.

A rationing system was evidently in operation.

Joseph saw that his brethren had enough bread to feed their families.

Verses 13-24: When the famine finally exhausted the Egyptians' supply of money, Joseph accepted animals in exchange for grain (verse 17). After the animals ran out, the peoples were desperate enough to exchange their land (verses 19-20).

Eventually, Pharaoh owned all the land, except what was the priests' (verse 22), though the people were allowed to work the land and pay one-fifth of its yield to Pharaoh (verse 24). Whatever may have been the land tenure system at that time, some private land ownership did at first exist, but finally, as in a feudal system (a political system in which a lord owned all the land while vassals and serfs farmed it), all worked their land for Pharaoh.

Nobility with land did lose out and declined during major social reforms undertaken under Senusert III. This is the first record in Scripture of a national income tax, and the amount was 20 percent. Later, after the Exodus, God would prescribe tithes for Israel as national income taxes to support the theocracy (see Mal. 3:10).

**Genesis 47:13 "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."**

"And there was no bread in all the land": The land of Egypt and the parts adjacent, but in Pharaoh's storehouses, all being consumed that were in private hands the first two years of the famine.

"For the famine was very sore": Severe, pressed very hard.

"So that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan, fainted by reason of the famine": That is, the inhabitants of both countries, their spirits sunk, as well as their flesh failed for want of food.

Or "raged"; became furious, and were like madmen, as the word signifies. According to Kimchi, they were at their wits' end, knew not what to do, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and became clamorous/loud.

It is amazing they had not, in a violent manner, broke open the storehouses of corn, and took it away by force. That they did not must be owing to the providence of God, which restrained them, and to the care and prudence of Joseph as a means, who, doubtless, had well-fortified the granaries.

And very probably there were a body of soldiers placed everywhere, who were one of the three parts or states of the kingdom of Egypt, as Diodorus Siculus relates. To which may be added, the mild and gentle address of Joseph to the people, speaking kindly to them, giving them hopes of a supply during the famine, and readily relieving them upon terms they could not object to.

This just meant that there are no producing crops throughout all this area. The only food was that stored by Joseph.

**Genesis 47:14 "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."**

"And Joseph gathered up all the money": Not that he went about to collect it, or employed men to do it, but he gathered it, being brought to him for corn as follows.

"That was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought": By which means those countries became as bare of money as of provisions.

"And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house": Into his repository, as the Targum of Jonathan, into his treasury, not into his own house or coffers, in which he acted the faithful part to Pharaoh. For it was with Pharaoh's money he bought the corn, built storehouses, kept men to look after them to sell the corn.

Wherefore the money arising from there belonged to Pharaoh; nor did he do any injury to the people. They sold their corn in the time of plenty freely; he gave them a price for it, then he sold it again to them, at a price according to the season.

Nor was it ever complained of, that it was an exorbitant one; it was highly just and necessary it should be at a greater price than when it was bought in, considering the great expense in the collection, preservation, and distribution of it.

When you are starving, money is not very important. The people bought food with all the money they had, and Joseph turned this money over to Pharaoh. We see what happened when the money ran out in the next verses.

**Genesis 47:15 "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."**

“When money failed in the land”: It had been all spent in the third, fourth, and fifth years of the famine; for it seems to be at the end of the fifth, or beginning of the sixth year of the famine, that this was the case.

The severity of the famine finally bankrupted all in Egypt and Canaan. With no monetary instruments available as a medium of exchange, a barter system was established (verses 16-18).

Since after we read of a second or following year, which was very plainly the last; since seed was given them to sow the land with, which shows the time of drought to be near at an end.

"All the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, give us bread": Freely, for nothing, since they had no money to buy any with: no mention is made of the Canaanites, who could not presume to come and ask for corn on such a footing.

"For why should we die in thy presence?" Before his eyes, he not relieving them when it was in his power to do it; they knew such an argument as this would work upon a mind so humane, tender, and generous as was Joseph's.

