

The Book of Genesis

Lesson 36

Chapter 46

Sacrifice at Beersheba

Genesis 46:1 So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. **2** And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, " Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." **3** And He said, " I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. **4** " I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes."

Jacob did not go directly to Egypt; he stopped in Beersheba on the way to worship his God. It was a special place for God as well as for Abraham and Isaac. At Beersheba, God had communicated with Abraham in Genesis 21:33 and to Isaac in Genesis 26:23. Here, He encouraged Jacob not to be afraid of entering Egypt for in that country, his family would grow into a "great nation." Then God said, "**I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes**" He is confirming that the family will one day come out of Egypt and return to the Promised Land; however, Jacob will die in Egypt and Joseph will be the one who closes his eyes when he dies. Jacob was not to worry because God was with him on the journey to and from Egypt.

Journey to Egypt

Genesis 46:5 Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. **6** And they took their livestock and their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him: **7** his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

Moses indicates in this passage that in the move to Egypt nothing would be left behind in Hebron. Pharaoh had encouraged them to come to Egypt without their possessions, but that is not what they did. They knew they were going to stay in Egypt for at least five years. They should have known that it would be at least 400 years. Joseph had warned his brothers that five years remained before the end of the famine and he wanted them to live with him where he could provide for them the entire time. The servants are not mentioned specifically in this passage but they were most definitely included in the mention of "their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan." Jacob owned the servants and they would not have been left behind in Hebron.

Once in Egypt, Jacob would never see the land of Canaan again.

List of the Family

Genesis 46:8 Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben, Jacob's first-born. 9 And the sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi. 10 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. 11 And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12 And the sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. 13 And the sons of Issachar: Tola and Puvvah and Iob and Shimron. 14 And the sons of Zebulun: Sered and Elon and Jahleel. 15 These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters *numbered* thirty-three. 16 And the sons of Gad: Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Aredi. 17 And the sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel. 18 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and she bore to Jacob these sixteen persons. 19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. 20 Now to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him. 21 And the sons of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard. 22 These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob; *there were* fourteen persons in all. 23 And the sons of Dan: Hushim. 24 And the sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem. 25 These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob; *there were* seven persons in all. 26 All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, *were* sixty-six persons in all, 27 and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, *were* seventy.

Jacob's family had grown in the 39 years since he left Haran. Sixteen people left Haran, including Jacob, his two wives and two maids, but 70 will move to Egypt. However, that number does not include the wives of all of Jacob's sons as noted in verse 26.

Jacob												
Leah							Zilpah		Raehel		Bilhah	
Reuben	Simeon	Levi	Judah	Issachar	Zebulun	Dinah	Gad	Ashur	Joseph	Benjamin	Dan	Naphtali
<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>		<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>	<i>Sons</i>
Hanoch	Jemuel	Gershon	Ephraim	Tola	Sered		Ziphion	Imnah	Manasseh	Bela	Hushim	Jahzeel
Pallu	Jamin	Kohath	Onan	Puvvah	Elon			Ishvah	Ephraim	Becher		Guni
Hezron	Ohad	Merari	Shelah	Job	Jahleel		Haggi	Ishvi	Ashbel	Ashbel		Jezer
Carmi	Jachin	Zohar	Zerah	Shimron			Shuni	Serah	Gera	Gera		Shillem
			Perez				Ezbon	Beriah	Maaman	Maaman		
							Eri	<i>Grandsons</i>	Ehi	Ehi		
			<i>Grandsons</i>				Heber		Rosh	Rosh		
			Hezron				Arodi		Muppim	Muppim		
			Hamul				Areli	Malchiel	Huppim	Huppim		
									Ard	Ard		

Rachel, Er, and Onan were family members of Jacob who did not go to Egypt and are not included in the count.

As noted, the wives are not mentioned in this listing. The most notable person missing in this list is Tamar, the mother of Zerah and Perez. Without a doubt, she would have been part of the group entering Egypt. We must also wonder if Dinah remained unmarried after the incident with Shechem and therefore had no children; however, she was among those who entered Egypt. Rachel, Er and Onan did not enter Egypt because they were deceased.

