

Genesis 45:16 – 47:26

^{45:16} Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. ¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸ and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.' ¹⁹ Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come. ²⁰ Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.' ²¹ Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey. ²² To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. ²³ To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey. ²⁴ So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, 'Do not quarrel on the journey.'

^{45:25} Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob. ²⁶ They told him, saying, 'Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.' But he was stunned, for he did not believe them. ²⁷ When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸ Then Israel said, 'It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.' ^{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 God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, 'Jacob, Jacob.' And he said, 'Here I am.' ³ 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.' 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 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.

^{46:8} Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. ⁹ The sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi. ¹⁰ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹ The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹² 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 The sons of Issachar: Tola and Puvvah and Iob and Shimron. ¹⁴ 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 The sons of Gad: Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli. ¹⁷ 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 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 The sons of Dan: Hushim. ²⁴ 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.

^{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. ²⁹ 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.' ³¹ 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 When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴ 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.'

^{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 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 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.’ 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.’ ⁷ Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸ 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. 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 Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to their little ones.

^{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 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 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 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 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 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.’ ²⁶ 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.

Historical and Cultural Background

- The entire Joseph and Judah story is in the form of a chiasm, a literary structure where the first point matches the last point, the second matches the second to last, and so on, until you get to the center. The center is the main point or turning point in the story. Notice that we are at the center of the Joseph and Judah story.

Structure of the Joseph and Judah Story¹

- A. Prologue: The genealogy of Jacob (37:1 – 2)
- B. Jacob favors Joseph, brothers hostile to Joseph (37:3 – 11)
- C. Joseph with Jacob for 17 years in Canaan, brothers sell him into slavery, Jacob mourns (37:12 – 35)
- D. Judah: moral failure and repentance with Tamar (38:1 – 26)
- E. Reversal of the firstborn: Perez before Zerah (38:27 – 30)
- F. Potiphar favors Joseph; Joseph accused unjustly by Potiphar's wife (39:1 – 23)
- G. Jailer favors Joseph; Joseph demonstrates wisdom; interprets dreams (40:1 – 42:57)
 - a. Joseph interprets dreams of cupbearer and baker (40:1 – 23)
 - b. (End of second year of that Pharaoh's reign?): Joseph leaves jail and interprets dreams of Pharaoh (41:1 – 57)
- H. Joseph tests his brothers and father (42:1 – 46:7)
 - a. Jacob sends brothers to Egypt; Joseph imprisons them, takes Simeon to test their brotherhood, demands to see Benjamin, gives silver (42:1 – 38);
 - b. Jacob finally releases Benjamin; Joseph frames Benjamin; Judah offers himself instead of Benjamin (43:1 – 34);
 - c. Joseph reveals himself (44:1 – 45:28);
 - d. Jacob sets out for Egypt (46:1 – 7)
- I. Provision for Jacob's family, all 70 persons (46:8 – 27)
- H'. Joseph reunited with his brothers and father (46:28 – 47:12)
 - a. Jacob arrives in Egypt, but sends Judah ahead (46:28 – 30);
 - b. Joseph reveals his family as shepherds (46:31 – 47:6);
 - c. Joseph welcomes Jacob, introduces him to Pharaoh; Jacob blesses Pharaoh (47:7 – 10);
 - d. Jacob moves to Ramesses in Egypt (47:11 – 12)
- G'. Joseph demonstrates wisdom, cares for Egypt, honors Pharaoh (47:13 – 26)
 - a. Year of severe famine: Joseph gives grain for money and livestock (47:13 – 17)
 - b. Second year of severe famine: Joseph gives grain for land and people (47:18 – 26)
- F'. Joseph elevated and blessed by Jacob (48:1 – 12)
- E'. Reversal of the firstborn: Ephraim before Manasseh (48:13 – 22)
- D'. Judah: Jacob blesses Judah as the firstborn among his brothers (esp. 49:8 – 12)
- C'. Joseph with Jacob for 17 years in Egypt², death of Jacob, Joseph buries him (49:29 – 50:14)
- B'. Brothers afraid of Joseph; Joseph reassures his brothers (50:15 – 21)
- A'. Epilogue: Death of Joseph (50:22 – 26)

¹ Modified by Mako Nagasawa from Duane Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publishing, 2nd publishing 2000), p.115

² See Gen.47:28, 'Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.'

