

CCLEB SERMON

NOTES

SUNDAY APRIL 26, 2026
GENESIS 47:1-31

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THIS IS NOT OUR FINAL HOME



Here are a few of the themes we will explore together.

GENESIS 47 THEMES

- 1 God provides through his providence and man's wise planning.
- 2 God's Covenant bearers come out on top.
- 3 When the world's wealth and systems fail, dependence on God becomes a clearer choice.
- 4 This is not our final home.

Genesis 47:1-10. Note the word "land". One thing biblical texts do exceptionally well is repeat key words to help us understand what is happening.

The word "land" occurs

22 TIMES

times in chapter 47

This repetition shows us that the word *land* carries the flow of the chapter.



In **verse 1** we see Jacob and family leave the land of Canaan and enter the land of Goshen.



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God orchestrated the events in Jacob's life so that Jacob would move to Egypt when God called him to. The son Jacob believed was dead for twenty-two years, turned out to be the second in command of all of Egypt - specifically over the food supply. Because of the famine, Canaan no longer had food. So, when God called Jacob to go to Egypt, Jacob went.

Since God called Jacob to Egypt, God cared for him – securing Pharaoh's permission for the family to live in Goshen, the best of the land.

In **verse 2** we see Joseph brings five of his brothers before Pharaoh. According to Robert Alter the Hebrew suggests Joseph selecting the best five of the brothers.

This scene of the brothers appearing before Pharaoh was anticipated by Joseph who even told the brothers what question Pharaoh would ask. (**Genesis 46:33-34**) And exactly as Joseph anticipated, it happened. Pharaoh asked the brothers what their occupation was. And they responded "shepherds". What is significant about the brothers telling Pharaoh that they were "shepherds" we were already know from **Genesis 46:34**. The Egyptians didn't want despised shepherds in their cities, so the "shepherds" were given permission by Pharaoh to live in Goshen.

Being given land in Goshen highlights God's favor through Joseph's wisdom and planning. Once again Joseph's plan works, and Jacob is again blessed by God.

But God's favor doesn't stop there. Pharaoh adds to the blessing of Goshen by offering Joseph's brothers positions over Pharaoh's own livestock.

This brings us to our first point. God provides through His providence in partnership with man's wise planning. Take note here that Jacob's provision came through a partnership between God's providence and Joseph's obedience.

1. God provides through His providence in partnership with man's wise planning.

God in his providence and power orchestrated all the details of the plan. Joseph was obedient and acted with God's wisdom. This partnership reflects God's original intention in **Genesis 1**, where humanity was called to reign under God's authority.

Joseph then brings his father before Pharaoh **verse 8-10**.

So picture this scene - an elderly humble shepherd from a foreign land comes into Pharaoh's palace and blesses the most powerful man on earth - Pharaoh. Not just once, but twice. The lowly shepherd blessing the king. From any worldly perspective, that is upside-down. From Scripture's perspective, it is exactly right.

This fulfills the covenant promise given to Abraham: **Genesis 12:2**

Through the seed of Abraham Pharaoh and Egypt were blessed.

Let me remind you how Pharaoh and Egypt were blessed. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's troubling dream, ends up saving Pharaoh and all of Egypt and the known world from famine. That's certainly being a "blessing to others". Then Jacob comes and literally pronounces a blessing on Pharaoh. That's Jacob being a blessing to Pharaoh.

Joseph then goes on to make Pharaoh even more rich and powerful as you will see later in this chapter. That is also being a blessing to others. This chapter is a beautiful fulfillment of the covenant promises given to Abraham in **chapter 12**.

What we see here in this scene of Jacob blessing Pharaoh is our second point.

2. God's covenant bearers come out on top!

Later generations of Pharaohs cursed Israel through enslavement, and Egypt suffered severe judgment God destroyed them with plagues, drowned their army, and they lost all their free slave labor when God delivered them out of Egypt under Moses.

Genesis 12:3 “I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt.” This is God protecting the covenant bearers.

Jacob blessing Pharaoh foreshadows Christ’s ultimate authority over all physical and spiritual. On that day the world will see the “The True Shepherd” – Jesus - having authority over all the kings of the world. And we who have accepted Jesus new covenant, will live and reign with him. We come out on top because of Jesus!

Moving on to **verse 8-9** When Pharaoh asks Jacob his age, Jacob describes his life as “hard” or “evil.”.

“Hard!” Anyone relate? This is a fascinating summary of his life, and I think worthy of us spending some time on. When we look back over Jacob’s life from **chapter 25** until now, we see that Jacob achieved everything he wanted. Jacob wanted the birthright – he took it. Jacob wanted his father’s blessing he took it. Jacob wanted Rachel the woman of his dreams, he worked for her. He then had a full quiver of children, and much wealth. But even after having all he wanted, Jacob described his life as “hard” or “evil”.

His life was marked by deception, struggle, and loss. Even in the womb, he was fighting with his brother. As a young man he deceived his father, stole the birthright from his brother, had to flee for his life. He essentially lost his family and home for twenty years.

Yes, he was eventually given Rachel but had to deal with Laban for twenty years. And then when Jacob finally gets back to Canaan, he had to deal with the outfall of Reuben’s evil, and Simeon and Levi’s evil. And then Jacob lost his beloved wife, and then he lost his beloved son.

Jacob’s life reminds me of what God said to Cain **Genesis 4:7** Jacob didn’t choose the right way, he chose the “sin that was crouching at his door”. Oh, Jacob got all that he wanted but look at the cost!! One scholar said, “the consequences were far more pain than contentment”. I think that’s what Jacob’s response to Pharaoh in **verse 9** indicates – “hard /evil”. But now in Jacob’s old age he chose to obey God, costly obedience, and now we see in **verses 11-12** that God gave Jacob and his descendants “the best of the land” of Egypt.

I think it is helpful to picture Jacob’s covenant family in Goshen as a “temporary Eden”. The world surrounding Goshen was being destroyed by the famine – turned into a wilderness, and the covenant family of Jacob was in an Eden-like place, Goshen. Protected like Eden was – provided for just like Eden, and God was with them, just as He promised. If the Israelites chose correctly, this could be a restart, just like the flood was a restart.

In **verses 13-19** – the narrative leaves Jacob and the brothers and returns to Joseph’s governance of the famine through his God given wisdom. Note that all the people of both Egypt and Canaan were severely affected by the famine.

In **verse 14-16** the word used here for “money” in Hebrew is “silver”. Isn’t it interesting that Joseph was sold into slavery for twenty pieces of “silver” and now twenty some years later Joseph has collected all the silver of both Egypt and Canaan?

For you Hebrew scholars out there, at the end of **verse 15** the phrase “die before your very eyes” is a flashback to the Egyptian slave Hagar in the wilderness where similar language was used in **Genesis 21:16** not wanting to watch her son Ishmael “die before her eyes”. God met Hagar the Egyptian in the wilderness and meets her and Ishmael’s need. And in **chapter 47** God stepped in through Joseph and met these Egyptians needs as well.

Now back in Egypt, Joseph has all the silver of Egypt and Canaan, and Joseph has all the grain.



In this economy, since there was no longer any silver to buy grain, the currency needs to change. And that is what we see happen here moving forward. They change the currency from silver to livestock in exchange for grain - what we call "bartering". When the livestock ran out, they changed the currency again and made their lives and their land the currency in exchange for food.

From a big picture perspective, the famine stripped Egypt and Canaan down in stages: First the famine took their money, then livestock, then their land and freedom. They had to become dependent on the plan God put in place through Joseph. Which is our third point:

3. When the world's wealth and systems fail, dependence on God becomes a clearer choice.

Verse 20-26 as we read this note again, the emphasis on the word "land".

Pharaoh has everything, the people, the land, their livestock and all their silver. And then Joseph goes one step further in **verse 21 NASB** and he relocates the people.

Scholar Alter suggest that the purpose of the relocation was to cut the people off from their own intergenerational lands and locate them to other lands where they would be acutely aware that they lived at the grace of Pharaoh alone.

Many have questioned if Joseph was being harsh through all of this? If you stick to the text and context it seems to argue that Joseph was being more than fair.

Look at **verse 25**. The response of the people who lost their silver, livestock, land and freedom tell Joseph "you have saved our lives!" That is not victim thinking with them yelling "unfair" and protesting with sit downs strikes and colored banners. This is the voice of the people saying "You have saved our lives!" They are "thankful"!

And regarding this one fifth tax. The Egyptians already had seven years of giving one fifth of their crops to Pharaoh - during the seven years of plenty - so that part is not new. But now because Pharaoh owns them and all the land - and the one fifth is permanent.

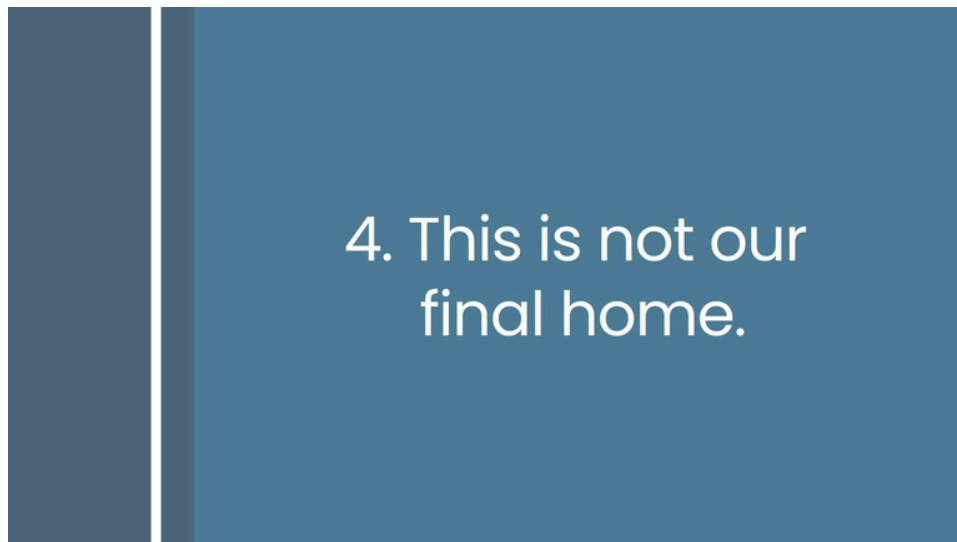
In **verses 27-28** the passage turns away from Joseph and the famine back to Jacob.

The Genesis one blessing of being “fruitful and multiplying” is clear here. God clearly blessed the Israelites and “their population grew rapidly”. Where Egypt and Canaan were declining or collapsing because of the famine, the Israelites were growing.

In **verse 28** we see that Jacob ends up living seventeen more years in Egypt, with Joseph providing for him. That was a gift of time to both Joseph and Jacob.

Verse 29-31 Jacob prepares for his death - and he wants to be assured that when he dies, his bones will be taken back to the land of the covenant and buried in the family tomb.

Which brings us to our final point.



That Jacob would return to land of the covenant is important to Jacob. He makes Joseph take a serious vow by placing his “hand under Jacob’s thigh”.

Back in **Genesis 24:2-3** we learned that this odd gesture was tied to the covenant. The sign of the covenant was circumcision. To place one’s hand “under the thigh” was an oath based on the covenant. The covenant that gave Jacob’s descendants the promised land, where he wanted to be buried.


I personally am more comfortable with a “pinkie promise”.



And this chapter ends with this beautiful scene of Jacob bowing in worship to the LORD.

Let me close with these thoughts for your meditation and application.


We watched Jacob leave the land of promise and settle in the best of the land of Egypt. And we saw that his faith was not in the land, but in the covenant faithfulness of God. Jacob lived by faith in the space between promise and fulfillment. The same space we live by faith in today.



1. God provides through
His providence in
partnership with man's
wise planning.

God and his providence through the God-given wisdom of Joseph gave Jacob and his family the best of the land of Egypt. Again think partnership between man and God.

Psalm 127:1 reminds us “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” This captures the image of both God and man doing the building. God building through man. Is God working through you today?



2. God's covenant
bearers come out
on top!

In this chapter, Pharaoh owns all the land, all the people, and all the wealth—but Jacob blesses Pharaoh. That is the covenant order of Scripture.

Genesis 12:3 says “I will bless those who bless you.” The power of God's people is not tied to land ownership or political authority, or jobs or money.

Our power is based on Jesus dying on the cross and resurrecting and securing a new covenant for us that ensures our eternal life with God - where there will be no more pain, suffering, crying, evil, and we are with Jesus forever. We come out on top! Amen?

3. When the world's wealth and systems fail, dependence on God becomes a clearer choice.

Genesis 47 shows us how quickly land, money, and security disappear. Silver runs dry. Livestock is traded. Land is surrendered. People become servants. Only one family remains secure—God's family. Famine exposed the weakness of worldly systems—but it magnified the faithfulness of God.

Psalm 20:7 "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God."

Let me ask you these questions: If you suddenly lost the things that make you secure: relationships, jobs, money, health, freedom, what would it show about where your faith lies? Are you leaning on prop that is destined to collapse?

4. This is not our final home.

Jacob ends his story insisting that his bones be carried back—not to Goshen—but to the land of promise. Jacob lived well in Egypt, but he died looking forward. My friends this is not our final home.

For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.

Hebrews 13:14

Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.

1 Peter 2:11

Living now as “temporary residents” looking forward to our “eternal home” is to be the posture of our minds and hearts in this world affecting our decisions and interactions. So let us live faithfully in temporary land, trusting God’s provision, walking in covenant faithfulness, allowing God to work thru us, that we may be unshaken when things of this world fail. That we may stand fixed on the promise that today and thru eternity God is with us.

Amen.

BONUS

CONTENT:

Genesis 47:3. The word for “live” in Hebrew is better translated as “sojourn” meaning “temporary”. This foreshadows that the Israelites will eventually leave – which is true – just not for 430 years.

Genesis 47:6 God’s continued favor. While being offered positions over Pharaoh’s livestock was certainly not on the same scale as Pharaoh appointing Joseph over all the land of Egypt, it certainly is reminiscent of that same unexpected favor.

Genesis 47:24 One fifth tax? In comparison, the median household in the US pays %24 of their income in tax.

Genesis 47:25 Start with thankfulness. Wouldn’t the response of “You have saved our lives” be a great starting place for disgruntled Christians today – first being thankful for salvation? Everything else is in perspective of that?

Genesis 47:26 The curse of Ham? This is another curious fulfillment of prophecy in this story. In **Genesis 9:25-27** The curse of Ham, whose descendants include the Egyptians, were to become slaves to Ham’s brothers, whose descendants include Joseph. God’s promises and prophecies always come true!

Genesis 47:20 Egypt wealth: If you have ever wondered how the ancient Egyptians financed their building projects, it was probably helped greatly by Joseph. We also know in history that the Israelites go on to build the storage city of Rameses.

Genesis 47:28:

Cool math 1. Based on Jacob’s age, that he lived 12 years after the famine was over, we can determine that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were in the land of Canaan for exactly 215 years before Egypt. Half the 430 years they were in Egypt.

Cool math 2. Jacob living seventeen years in Egypt with Joseph providing for him is an interesting time mirror because Joseph lived seventeen years under Jacob providing for him before slavery.

Cool math 3. Jacob living seventeen years being provided for by Joseph was exactly the number of years Joseph lived under Jacob’s roof being provided for prior to being sold into slavery.