"For the money faileth": All was gone, they had none left to purchase corn with; or they suggest they should not have to pay for it, but desired to have had it at no cost.

Verses 16-18: Land soon replaced animals as the medium of exchange.

**Genesis 47:16 "And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail."**

"And Joseph said, give your cattle": Oxen, sheep, horses, asses, as follows.

"And I will give you for your cattle, if money fail": That is, corn for cattle, if they had no money to give.

These Egyptians had no money left. They had used their last money for food, and they were still hungry. Joseph started to barter now. He would trade them grain for their cattle.

**Genesis 47:17 "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."**

"And they brought their cattle unto Joseph": Which they might the more readily do, since there was scarce any grass to feed them with. And though some of them were creatures used for food, yet might be so lean and poor for want of grass, as not to be fit to eat. And besides, they could do better without flesh than without bread.



"And Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses": With which Egypt abounded, to which many places of Scripture have respect (Deuteronomy 17:16).

"And for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds": The sheep and the oxen; which shows that these creatures were bred and fed by them, and were, no doubt, slain, and used for food.

"And for the asses": Which were used for carrying burdens.

"And he fed them with bread for all their cattle, for that year": Which seems to be the sixth year of the famine. One would wonder what Joseph should do with all their cattle, where he would put them, and feed them, in such a time of drought. Though it is probable the number was not exceeding large, since they only fetched one year's provision of bread.

**Genesis 47:18 "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:"**

"When the year was ended, they came unto him the second year": Which seems to be the seventh and last year of the years of famine. Not the second year of the famine, as Jarchi, but the second year of their great distress, when having spent all their money they parted with their cattle. For it cannot be thought that they should be drained of their money and cattle too in one 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": Both these were well known to Joseph, and therefore cannot be the things which they say they would not hide.

Musculus thinks it should be rendered in the past tense, "we have not hid"; this they told him the last year, that their money was gone. He knew he had their cattle for their last year's provision. The sense seems to be this, that seeing their money was spent, and their cattle were in the hands of Joseph, they would not, and could not conceal from him what follows.

"There is not enough left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands": And the one were starving and the other desolate.

Things had gotten so bad that they had nothing left but the bare land and their own bodies.

**Genesis 47:19 "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."**

"Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land?" Beholding their miserable condition, and not helping them; die they must unless they had bread to eat, and their land die also if they had not seed to sow. That is, would become desolate, as the Septuagint version renders it.

So Ben Melech observes, that land which is desolate is as if it was dead, because it produces neither grass nor fruit, whereas when it does it looks lively and cheerful.

"Buy us and our land for bread": They were willing to sell themselves and their land too for bread to support their lives, nothing being dearer to a man than life.

"And we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh": Both should be his; they would hold their land of him, and be tenants to him.

"And give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land may not be desolate": Entirely so; some parts of it they could sow a little upon, as on the banks of the Nile, or perhaps that river might begin to overflow, or they had some hopes of it, especially from Joseph's prediction they knew this was the last year of famine.

And therefore, it was proper to sow the ground some time in this, that they might have a crop for the provision of the next year. And they had no seed to sow, and if they were not furnished with it, the famine must unavoidably continue, notwithstanding the flow of the Nile.

**Genesis 47:20 "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."**

"And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh": Not for himself, nor did he entail it on his posterity, but for Pharaoh, who became sole proprietor of it.

"For the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them": Everyone that had a field sold it to buy bread for his family, so great was the famine. No mention is made of their houses, either because these went with their lands, or they were so run down that they were of little account, and would scarce bear any price.

For as Diodorus Siculus reports of the Egyptians, they were less careful of the structure of their houses; and exceeded all bounds in the magnificence of their sepulchers.

"So the land became Pharaoh's": Not only with respect to dominion and government, so it was before, but with respect to property. Before, every man's field, and garden, and vineyard were his own, and he was in possession thereof for his own use. But now being sold, were Pharaoh's. And they held them of him, and paid a rent for them in a manner hereafter directed by a law.