Questions

1. I've broken up the passage into five parts:
 - a. Joseph sends off his brothers to Canaan (45:16 – 24)
 - b. Jacob sets out for Egypt (45:25 – 46:7)
 - c. Joseph provides for the family of Jacob (46:8 – 27)
 - d. Jacob is reunited with Joseph and meets Pharaoh (46:28 – 47:12)
 - e. Joseph demonstrates wisdom, provides for all Egypt, honors Pharaoh (47:13 – 26)
2. Joseph sends off his brothers to Canaan (45:16 – 24)
 - a. Why does Joseph still favor Benjamin by giving him more clothes and silver?
 - b. Why would Joseph tell them, 'Do not quarrel on the journey'?
3. Jacob sets out for Egypt (45:25 – 46:7). What clues do we have about Jacob's feelings?
 - a. At first, Jacob was stunned, for he did not believe them (45:26).
 - b. Energized and hopeful. Then, when he heard the 'all the words of Joseph that he had spoken' to his brothers, and 'when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived' (45:27).
 - c. Then the narrator uses the name 'Israel,' which might signify Jacob's faith at that moment: 'Then Israel said, 'It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.'" (45:28). Then Israel came to Beersheba, which we know from other passages about Isaac was near Beer-lahai-roi and where Jacob and Esau grew up; he offered sacrifices to God there (46:1).
 - d. Afraid. Then God spoke to Israel in a dream or night vision, similar to what He did at Bethel when Jacob ran from his family. God is now bookending this time. But He does have to say, 'Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.' (46:2 – 3). Israel appears to be concerned that this will not go well for his household. But God reassures him that He will bring them up again (46:4). Jacob probably remembered from Abraham that God had said they would be oppressed (Gen.15). He also probably remembered that when his parents and grandparents left the land, they got into trouble or were threatened.
4. Joseph provides for the family of Jacob (46:8 – 27)
 - a. Why would this list be here?
 - b. Why would this list be placed at the *center* of the story of Joseph and Judah? See above
 - c. To show that God cares about the whole family
 - d. To enumerate that there are 70 people in the household of Israel. Where have we seen the number 70 before? In Genesis 10, the 'table of nations.' They are a microcosm of the world.
5. Jacob is reunited with Joseph and meets Pharaoh (46:28 – 47:12)
 - a. Jacob learns how to bless Pharaoh; at 130 years of age, his great age gives him social standing and wisdom
 - b. Experience of God's provision, like the abundance of the garden of Eden; it is perhaps a foreshadowing of what would do for the entire world
6. Joseph demonstrates wisdom, provides for Egypt, honors Pharaoh (47:13 – 26)
 - a. Joseph cares for the little ones of Israel (47:12) and the little ones of Egypt (47:24). That makes him the person who demonstrates love for the smallest person that Genesis 1 – 11 cares about. God cares for each person because every person is made in His image. Jacob had to learn to not play favorites in his family. Joseph is the one who had to really learn that and then teach the rest of his family, and then live it out in such a way that the whole world around Egypt is blessed by his character.
 - b. Illus: Jean Valjean in *Les Miserables* learns how to care for life, from being a mayor of a town, and owner of a factory, and then especially by adopting Cosette
 - c. Illus: Charles Colson came to Christ after the Nixon Watergate scandal on his way to prison. He learned to care about prisoners in Alabama Maxwell Prison and founded Prison Fellowship after he got out.
 - d. Illus: Watchman Nee (1903 – 1972) was a preacher and church planter in China from 1923 – 1952. He felt Jesus lead him to stay in Mainland China in spite of the threat of Communism, and to sacrifice everything to care for people. He spent 1/3 of his income on personal expenses, 1/3 on books, and 1/3 on care for others. Nee was arrested by the Chinese Communists in March 1952 for his professed faith in Christ as well as his leadership among the local churches. He was judged, condemned, and sentenced in 1956 to fifteen years in prison, which was extended to twenty years. During this entire time, only his wife was allowed to visit him. But his heart for

others, and his love for Christ, remained undiminished. In his final letter, written on the day of his death, he said, 'In my sickness, I still remain joyful at heart.' He died in confinement in his cell on May 30, 1972. After Nee's death, when his niece came to collect his few belongings, she was given a scrap of paper that a guard had found by his bed. What was written on that scrap may serve as Watchman Nee's testament: 'Christ is the Son of God Who died for the redemption of sinners and was resurrected after three days. This is the greatest truth in the universe. I die because of my belief in Christ. Watchman Nee.' Even while in prison, he wanted to provide for others – provide them with the love he had discovered in Jesus.