Judah Sent to Joseph

Genesis 46:28 Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out *the way* before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

It was not a fast process to move this large group with all the livestock to Egypt. Not knowing where Goshen was, Jacob sent Judah to Joseph in Zoan to get directions and return to the family to lead them to the proper place.

Goshen was located in the northeast portion of the Nile Delta. According to Genesis 47:6 and 11, it was the best land in Egypt which meant that it was the most reliable land for the growth of crops to provide for family and livestock. The rest of Egypt relied on the overflow of the Nile each year to provide a strip of fertilized land on each side for crops. Goshen did not require the flood for that purpose.

Joseph and Jacob

Genesis 46:29 And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. 30 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive."

As the family grew near to their new home, Joseph was there to meet them. As this passage indicates, it was an emotional time between Jacob and Joseph.

Joseph's Instruction

Genesis 46:31 And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, " I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who *were* in the land of Canaan, have come to me; 32 and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.' 33 "And it shall come about when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' 34 that you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians."

The family would have to meet Pharaoh at some time. He had a unique relationship with Joseph and was deeply indebted to him and concerned for his well-being; however, there was still a protocol for speaking to the Pharaoh. Moses pointed this out when he said “for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians.”

Why were shepherds loathsome to the Egyptians? The Egyptians worshiped the ox. One of their main gods was Apis who was represented by a carving in the form of an ox. Shepherds killed oxen for food and for sacrifice to their God and that was appalling to the Egyptians; it was as if they were putting their god to death.

Chapter 47

Joseph, Pharaoh, Five Brothers

Genesis 47:1 Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen." 2 And he took five men from among his brothers, and presented them to Pharaoh. 3 Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, " What is your occupation?" So they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers." 4 And they said to Pharaoh, " We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen."

The whole family did not go to meet Pharaoh; Joseph took only five of his brothers with him for that meeting. Just as expected, Pharaoh asked the brothers to reveal their occupation. Joseph had prepared them well for this meeting.

Pharaoh's Answer to Joseph

Genesis 47:5 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6 "The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock."

Just as Joseph had planned, Pharaoh gave his brothers the land of Goshen to use. In addition, he assigned Joseph the task of selecting some of his kin to care for Pharaoh's herds which were kept in Goshen. Would they work the livestock for the privilege of living on the land or would they be paid a salary? We do not know that answer; however, it was Joseph's call to make and most likely, they were paid.

Jacob Before Pharaoh

Genesis 47:7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.⁸ And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many years have you lived?"⁹ So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning."¹⁰ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.

Whether or not this meeting occurred at the same time as Pharaoh's meeting with the five brothers, we do not know. Nevertheless, it took place soon after Jacob arrived in Egypt. Here, we discover that Jacob was 130 years old when he stood before Pharaoh. Joseph was 39; therefore, Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born. In his message to Pharaoh, Jacob revealed that he still had several more years to live if he was going to survive as long as Abraham and Isaac did. Abraham died when he was 175 and Isaac was 180.

We can only speculate concerning the blessing that Jacob spoke over Pharaoh. Whatever he said, it must have pleased Pharaoh.

Settlement of Family

Genesis 47:11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.¹² And Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to their little ones.

In this passage, Moses compares the life of Joseph's family in Goshen in contrast to the next passage. His family had all the food they needed but that was not the case with the rest of Egypt and Canaan.