**Genesis 47:21 "And as for the people, he removed them to cities from [one] end of the borders of Egypt even to the [other] end thereof."**

"And as for the people, he removed them": From the places where they dwelt, that it might appear they had no more property there, and might forget it, and be more willing to pay rent elsewhere.

And their posterity hereafter could have no notion of its being theirs, or plead prescription (an interest in land through the long, continuous use of the land). Besides, by such a removal and separation of the habitants of cities, some to one place, and some to another, sedition and mutiny might be prevented.

"To cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt, even unto the other end thereof": According to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, those that dwelt in provinces, or in country towns and villages, he removed to cities, and those that dwelt in cities he removed into provinces.

And placed them at a distance from their former places of living for the reasons that were given before. And the above Targums suggest another reason, to teach the Egyptians not to reproach the Israelites with being exiles and strangers, when they were all removed from their native places, and were now strangers, where they were.

Joseph had stored the food in the cities, so that it would be guarded. He traded for all of the land. Now, Pharaoh owns all the property. Joseph had not only saved Pharaoh's life, but now; he had become far wealthier than he was when Joseph took over. At least the people were alive, even if they did not own anything.

**Genesis 47:22 "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."**

"Only the land of the priests bought he not": Not from any special affection for them, or any superstitious veneration of them, which can never be thought of so good a man, but for a reason following, which shows they had no need to sell them.

"For the priests had a portion assigned them, by Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them": They had a certain allowance by the day of provision granted them, on which they lived.

Herodotus says of the priests of Egypt, that they spend nothing of their own, but sacred food is provided for them, and great plenty of the flesh of geese and oxen is given daily to every one of them.

And this was a delicate affair, which Joseph could not intermeddle with, but in wisdom must leave it as he found it, and do as had been used to be done. This depending on the will and pleasure of Pharaoh, if not upon the constitution of the land, as it seems to be from Diodorus Siculus, who divides Egypt into three parts.

The first part he assigns to the priests, who, according to him, were maintained out of their own revenues. Some understand this of "princes", the word sometimes being used of them, and interpret it of the officers and courtiers of Pharaoh, his nobles, that dwelt in his palace, and had their portion of food from him. But the former sense seems best.

"Wherefore they sold not their lands": They were not obliged to it, having provision from the king's table, or by his appointment.

These priests did not have to pay for their food, so they did not lose their land. Their food was given to them.

**Genesis 47:23 "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."**

"Then Joseph said unto the people": After he had bought their land, and before the removal of them to distant parts.

"Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh": Which he observes to them, that they might take notice of it, and confirm it, or object if they had anything to say to the contrary.

"Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land": By which it should seem that they were not removed from the spot where they lived, but retained their own land under Pharaoh, and had seed given them to sow it with, which may seem contrary to (Genesis 47:21).

Wherefore that must be understood of a purpose and proposal to remove them, and not that it was actually done; or, as Musculus gives the sense. Joseph by a public edict called all the people from the extreme parts of Egypt to the cities nearest to them, and there proclaimed the subjection of them, and their lands to Pharaoh, but continued to use them as tenants of his.

Unless it should be said, that in those distant parts to which they were sent, land was put into their hands to till and manure for the king, and have seed given them to sow it with; but this seems to be said to them at the same time the bargain was made.

**Genesis 47:24 "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."**

"And it shall come to pass, in the increase": When the land shall produce an increase, and it shall be gathered in.

"That you shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh": A fifth part of the increase.

"And four parts shall be your own": For the following uses, one part.

"For seed of the field": To sow again with for the next year: a second part.

"For your food": For food for themselves: a third part.

"For them of your household": Their servants and maids: and the fourth part.

"For food for your little ones": For their children, whether they are young or old. Or however four parts of five he proposed they should have for their own use, and for the maintenance of their families. Which was a kind and generous proposal, when all might have been demanded; and they and theirs treated as slaves.

