

STUDY NUMBER NINE - Genesis 46:1-47:31

INTRODUCTION:

(Just Folks by Edgar A. Guest)

"Men will grow weary," said the Lord,
"Of working for their bed and board.
They'll weary of the money chase
And want to find a resting place
Where hum of wheel is never heard
And no one speaks an angry word,
And selfishness and greed and pride
And petty motives don't abide.
They'll need a place where they can go
To wash their souls as white as snow.
They will be better men and true
If they can play a day or two."

The Lord then made the brooks to flow
And fashioned rivers here below,
And many lakes; for water seems
Best suited for a mortal's dreams.
He placed about them willow trees
And sent the birds that sing the best
Among the foliage to nest.
He filled each pond and stream and lake
With fish for man to come and take;
Then stretched a velvet carpet deep
On which a weary soul could sleep.

It seemed to me the Good Lord knew
That man would want something to do
When worn and wearied with the stress
Of battling hard for world success.
When sick at heart of all the strife
And pettiness of daily life,
He knew he'd need, from time to time,
To cleanse himself of city grime,
And he would want some place to be
Where hate and greed he'd never see.

And so on lakes and streams and brooks
The Good Lord fashioned fishing nooks.

Life has been hard and very taxing for old Jacob. He is going now to spend his final days with his much-loved son Joseph, from whom he has been separated for 22 years.

In our last study Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. It was a very emotional time as reconciliation took place.

Joseph was not bitter toward his brothers because he could understand God's eternal purpose in all that had happened.

45:5

"And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."

After the reunion, Joseph commands the brothers to go and bring his father down. This command from Joseph was also accompanied with an executive order from the Oval Office from Pharaoh himself: "Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. Never mind about your belongings because the best of all Egypt will be yours."

The boys returned home with all the carts and provisions, and needless to say Jacob is stunned by the fact that he not only has his eleven sons home safe but his twelfth is also alive and living in Egypt.

Our last study closed with these words: "And Israel said, 'I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.'"

What a tremendous sense of peace must have come over the whole group as Jacob surrenders himself to God's sovereign purpose in full accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 15:13, 14

And God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed 400 years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions."

I can just hear the company singing as they left Hebron on their way down to Egypt:

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way.
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share,
But our toil he doth richly repay.
Not a grief nor a loss,
Not a frown nor a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love
Until all on the altar we lay,
For the favor He shows and the joy He bestows
Are for them who will trust and obey.

(When the Ceiling Is Zero by Robert D. Foster)

The story is told of Napoleon's soldiers carrying a map of the world over their hearts. Why? So they would not be thinking of the mud, shortage of food and tired bodies. Daily this military leader wanted his men to think in terms of world conquest.

Think big. Think of the world. Get in step with your Creator who alone can give a true view of eternity and the big picture.

This verse tells me that there are many things that Almighty God is doing that I cannot comprehend, but I can trust Him that the timing is beautiful and what He wants me to know I can know for "eternity has been placed in my heart!"

God, keep me from shortsightedness. Give to me eyes that see with a conquerable optimism in contrast to a defeated pessimism. Lord, enable me to do some spiritual soaring both in sight and service.

The man of vision is always the man of venture.

v. 1 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

The scene is probably similar to "Fiddler on the Roof" when everybody leaves Anatevka. Everybody packs up and gets all the belongings together that they're going to take and prepares themselves for the 250-mile trip southwest to Egypt. The impact upon the economy of Hebron must have been effected with the departure of a company this size.

This has got to be a very emotional time too because Jacob has been living here for quite a number of years. He has also buried his wife Leah here in this place.

When Jacob got to Beersheba, which is 30-40 miles south of Hebron, he stopped and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Jacob wants to be sure this is God's will for him to go to Egypt because he has in mind, I'm sure, the mistake of Abram in going down into Egypt and the consequences that resulted from that. Jacob wants to get there but not out of the will of God. Jacob's emotions say, "Go for it because you haven't seen Joseph for all of these years but spiritually he wants the affirmation from God himself that this is the will of God.