The use of the word "Rameses" has caused a world of confusion in the dating of Jacob's family's departure from Egypt 430 years after this time in the Scripture. Most commentators immediately jump to the Pharaohs who were called Rameses in dating the exodus. Rameses I reigned two years from 1293 – 1291 BC. Rameses II reigned 67 years from 1279-1212 BC. This second Rameses was called the builder because of his additions to many of the complexes in Egypt, all of which would bear his name once he ordered a building project. Herculean in scale, his projects included additions to the temples in Karnak and Luxor, his father's temple at Thebes, his Abydos temple, and the Ramesseum. Others included temples



Figure 35: The Colossi of Rameses

in Nubia and as far as Napata. His carvings in the mountainside at Abu Simbel cannot be overlooked and the four 60-foot colossi seated as kings flanking the entrance are spectacular. All of these projects were completed with forced labor. The cities were rebuilt with the newly discovered formula for concrete bricks that would last through the centuries but the forced laborers who completed those projects in the 1200s BC were not Israelites because they had made the exodus from Egypt 200 years before. The trouble comes by automatically associating the land of Rameses as well as the city of Rameses mentioned in Exodus 12:37 with the Pharaoh of 1279-1212 BC. Archeologists have discovered beyond a shadow of a doubt that the concrete structure that Rameses II built in the city of Rameses was done so to replace the mud brick structures of the original city also called Rameses. It is quite possible that the Israelites were forced to make the mud bricks that were used to build the original city of Rameses but they did not make the concrete structures positively associated with construction projects of Rameses II. Even the book of Exodus confirms that the Israelites were forced to make their bricks from mud and straw (Exodus 5), not gypsum or limestone, sand and water.

We have already mentioned that Senusret II was the Pharaoh who placed Joseph in charge of his kingdom. Peter A Clayton, in his *Chronicle of the Pharaohs*, states the following. "Senusret II chose to build his pyramid at Lahun, once again essentially of mud brick that became heavily eroded when the outer limestone casing was gone."



Figure 36: Tomb of Senusret II

Joseph's Work

Genesis 47:13 **Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.**

¹⁴ **And Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.** ¹⁵ **And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For our money is gone."** ¹⁶ **Then Joseph said, "Give up your livestock, and I will give you food for your livestock, since your money is gone."** ¹⁷ **So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year.** ¹⁸ **And when that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.** ¹⁹ **"Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and**

our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate." ²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's. ²¹ And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other. ²² Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land. ²³ Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, *here* is seed for you, and you may sow the land. ²⁴ "And at the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones." ²⁵ So they said, "You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves."

For five years Egyptians, Canaanites and people from all the rest of the world paraded before Joseph to purchase food. They bought the grain until their money ran out. Then they traded livestock for food. Finally, when they had nothing else to purchase food with, they sold their land to Joseph for food. Joseph took the land for food; however, he did not allow the people to remain on their old land. He scattered them on other land where they would work for Pharaoh. Joseph required them to give one-fifth of the crops on Pharaoh's new land that they were working to the government and allowed them to keep the other four-fifths as their payment for working the land.

Statue/Law of the Land

Genesis 47:26 And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt *valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.*

A statute is a law. This verse shows the authority and power that Joseph possessed in Egypt delegated to him by Pharaoh. It also shows that religious authorities were exempt from the tax imposed by the law.

Life and Desire of Jacob

Genesis 47:27 Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous. ²⁸ And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. ²⁹ When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰ but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of

Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said."
³¹ And he said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed *in worship* at the head of the bed.

As a preview to his death, Moses gave the length of Jacobs's life in Egypt as 17 years; therefore, Jacob died in Egypt when he was 147 years old.

This passage also includes the events that took place whereby Jacob made Joseph promise to bury him in the cave in Haran with Abraham. When Jacob asked Joseph to "place your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness" he was asking him to do the same thing that Abraham asked his servant to do in Genesis 24. There, as here, the English translators toned down the true translation of this passage, surely for modesty purposes; however, the original intent is the "section circumcised next to the femur" or thighbone. In other words, Jacob bound Joseph by asking him to put his hand on the mark of the covenant God had made with Abraham and had been carried on with every male descendant, the section of Jacob's body that had been circumcised. We must not consider it a profane act in any form or fashion. By placing his hand on the circumcised section of Joseph's body, Joseph was promising to fulfill the oath to Jacob as if he was promising it to "the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth."