

**Lesson 50**  
**Joseph Preserves Israel**

Genesis 46:1-48:22

I. INTRODUCTION

A. These three chapters give the reader insight into the personality of Joseph: man of God, wisdom, compassion, creativity, ability and industry. Joseph was mightily blessed of God, and he used all of his talents to glorify God.

B. These three chapters give insight into Jacob. He was a changed man because he had undergone years of sanctification and he was now God's man. By God's grace Jacob became the kind of man that God wanted him to be. It took years for God to bring Jacob from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. Sanctification is a lifetime process and is not something that believers get overnight.

II. ISRAEL GOES TO EGYPT 46:1-34

A. God Appears to Jacob and Permits Him to Go to Egypt (46:1-4)

1. Jacob, knowing his family would die unless they had food, consented to go to Egypt. On the way, he stopped at Beersheba to worship his God (46:1). NOTE. Jacob turns to God in a time of crisis. What a contrast between Jacob and his earlier years when he walked so much in the flesh.

2. Jacob has some anxious moments for he knew from the earlier experiences of the patriarchs that the Hebrews were not to go to Egypt, for Egypt represented the world (Gen. 35:1) and his last instructions were to stay in the land of Canaan. God appeared to Jacob to assure him that he was doing the right thing (46:2). Jacob replied, "Here I am," which indicates that he was in fellowship with his God (Isa. 6:8-10).

3. God reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob (46:3) and assured him that He would go with him and that He would bring them out of the Egypt again (46:4). NOTE. Jacob did not realize that it would be 400 years before he and his children would be back in the land of Canaan. Providence was at work, for in Egypt God would multiply, prepare and train the Hebrews. Through oppression, the tribes would be welded into a unified group. Egypt was part of God's plan to transform Israel into a nation. NOTE. It says, "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" which is the shutting of the eyes at death. God promises to bring Jacob to this land again, which is the promise of resurrection.

B. Jacob and His Family Leave for Egypt (46:5-7). All the seed of Israel went to Egypt.

C. Genealogy of Jacob at the Time They Went to Egypt (46:8-28). Every individual is listed who went down into Egypt. There were 70 in all (46:27). Acts 7:14 indicates that there were 75 who went into Egypt. Is this a contradiction? No, Stephen was quoting from the Septuagint, and the additional five seem to be the grandsons of Joseph, who are mentioned in the Septuagint version. NOTE. In 400 years God took a people of 75 and made them a nation of around 2 million. NOTE. The Hebrews were out of the land for centuries and at times they must have had a hard time reconciling their presence in Egypt with the promise that God would give them Canaan. God's love and promises are unchangeable but God knew best how to fulfill the promises and to make known His love.

D. Joseph Meets His Father Jacob (46:29-34)

1. What a glorious meeting that was when Joseph saw his father Jacob (46:29). This was a reunion of tears. So thrilled was Jacob that he was now ready to die if God willed it, for he had seen Joseph. NOTE. Jacob must have had great confidence in life after death or he never would have had made the statement about death. However, it was not God's will for Jacob to die yet (Philip. 1:21-24).

2. Jacob and his sons were to make it clear that they were shepherds and keepers of cattle. Shepherds to an Egyptian were an abomination, for they were considered low-class people (46:33-34). The Egyptians were very caste minded, and separated themselves from one another and from foreigners (43:32).

### III. JOSEPH SAVES ISRAEL 47:1-31

#### A. Jacob and Family Before Pharaoh (47:1-10)

1. Joseph is a wise man for he puts his family in the land of Goshen before he informed Pharaoh. It made it easier for Pharaoh to give them this choice land (47:1).

2. The Hebrews declared themselves shepherds (47:3-4). Being shepherds they were outcasts but this was God's way of keeping the children of Israel separated from the Egyptians. NOTE. There is no archeological evidence yet that Israel was ever in Goshen but we do know that the Pharaohs often let foreign groups settle in Egypt. Such an instance would not be unusual.

3. Pharaoh gave Israel "the best of the land" (47:6). God always gives the best to His children (Eph. 3:20), because He is partial to the elect of God. Leaders and hard workers were to be given places of prominence over Pharaoh's cattle (47:6).

