

## Genesis 47:13-31

JOSEPH'S LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* A few short verses now sum up the final 2 years of the famine, and ...
- \* The legacy of Joseph's leadership through the 14 years of "feast and famine"

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* Vv. 13-19 record Joseph's leadership over the final 2 years of the famine
- \* Vv. 20-26 provide a summary outcome of the 7 years — and a statute, valid to “this day”
- \* Vv. 27-31 turn back to Jacob and introduce his final days beginning with his burial plea

READ 47:13-19

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## Joseph's Provision

- \* Having “re-settled” the family with a possession in the land and food ...
- \* We return in v. 13 to the ongoing famine and the stark contrast between Israel's provision and the Egyptians need

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## Joseph's Provision

- \* Control of Canaan fluctuated throughout history
  - ◆ Between its own sovereign nation of God's people, and ...
    - Egypt in the South, and Babylon and Assyria in the North
    - Greece and Rome
  - ◆ Modern day Israel — vs. the Arab nations

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## Joseph's Provision

- \* The 1<sup>st</sup> five years of the famine had exhausted "the peoples" cash reserves
- \* Joseph had dutifully accepted payment and deposited the money into Pharaoh's "treasury"

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## Joseph's Provision

### \* What might we note about Joseph's actions?

- ◆ First — That the Egyptians were expected to “pay” for the grain ... it was not charity
- ◆ Second — Joseph's integrity!! ... Never a hint or report of “A dollar for Pharaoh, a dime for me”

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## Joseph's Provision

- \* It seems obvious that Pharaoh would never have “missed” the loose change
- \* Yet Joseph's honesty is “above reproach” — he would certainly have met this qualification of an elder 😊

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## Joseph's Provision

- \* So — \$\$'s exhausted, the starving Egyptians appeal to Joseph in v. 15
- \* Essentially saying — We are out of cash ...are you going let us starve to death?
- \* So what is Joseph's response in v. 16?

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## Joseph's Provision

- ◆ He will accept payment in the form of their livestock
- \* Now — does this seem harsh or “mal-intended,” or is it an act of kindness?
- ◆ It is actually an act of kindness — HOW?

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## Joseph's Provision

- ◆ Because feeding their livestock would have been an additional burden ...
- ◆ So Joseph is again acting benevolently to supply them with the needed food
- \* How might we know that the Egyptians saw it this way?

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## Joseph's Provision

- ◆ Because they brought Joseph the required payment with no “grumbling” or seeming resentment — note v. 17
- \* How long was this supply of food intended to last?
- ◆ One year — note the last part of v. 17

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## Joseph's Provision

- \* So one year later they are back at “the food bank”
- \* Now what is different about the food negotiations for the coming year?
  - ◆ The terms are proffered by the Egyptians — Joseph doesn't say a word!
  - ◆ He — wisely — let's them take the lead

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## Summary and Statutes

- \* So what is their “offer?”
  - ◆ Themselves and their land
- \* What else is interesting about their question in v. 19?
  - ◆ Their appeal is “both” for themselves and their land!

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## Joseph's Provision

### \* So what do they request?

- ◆ Food to eat, and ...
- ◆ Seed to plant — note the last part of v. 19
- \* It is interesting to me to see that they are still trying to provide for themselves and care for the land

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## Joseph's Provision

- READ 47:20-26
- \* Versus how often people would have given up in hopelessness by this point
  - \* Now, what does all this suggest about how they view Joseph?
  - ◆ I'd say they see him as fair, having no ulterior motive for power or personal gain

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## Summary and Statutes

- \* Joseph completes the land acquisition in v. 20 and makes a wise decision in v. 21 — **What is it?**
  - ◆ He relocates the people to the cities
- \* **Why does he do this?**

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## Summary and Statutes

- ◆ Text is not explicit — but I'd suggest two reasons ...
- ◆ First — To better care for the people; and
- ◆ Second — To make the “administration” of the food distribution easier
- ◆ This said, I can't explain why he didn't do this sooner in the 7-year process

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## Summary and Statutes

- \* Continuing — We learn in v. 22 that in addition to Joseph's family, only the priests were exempted from selling their land for provision
- \* Now lest we think of the Egyptians as slaves in a "western context" ...

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## Summary and Statutes

- \* We should note that in reality what has been established is a feudal system
- \* **How can we surmise this?**
  - ◆ Note v. 24 — Essentially a tax and a fair one at that ... 20% of the produce

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## Summary and Statutes

- \* The feudal system was very common and reasonably fair ...
  - ◆ A noble or king “owned” the land
  - ◆ Serfs farmed the land and received protection in return for an annual “crop tax”

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## Summary and Statutes

- \* This may not sound appealing to our Western minds ...
- \* But it was a common and fruitful form of governance historically
- \* Now, what is the ultimate proof that the Egyptians trusted Joseph’s administration?

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## Summary and Statutes

- ◆ They viewed him as a “savior” — at least in a temporal and material sense
- \* And the final recorded act of Joseph’s stewardship was to establish the “feudal” practice as a permanent statute

READ 47:27-31

## Burial Provisions

- \* As we enter vv. 27-31 — we again begin with a contrast between the two peoples ...
- ◆ From v. 12 to v. 13 the contrast is one of provision vs. starvation
- ◆ From v. 26 to v. 27 the contrast is one of a “fruitful and free people acquiring property” vs. a “saved but bound people who lost property”

## Burial Provisions

- \* In v. 27 we see the beginnings of the “great multitude” promised to Abraham
- \* Which is intriguing and almost a “hallmark of God,” namely ...
- \* That He chooses to work in what we might see as the “oddest of circumstances” ...

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Yet, we often see God accomplishing his work in unlikely circumstances —  
*Any examples come to mind for you?*
- ◆ In the midst of heavy persecution
- ◆ In obscure places
- ◆ In unlikely people

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Jacob lived 17 years in Egypt — under Joseph's care ...
- \* Which ironically is the same number of years Jacob cared for Joseph before he left for Haran!
- \* Sensing his final days ...

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Jacob has one pressing concern — **what is it?**
  - ◆ Don't bury me in Egypt!
- \* **Why this concern — of all things?**
  - ◆ The text really doesn't say — but we can posit some reasonable ideas based on the context

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## Burial Provisions

- \* First — he may have been concerned with the burial he might receive given Joseph's position in Egypt, that is ...
- \* A lot of pomp and circumstance — but I think this is a tertiary motive at best

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Second and more probable is to reflect his faith in God's promises, namely ...
- \* To be buried in the land of promise — what Jacob considered "home," suggesting ...
- \* Jacob preferred the "promises of God" over the "acclaim of the world" — a good reminder

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Third — and maybe “2.b.” is this ...
- \* As an important object lesson to the new generation born in Egypt!
- \* That is — to impress upon them that Egypt is not their home

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Rather they are “sojourners” and their covenant promises lie in Canaan
- \* A burial in the ancestral “cemetery,” the cave at Machpelah, would forcibly make this point

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Joseph readily agrees to Jacob's request ...
- \* Which Jacob secures by demanding an oath from Joseph
- \* To which Joseph swears — apparently following the same ritual as Abram in Gen 24:2 — [READ]

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Upon securing Joseph's "oath" Jacob closes this first stage of preparing for the end with worship
- \* One of the distinct privileges of growing older is "reflection"

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Reflection is an interesting thing ...
- \* As I reflect, my mind always wanders in one of two directions ...
- \* One is [regret](#) — which can always be traced to things I have done

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## Burial Provisions

- \* And particularly what I wish to or want to have done differently ...
- \* The other is [rejoicing](#) — which can always be traced to what God has done in my life ...
- \* Things I'd never want to change, to which ...
- \* The only right-response is worship!

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## Burial Provisions

- \* There are many things that old-age can take from us — but worship is not one of them!
- \* I think this is what we see here in Jacob's final days — he bows in worship

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## Burial Provisions

- \* Which in fact is corroborated as the greatest expression of Jacob's faith by the writer of Hebrews — turn to [\[Heb 11:21\]](#)
- \* I find it fascinating that of all the things the writer of Hebrews might have chosen to highlight Jacob's great faith ...

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## Burial Provisions

- \* The one he chooses is a reasonably obscure set of events ...
- \* The focus of which is [worship](#)
- \* This really should not surprise us — turn to Rev 4 ... [\[READ chapter 4\]](#)

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## Burial Provisions

- \* This scene in heaven amplifies the fundamental importance of worship
- \* It is what we will continually do when we have the final privilege to appear before the Lord in heaven

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## Burial Provisions

- \* We find the object of Jacob’s “rejoicing in worship” in Gen 48:11 — [READ]
- \* We should reflect on the rich truth that God has neither left nor forsaken us ...
- \* So — on that perfect “endnote” — some closing thoughts ...

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## Closing Thoughts

- \* We have had a pretty remarkable journey with Joseph in chapters 37-47
- \* Looking back — the overall structure of Jacob’s patriarchy has been quite interesting

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## Closing Thoughts

- \* It started in Gen 27 ...
  - ◆ In Gen 27-36 the focus was on Jacob and his exploits leading to his ascendance as Patriarch
  - ◆ Then in Gen 37-47 the focus of attention was Joseph ...

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## Closing Thoughts

- ◆ And God's sovereign maneuvering through Joseph to get the nation to Egypt
- \* And now — starting in Gen 48 the focus returns to Jacob and his end
- \* Which paves the way for an important question to contemplate — **Which is?**

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Our “end” of Genesis and  
what will we study next??

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## Next Steps

- \* Matthew will guide us through the topic of sanctification over the next four Sundays
- \* Then I'll spend 2-3 Sunday's to wrap up Genesis
- \* So I want to gauge — or whet — your appetites for what we do next ...

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## Next Steps

- \* It's not a pure democracy — but I would like your input
- \* My proposal is this ...
  - ◆ Continue sequentially with Exodus — NOT belaboring the Tabernacle design and construction (chapters 25-31; 35-40)

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## Next Steps

- ◆ Mix in the Psalms that overlap with and speak of the exodus — 5 in total (Pss 105, 114, 33, 109, 90)
- ◆ Before the 1<sup>st</sup> one, I will spend a few weeks to introduce the Psalms and explain how Hebrew poetry works
- ◆ Which will give us a periodic break from straight narrative

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## Next Steps

- \* My thought for this proposal is — to reach closure of the “nation story” ...
  - ♦ Genesis has gotten us started
  - ♦ Exodus tells us how God fulfills His promise to bring Israel back to the land
  - ♦ And brings us to a nice stopping point for the Pentateuch, unless ...

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## Next Steps

- ♦ You want to study the details of the sacrificial system and laws in Leviticus??
- \* So — give this some thought and we can discuss over the coming weeks
- \* If you think we need a NT “foray,” I’m open to this alternative ...

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