This was the first example of sharecropping in the Bible. Pharaoh the land owner, would furnish the land, and the seed, and get 1/5 of the crop. The farmer and his family got 4/5 of the crop. This practice is still in existence today throughout the world. These people were thankful for anything. Jesus had bought us with a price.

Verses 25-26: The extra measures imposed by Joseph to control the impact of the famine, i.e., moving parts of the population into cities (verse 21), and demanding a one-fifth tax on crop yields (verse 24), did not affect his approval ratings (verse 25). Whatever the gain to Pharaoh, the people obviously understood that Joseph had not enriched himself at their expense.

**Genesis 47:25 "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."**

"And they said, thou hast saved our lives": Preserved them from death through famine, by laying up stores of corn, which he had sold out to them for their money, cattle, and land, or otherwise they must have perished, they and theirs, and this favor they thankfully acknowledge.

"Let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants": Signifying, that they esteemed it a great favor to be so on the basis of the bargain made with them, and they desired a continuance in it.

**Genesis 47:26 "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."**

"And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day": With the consent of Pharaoh, his nobles, and all the people of the land, who readily came into it. And so, it became a fundamental law of their constitution, and which continued to the times of Moses, the writer of this history.

"That Pharaoh should have the fifth part": That is, of the increase the whole land of Egypt produced.

"Except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's": As it was not bought by him; so Diodorus Siculus, as he assigns the first part of the land to the priests, so he says they were free from all taxes and tribute, and next to the king were possessed of honor and authority.

The land still had this same law when this book was written.

Verses 27-28: "Grew, and multiplied exceedingly": For 17 years, Jacob was witness to the increase; he had a glimpse of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and himself in the process of being fulfilled.

**Genesis 47:27 "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly."**

"And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen": The historian returns to the account of the Israelites, having before observed the placing of them in Goshen by Joseph, at the direction of Pharaoh, in compliance with their own request.

And here they continued until they were grown more numerous, when they were obliged to spread themselves further in this same country.

"And they had possessions therein": Fields and vineyards, as the Targum of Jonathan; all the land was Pharaoh's, and they rented of him as his people did, it may be supposed.

"And grew, and multiplied exceedingly": Even in Jacob's lifetime they grew rich and numerous.

**Genesis 47:28 "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years."**

"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years": He lived just the same term of years with Joseph in Egypt as he had lived with him in Syria and Canaan (Gen. 37:2). About two hours' walk from Fium are now to be seen the ruins of an ancient town, which the Coptics say was inhabited by the patriarch Jacob, and for this cause they name it.

Yet, Modsellet Jacob, or the tabernacle of Jacob, which place is supposed to be in the land of Goshen (see Gen. 47:11).

"So the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years": He was one hundred and thirty when he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 47:9); and now had lived in Egypt seventeen years, as in the above clause, which together make up the sum. And this exact time of the years of his life is given by Polyhistor from Demetrius.

God had promised that they would multiply, and this is the fulfillment of this here. Pharaoh saw to it that they prospered for Joseph's sake. Israel lived to be 147 years old.

**Genesis 47:29 "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:"**

"And the time drew nigh that Israel must die": As all men must, by the appointment of God, even good men. The sting having been removed and so not a punitive evil; which is owing to Christ's dying for them; who has abolished death as such.

And there is a time fixed for their death, beyond which they must not live, and before which they must not die, but when the time comes there is no avoiding it.

The time of Jacob's death was drawing on, as he perceived by the great decline of his natural strength and perhaps by a divine impulse on his mind.

"And he called his son Joseph": Sent for him, by a messenger, to come to him.

"And said unto him": When he was come.

"If now I have found grace in thy sight": Which this is not spoken in a way of submission, as from an inferior to a superior, as the phrase is sometimes used. Or as signifying what would be esteemed as a favor should it be granted, but it is as if he should say, if thou hast any devoted affection for me as a parent, and art willing to show love and respect to me, do as follows.

"Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh": A gesture in swearing, as Jarchi observes (Gen. 24:2); adding, for explanation's sake (see Abraham and Eliezer in Gen. 24:9).

"And deal kindly and truly with me": "Kindly", by promising and swearing to do what he after desires; and "truly", by observing his oath, and fulfilling his promise.

"Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt": Not choosing to lie among idolaters at death, with whom he cared not to have any fellowship in life. With the customary sign of an oath in that day, Joseph sincerely promised to bury Jacob, at his request, in the family burial cave in Canaan (49:29-32).

**Genesis 47:30 "But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said."**

"But I will lie with my fathers": Abraham and Isaac, whose bodies lay in the land of Canaan, where Jacob desired to be buried. Partly to express his faith in the Promised Land, that it should be the inheritance of his posterity, and partly to draw off their minds from a continuance in Egypt, and to incline them to think of removing him to that place at the proper time.

As well as to intimate his desire after, and faith in the heavenly glory he was going to, of which Canaan was a type.

"And thou shalt carry me out of Egypt": Into the land of Canaan.

"And bury me in their burying place": In the burying place of his fathers, in the cave of Machpelah, near Hebron (see Gen. 49:30).

"And he said, I will do as thou hast said": Joseph promised his father to fulfil his request, and do as he had desired of him.

**Genesis 47:31 "And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."**

"And he said, swear unto me": This he required, not from any distrust of Joseph, but to show his own eagerness, and the intensesness of his mind about this thing, how much he was set upon it, and what an important thing it was with him.

As also, that if he should have any objections made to it, or arguments used with him to divert him from it, by Pharaoh or his court, he would be able to say his father had bound him by an oath to do it, which would at once stop their mouths, and be judged a sufficient reason for what he did (see Gen. 50:5).

"And he sware unto him": Not only gave his promise, but confirmed it with an oath.

"And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head": Not in a way of civil respect to Joseph, giving him thanks for the assurance he had given him, that he would bury him, not in Egypt, but in Canaan.

But in a religious way to God, giving thanks to him that he had lived to see his son Joseph, who, according to the promise, would close his eyes, and that he had inclined his heart to fulfil his request.

Though some think that no more is meant, than that after Jacob had spent himself in discoursing with Joseph, he sunk down and reclined on his pillow at his bed's head, to take some rest. For as for what the apostle says in Hebrews; that refers to another thing at another time (Heb. 11:21).

Jacob desired to be buried in Canaan, because of the promise of God that this was their land forever, and because his ancestors were buried there. He made Joseph promise, with an oath, to take him back home to be buried.

### **Genesis Chapter 47 Questions**

1. Where did Joseph tell Pharaoh his people were?
2. How many men did Joseph take to see Pharaoh?
3. Why that number?
4. What question did Pharaoh ask them?
5. What did they answer?



6. What did the brothers ask Pharaoh for?
7. What had Joseph told them not to say?
8. Where did Pharaoh tell Joseph to let his brethren dwell?
9. What job did Pharaoh offer them?
10. When Joseph brought Jacob to Pharaoh, what did Jacob do?
11. What privilege did patriarchs have from God?
12. What question did Pharaoh ask Jacob?
13. What did Jacob answer?
14. When we look at the length of our life on earth, what does it appear like?
15. What was another name for Goshen?
16. The Egyptians ran out of \_\_\_\_\_ to buy food.
17. What was the next thing Joseph traded them out of?
18. What was the third and last thing Joseph had them trade for bread.
19. After nothing was left, what offer did Joseph make the people?
20. What percent of the crop did Pharaoh get?
21. What was the only land Joseph did not trade for?
22. How long did Jacob live in Egypt?
23. How many years did Jacob live?
24. What did Jacob make Joseph swear to him?
25. Why did Jacob make this request?