4. Jacob blessed Pharaoh (47:7). Jacob, as God's representative, blessed Pharaoh. Jacob was greater than Pharaoh, for he was God's man. The less was blessed by the greater. NOTE. Spiritual position is higher than all secular positions and God always thinks of it in that way.

5. When asked by Pharaoh his age, Jacob replied his pilgrimage was 130 years (47:9) and says he had not lived as long as his fathers and perhaps implies he had not lived as well (47:10). NOTE. Jacob calls his life a "pilgrimage" for his life had a beginning and ending with God guiding the totality of it. This life according to Jacob is temporary and transitory and he would not be on this earth permanently. He was just passing through on his way to his heavenly home (Heb. 11:13).

B. Joseph Cares for His Family (47:11-13). Joseph took exceptionally good care of his family. They had the best. God does show partiality towards His own.

C. Joseph's Business Mind Forces The Egyptians to Sell Their Cattle, Lands and Themselves to Pharaoh (47:13-26). When the famine became severe, the Egyptians became desperate. When the people ran out of money, they bartered cattle, lands and selves for food. All the wealth went to Pharaoh (47:14,20,26). NOTE. These business acts of Joseph made Pharaoh very powerful and undoubtedly made his influence great with other nations. Most of the wealth of Egypt belonged to Pharaoh. NOTE. Did Joseph treat the Egyptians badly? No, he actually saved their lives and they were grateful for it (47:25). NOTE. Joseph was a great man in whom the Spirit of God dwelt (41:38) but he used his natural talents well and for the glory of God. He applied his faith in God to his secular work. Joseph was as much in the Spirit of God when selling corn as when he was witnessing to Pharaoh. Faith in God is to touch every aspect of one's life. A strict separation between the secular and religious is not Scriptural. A Christian can succeed in business but worldly success is not always the evidence of God's blessing on the believing businessman. NOTE. Joseph was not afraid to work and make decisions. He did his job to the glory of God (Col. 3:23; 3:17; 1 Cor. 10:31).

D. Jacob Makes Joseph Swear to Bury Him in Canaan (47:27-31)

1. Due to good health and the providence of God, the Israelites prospered and multiplied exceedingly (47:27).
2. Jacob made Joseph promise that he would bury him in Canaan, the promised land, for God had promised to give it to him and his seed (47:29—30).
3. Jacob “bowed himself” (47:31) indicating that he prayed and worshipped God in the closing days of his life.

#### IV. JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH THROUGH HIS SONS 48:1-22

A. Joseph Visits His Dying Father (48:1-4). Even Israel must go the way of his fathers and pass into the presence of his God through death. Joseph visited his father on his deathbed, bringing his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. When Jacob saw Joseph he is strengthened and reiterates the Abrahamic Covenant to Joseph and his sons.

#### B. Jacob Adopts and Blesses the Two Sons of Joseph (48:5-16)

1. Jacob adopts Manasseh and Ephraim. Each becomes a tribe among the 12 tribes of Israel. There are not 13 tribes but 12. Levi became the tribe of priesthood, and they were scattered throughout the other tribes (Num. 1:49-50). The tribe of Manasseh marched under the banner of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 2:18-20).
2. Jacob remembered Rachel his wife (48:2) and he blessed these sons because of Joseph and Rachel. NOTE: Real love in marriage is never forgotten.

C. Jacob Blesses the Younger Before the Older (46:17-22). Joseph tried to stop Jacob from blessing Ephraim before Manasseh for the latter was the older of the two. Griffith Thomas says,

This passing over the first-born is one of the most striking features of the book of Genesis. So it was with Seth instead of Cain; Shem instead of Japheth; Abraham instead of Haran; Isaac instead of Ishmael; Jacob instead of Esau. And now it was Ephraim instead of Manasseh. Thus did God display His sovereignty and prevent anyone imagining that His blessings necessarily follow the line of natural privilege. God has again and again chosen the weak things of the earth, and even those that are despised, to set at naught those that are mighty. Grace is sovereign, and by no means follows, but rather opposes the course of nature (*Genesis*).