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Beersheba is the southern boundary, and before he crosses that boundary, he wants to know in his heart that everything that has been done is in the will of God.

v. 2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied.

Genesis 28:13-15

There above it stood the Lord, and he said: "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

1 Samuel 3:8-10

The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

What a wonderful thought to know that the Lord knows all of our names and He calls us by name.

1 Kings 19:9

And the word of the Lord came to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Jacob knew and recognized this voice so he says, "Here I am."

v. 3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there."

Oh how well the Lord knows us. He knows Jacob is frightened and fearful about what is happening, and so the Lord comes and addresses those fears by saying, "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt."

Genesis 15:1

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram. I am a shield to you. Your reward shall be very great."

Isaiah 41:10

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; surely I will help; surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Paul, storm-tossed at sea, with all hope of being rescued gone, testifies in Acts 27:23-25

"For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, stood before me, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told."

The reason you don't have to be afraid, Jacob is "For I will make you into a great nation there."

Once again that great little word THERE jumps off the page of Scripture.

We saw it in our last study -- Genesis 45:11

I will provide for you there because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise, you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.

The Lord said during the time of famine for Elijah:

"Go to the brook Cherith, and I will be sending my ravens there." Oh how it behooves us to find the place where God is wanting to bless and prosper us, to seek the place of His choosing, that we might walk in His way and in the center of His will. It is there my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Jacob, there is going to be some good things to happen in Egypt. I will make you into a great nation there.

Yes, Jacob, you are right in the center of my will. This is in full accord with my eternal purpose. You are to go there.

v. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

Jacob, we're going to take a 210-mile trip west from Beersheba to Egypt. "I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes." This is our heavenly Father's way of saying that the remaining years of his earthly pilgrimage will be spent in Egypt, and he will die there. But God has promised He will surely bring Jacob back again.

This could refer to his old physical body being brought back and placed in the tomb in Hebron.

Rev. 19:7-9

Let us rejoice and be glad, and give the glory to him! For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean. For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

v. 5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him.

The trip is now underway, and the caravan is heading west. The covered wagons of the old west probably look similar to what we see with this large group heading to Egypt.

v. 6 They also took with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan, and Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt.

Genesis 45:20

Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.

Obviously, Jacob does not want to come to Egypt as a charity case. He wants everybody to bring what they can.

v. 7 He took with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters--all his offspring.

The spirit of God wants to make it clear at this point that the seed is now residing in Egypt. All his offspring are involved. This is in full accord with the Abrahamic Covenant.

v. 8 These are the name of the Israelites (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt:

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob.

v. 9 The sons of Reuben:

Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

v. 10 The sons of Simeon:

Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul
the son of a Canaanite woman.

v. 11 The sons of Levi:
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

v. 12 The sons of Judah:
Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan).

The sons of Perez:
Hezron and Hamul.

v. 13 The sons of Issachar:
Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron.

v. 14 The sons of Zebulun:
Sered, Elon and Jahleel.

v.15 These were the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram, besides his daughter Dinah. These sons and daughters of his were thirty-three in all.

v. 16 The sons of Gad:
Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Er, Arodi and Areli.

v. 17 The sons of Asher:
Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Their sister was Serah.

The sons of Beriah:
Heber and Malkiel.

v. 18 These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah--sixteen in all.

v. 19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel:
Joseph and Benjamin.

v. 20 In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On.

v. 21 The sons of Benjamin:
Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh,
Muppim, Huppim and Ard.

Oh how I love that! I can just hear Benjamin's wife calling:"Muppim, Huppim and Ard!" That's like Winken, Blinken and Nod!

v. 22 These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob--fourteen in all.

v. 23 The son of Dan:
Hushim.

v. 24 The sons of Naphtali:
Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.

v. 25 These were the sons born to Jacob by Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel--seven in all.

v. 26 All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons wives--numbered sixty-six persons.

v. 27 With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all.

It is altogether fitting that the spirit of God would give us a very accurate passenger list for flight insurance purposes.

v. 28 Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen,

Jacob has leaned heavily on Judah more recently because it was Judah who convinced him to let Benjamin go on the second trip to Egypt; and it was Judah who interceded before Joseph. And it is now Judah who is taking the leadership in this project. It is altogether fitting that he would do so because it is going to be out of his tribe that the Messiah is going to come.

So they would not waste a lot of time looking for the land of Goshen, Jacob sends Judah on ahead to get directions when they arrived in the region of Goshen.

v. 29 Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.

As soon as Judah arrives, Joseph puts everything else in the administration aside and got his chariot made ready. I am sure he took Judah with him and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel.

It has been 22 long years, so as soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time.

Genesis 45:14, 15

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept and Benjamin embraced him weeping, and he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward, his brothers talked with him.

Joseph makes the 75-mile trip north. And "as soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time."

v. 30 Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

Luke 2:29

Now, Lord, thou dost let thy bondservant depart in peace, according to thy word.

Jacob's first words to his son Joseph are: "Now I am ready to die." And the reason is I have had the fulfillment of everything I've longed for: I have seen for myself that you are still alive.

I wonder how Jacob feels about all the years of sadness and grief that he has experienced.

v. 31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me.

v. 32 The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.'

v. 33 When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?'

v. 34 you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."

Joseph knows his master well, and so he prompts the boys on what they are to say and prepares them for their audience with Pharaoh so that they might secure the region of Goshen for their flocks and herds and for the settlement of the entire clan.

47:v. 1 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."

Joseph goes immediately to Pharaoh and gives a progress report by telling him that his family is in Goshen.

v. 2 He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.

He probably picked the four oldest plus Benjamin:

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and Benjamin

v. 3 Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?" "Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were."

v. 4 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."

The brothers answer his questions directly and also present a request. They know what they want and they are going after it.

v. 5 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you,

v. 6 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."

How gracious Pharaoh is as he makes it possible for Joseph's family to live in Goshen, the best part of the land. And he also provides an opportunity for employment if any among them has a special ability. Joseph can put them in charge of Pharaoh's own livestock.

v. 7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed Pharaoh,

Jacob is overwhelmed with deep gratitude for the one who has done so much for his son. So Jacob proceeds to bless Pharaoh.

v. 8 Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?"

It is obvious that Jacob is getting up in years, and Pharaoh just is so impressed by the dignity, the stature, the very bearing of this distinguished gentleman that he asks him, "How old are you?"

v. 9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers."

(*Joseph* by F. B. Meyer)

"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." They had been *few* in comparison with those of his ancestors. Terah reached the age of 205; Abraham of 175; Isaac of 180. But "the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years." They had been *evil*. As a young man he was wrenched from his dearest associations of home and friends, and went forth alone to spend the best years of his life as a stranger in a strange land. Arduous and difficult was his service to Laban, consumed in the day by drought, and in the (cont.)

sleepless night-vigils by frost. He escaped from Laban with difficulty; and no sooner had he done so than he had to encounter his incensed and impetuous brother. In the agony of that dread crisis he met with the Angel Wrestler, who touched the sinew of his thigh, so that he halted to the end of his life. These calamities had hardly passed when he was involved in extreme danger with the Canaanites of Shechem, and passed through scenes which have blanched his hair, furrowed his cheeks, and scarred his heart. Thus he came to Luz, and Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and was buried beneath an oak, which was thenceforth called the Oak of Weeping. "And they journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath, and Rachel (his favourite wife) bare a son; and it came to pass, as her soul was departing, for she died, that she called his name Ben-oni, the son of my sorrow." A little further on he came to Mamre, arriving just in time to bear the remains of his own father to the grave. And what sorrows befell him after that, have already touched our hearts, as we have studied the wondrous history of his son, Joseph. Reuben involved his name in shameful disgrace. Judah trailed the family honour in the mire of sensual appetite. To all appearance Joseph had been

torn to pieces by wild beasts. The dissensions of his sons must have rent his heart. And even after his meeting with his long-lost son he was to linger for seventeen years a pensioner on the bounty of the king of Egypt: far from the glorious heritage which had been promised to his race.

(Joseph: God's Man in Egypt by Leslie Flynn)

Jacob summarized his earthly sojourn, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been" (Gen. 47:9). Repeated trials crossed his path. After stealing Esau's blessing he had to flee for his life, never to see his mother again. For 20 years he was cheated by his employer--Uncle Laban, who palmed the wrong wife off on him, then made him work seven more years for the right one, and who decreased his wages 10 times. Calling this period "affliction," he said, "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (31:40).

(cont.)

With great difficulty he escaped from Laban, then risked reconciliation with a potentially revengeful Esau. He suffered a thigh injury in a wrestling match with an angel. He was in danger of a reprisal attack by the Canaanites after his sons tricked and slew the Shechemites. He suffered the staggering blow of the loss of his favorite wife, Rachel. Then came the climactic tragedy when his sons brought back Joseph's bloodstained coat, sending him into inconsolable sorrow.

(Has Life Given You a Lemon...Make Lemonade by Robert D. Foster)

"Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should."

So thought a religious leader of the 17th century. After seeing the failure in his personal life and ministry, he incorporated the following resolutions:

1. "In imitation of Christ and His apostles, and to get good done, I purpose to rise timely every morning.
2. To prepare as soon as I am up some work to be done, and how and when to do it; to engage my heart to it; and at evening to call myself to account and to mourn over my failings.
3. To spend a sufficient portion of time every day in prayer, reading of the Holy Scriptures and other profitable spiritual exercises.

4. I will spend once every week four hours over and above my daily portion in private, for some special causes relating either to myself or others.
5. To spend some time on Saturday, towards night, for preparation for the Sabbath"
Horatius Bonar.

Archaeological evidence here shows that Jacob was merely following the common rules of etiquette during this period of time.

v. 10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

Well, the hard part's over now. The audience with Pharaoh is past and now it's simply a matter of carrying out his mandates in getting his family settled.

v. 11 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.

Rameses is about 25 miles from the Mediterranean Sea on a tributary of the Nile, about 80 miles north of Memphis.

Swindoll takes a look at Joseph's ability as an administrator, and he has these following observations:

- I. Some General Observations about our work: As we look at Joseph's business life in order to review our own performance, we must first understand three things about work in general that have bearing on our lives, just as they had on Joseph's.
 - A. Our work is a revealing display of our character. It can surface both positive and negative traits that we possess. On the negative side, work may reveal slothfulness, deception, dishonesty, anger, greed, discord, and disloyalty. On the positive side, it may display our confidentiality, punctuality, team spirit, respect, enthusiasm, and willingness to serve. The way we act on the job makes one of the strongest statements about our commitment to Christ.
 - B. Our work is a demanding arena of pressure. The sources of pressure are numerous: the "stack," the deadlines, the profanity, co-workers, employers, customers, or clients; pressure can even be produced by feelings of insecurity which result from uncertainty about the job itself.
(cont.)
 - C. Our work is an exacting test of efficiency. This hurts, particularly when we tend

to be inefficient anyway. Our jobs measure such areas as creativity, decisiveness, and perception. They show us how thorough we really are and how financially responsible we are capable of being. It also tells the truth about our accountability and organization.

II. A Specific Example: Joseph (Gen. 46:31-47:26).

Joseph sits for the portrait of "Mr. Efficiency" in these two chapters of Genesis. His life and work were marked by excellence. His assignment was to store and distribute grain during a fourteen-year period which began with seven years of plenty and ended with seven years of famine. Not only was he busy overseeing the constant care of his nation and serving Pharaoh, but he experienced the added pressure that came to him when his family (seventy members in all) moved to Egypt. As the biblical narrative unfolds, we see four ways Joseph demonstrated efficiency. As we look briefly at each, ask yourself, "How do I measure up in this area?" Efficiency is seen when he:

A. Planned Ahead with Wise Objectivity (46:31-34) This is reflected in the way he thought through a plan to settle his family and assist them in securing jobs. Once the plan was sketched out, he reviewed it with his superior.

B. Submitted to Authority with Loyal Accountability (47:1-11). Pharaoh ordered a region of the land of Rameses to be allocated to Joseph's family. Joseph did not argue or suggest an alternative. He listened and did what he was told.

C. Arranged for Survival with Personal Integrity (47:12; cf. 41:33-35). He held people's lives in the palm of his hand as he had the key to the pantry. He received large sums of money from those buying grain. Though he was in an unchallenged position of authority where he could skim profits for himself without being noticed, he didn't! He treated people with dignity and his job with integrity.

D. Accepted the Challenge with Innovative Creativity (47:20-26). The situation was impossible for others, but not for Joseph. He developed a plan, distributed seed, and established a support tax of 20 percent to finance the government. That plan became a public statute. He wasn't afraid to try something that had never been done before. Invariably, leadership calls for the stretching of creativity.

v. 12 Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children.

Joseph not only provided them with good land and everything to go with it, he also provided food for everybody during this crisis time.

v. 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.

How privileged Joseph's family must feel with this generous allotment on the part of Joseph being made for the whole family of his father when everyone else around them is far less fortunate.

This is during the final five years of the famine, so it's going to get increasingly more difficult.

v. 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.

Joseph did not get involved in any federal give-away programs. He sold the grain to the citizens.

v. 15 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."

Now that they no longer have money they are coming asking for a handout. "Give us food."

Joseph will not have a part in that kind of program.

v. 16 "Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone."

Joseph is willing to take on the responsibility of their livestock, which I'm sure they're ready to get free of in this crisis situation. So in verse 16 he says, "Then bring your livestock. I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone."

v. 17 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.

Well, after all the finances were gone, the next year is a year for livestock. And their livestock got them through another year because of Joseph's careful planning.

v. 18 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.

v. 19 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."

The proposal this time is for Joseph to buy their land and for the citizens to become slaves of Pharaoh in order to get through this difficult period.

v. 20 So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's,

It is incredible that Joseph still has adequate grain in all these circumstances to carry his people on through this traumatic time period.

v. 21 And Joseph reduced the people to servitude, from one end of Egypt to the other.

v. 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.

Joseph takes their recommendation and bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh and then reduced the people to servitude to get through this last part of the period. The only exception to this large real estate deal was the priests because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and they had food enough from the allotment that Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land.

v. 23 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.

Joseph knows that the worst is over and that now they are given seed, and they will be able to plant the ground and have crops once more.

1 Kings 18:44, 45

And it came about at the seventh time, that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.'" So it came about in a little while, that the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

v. 24 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."

How different would the prosperity of our country be if we followed a similar work ethic. I was interviewing a young lady the other day for a position that we have in our office, and she made the simple statement, "Unless I am going to get X number of dollars for my employment, it will be better for me financially to stay unemployed."

v. 25 "You have saved our lives," they said. "May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh."

Now they come with such thankful hearts: "You have saved our lives through this very difficult period, and we want to show our love and appreciation by being willing servants to Pharaoh."

What a great lesson we could learn in our country if we too would begin to institute economic policies that would protect human dignity and would magnify and recognize hard work and achievement. (Iacocca, An Autobiography by Lee Iacocca) Despite all of President Reagan's campaign promises, the national debt is out of control. Back in 1835, the federal deficit was a mere \$38,000. In 1981, the annual deficit broke \$100 billion for the first time in history. Today it's about \$200 billion. And, over the next five years it's expected to total over □ \$1 trillion. We picked up a deficit that big once before--during the period from 1776 through 1981. Think of it. It took us 206 years, with eight wars, two major depressions, a dozen recessions, two space programs, the opening of the West, and the terms of thirty-nine presidents to do that. Now we're going to duplicate that record in just five years while we're at peace--and during a so-called economic recovery. To put it another way, there are sixty-one million families in this country and we're going to put all of them in hock for \$3,000 a year □ without their permission. It's like Uncle Sam is using your credit card without asking. As a result, we're mortgaging the futures of our kids and our grandchildren. Since most of them can't vote yet, they've given us their proxy. And we're not using it very well. In my book, the boys in Washington--all of them--get an F on the budget.

The citizens come and say to Joseph, "You have saved our lives."

That's exactly what we're going to say when we step into the presence of the Lord after our physical tenure of service here on earth. You have saved our lives.

(*Joseph* by F. B. Meyer)

He deserves this. For you He lay in Bethlehem's manger. For you He was homeless and poor. For you He sweat the drops of blood and poured out his soul unto death. For you He pleads in heaven. "I beseech you then, by the mercies of God, that ye present yourselves to Him, living sacrifices, which is your reasonable service."

v. 26 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.

Out of all of this crisis and set of circumstances, there is now a new policy of taxation. It is a universal law-- 1/5 for Pharaoh; 4/5 for you and your family's needs.

v. 27 Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

Once the families of Jacob got settled, they acquired property there in the Goshen region, and our text tells us "they were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

Isn't this always the way it is when you are in the center of God's will, wanting to accomplish His purpose-- fruit is born and the numbers increase.

Exodus 1:7

But the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous so that the land was filled with them.

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it."

v. 28 Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven.

Jacob and his family survived the five years of economic crisis. Following this they had twelve years of blessing and abundance before the time came for Jacob to die.

v. 29 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 that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt,

Jacob is getting old. Perhaps he has forgotten the promise of the Lord 17 years earlier in Genesis 46:4

"I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again, and Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

(Necessary Losses by Judith Viorst)

The French writer Paul Claudel: "Eighty years old:
No eyes left, no ears, no teeth, no legs, no wind!
And when all is said and done, how astonishingly well one does without them!"

A gerontologist adds this: "Put cotton in your ears and pebbles in your shoes. Pull on rubber gloves. Smear Vaseline over your glasses, and there you have it: instant aging."

And hear Lady Thelma, ninety, who awakens every morning full of plans and who says that, although she's "terrifically old. . . there are still things that I have to do--a lot more things. Are you listening up there?"

A person spends years coming into his own, developing his talent, his unique gifts, perfecting his discriminations about the world, broadening and sharpening his appetite, learning to bear the disappointments of life, becoming mature, seasoned--finally a unique creature in nature, standing with some dignity and mobility and transcending the animal condition; no longer driven, no longer a complete reflex, not stamped out of any mold. And then the real tragedy...: that it takes sixty years of incredible suffering and effort to make such an individual, and then he is good only for dying.
--Ernest Becker

"When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him,"

Jacob has one last request of his son.

"If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness."

Jacob wants Joseph to place his hand under his thigh and give him a promise, taking an oath that he will show Jacob kindness and faithfulness.

We then have the statement of the request: "Do not bury me in Egypt."

v. 30 but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."

Jacob wants to be taken back up to Hebron and there buried next to Leah, along with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah.

"I will do as you say," he said.

Joseph, over all the years, has not changed one whit in his relationship to his father. Forty years hasn't changed him a bit.

Genesis 37:12

Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I'm going to send you to them." "Very well," he replied.

Now here, forty years later, he simply says, "I will do as you say."

v. 31 "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Hebrews 11:21

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

How beautiful to see this study open with Jacob in Beersheba, offering sacrifices, and it ends with Jacob worshiping while leaning on the top of his staff.

I can just hear old Jacob singing,

There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar.
For the Father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling place there.

We shall sing on that beautiful shore
The melodious songs of the blest,
And our spirits shall sorrow no more,
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.

To our bountiful Father above
We will offer our tribute of praise.
For the glorious gift of His love
And the blessings that hallow our days.

In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Jacob wants to be certain that he is in the center of God's will in leaving the land, so he stops to offer sacrifices to God.

LESSON #2: The Lord will speak to our fears through His Word.

LESSON #3: The Lord always gives the best to those who leave the choice with Him.

LESSON #4: Oh, what peace and blessing come when we surrender to God's eternal purpose.

LESSON #5: Joseph cares for his father in his old age.

LESSON #6: There were no federal give-away programs during the time of economic crisis.

LESSON #7: We too shall say when we get to glory, "You have saved our lives."

LESSON #8: In this passage we see Jacob seeking the will of God and worshipping God, leaning on the top of his staff.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.