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Genesis 43 - 47



Genesis - Steve Gregg

In "Genesis 43 - 47", Steve Gregg discusses the stories of Joseph and his brothers during the famine in Egypt. The brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin and are tested by Joseph to see if they have repented for their past transgressions. Joseph forgives his brothers and allows them to bring their father, Jacob, to Egypt. The story of Joseph ends with the establishment of the Israelite family as a great nation, but the rest of Genesis focuses on administrative matters such as famine management and the distribution of blessings to Jacob's sons. Joseph's actions in collecting and storing food during the seven good years and taking 20% of it for the government during the bad years helped save Egypt from famine and became a lasting legacy in Egyptian law.

Transcript

The story of Joseph resumes at chapter 43 of Genesis. The brothers have come back from their first visit to Egypt where they bought a year's supply of grain and they found when they got home that the money had been returned to them and so they're alarmed about that. They're not sure what to think of it.

Their brother Simeon has been left for that whole year in a jail, in prison, awaiting the return of the brothers and Benjamin, but they're not in a hurry to go back. Facing Joseph was not a pleasant thing for them and Jacob is not going to be sending Benjamin back without a fight and so they're just spending their time in Canaan eating the grain until it runs out and that takes about a year. They buy about a year's worth of grain at a time.

So the land, it says, the famine was severe in the land and it came to pass when they had eaten up the grain which they had bought from Egypt that their father said to them, go back and buy us a little food. But Judah spoke to him saying, the man solemnly warned us saying you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.

But if you will not send him, we will not go down for the man said to us, you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. Now it's not common for brothers to stand up and defy their father like this and say, we're not going to obey you in this, but Jacob is

being unreasonable and they're saying, you know, we can't go down there. What's the point? We won't get any grain.

We might even make the guy mad. He might put us all in prison. He's told us he won't even see us without vengeance.

So basically the ball is in Jacob's court. Will you send Benjamin or will you not? And Israel, Jacob said, why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother? But they said the man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our kindred saying, is your father still alive? Have you another brother? And we told him, according to these words, could we possibly have known that he would say, bring your brother down? We don't know if all that conversation they reported really did happen. It's not.

It's not recorded, but it's entirely possible that chapter forty two is a summary of the dealings and there may have been these questions actually asked. They are questions that Joseph would have wanted to know, so he may have asked them these things, as they said. Then Judah said to Israel, his father.

And here's where Judah stands out as the great one among his brothers. Send the lad with me and we will arise and go that we may live and not die. Both we and you and also our little ones.

I myself will be surety for him. From my hand, you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

For if we had not lingered, surely now we would have returned the second time. That is, they were running out of food and we could have had food by now if we hadn't been delaying. If that is that if you weren't reluctant as you have been to meet the conditions this man has laid out for us.

We could have been back by now with Simeon and food and their father. Israel said to them, if it must be so, then do this. Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry them down as a present for the man.

A little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. Most of these things would be products of trees and even in famines when the shallow soil crops like grain cannot grow because there's not sufficient surface water. Trees often survive because they have roots and so they still produce fruit and things like that.

So it's not as if there is nothing to eat. It's just you don't subsist on honey and pistachio nuts and almonds and spices. Those are those are things that they enhance your life and your diet, but they certainly are not things you live on.

So they're fancy things that they could send as a present. They didn't have awful lot they

could send during a famine. It is take double money in your hand and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks.

Perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also and arise and go back to the man and may God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I'm bereaved, well, I'm bereaved.

I don't have any choice in the matter. I know there's nothing more horrible to me than the prospect of being bereaved of Benjamin. But sometimes you're in a position where you just don't have any choice.

Benjamin will die if we don't have food, too. So the men took the presents and Benjamin and they took double money in their hand and rose and went down to Egypt and they stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and make ready for these men will dine with me at noon.

Then the man did as Joseph ordered and the man brought men into the men's into Joseph's house. Now, the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house. Now, on this visit, of course, Joseph is going to show uncharacteristic, uncharacteristic kindness and hospitality to them and nothing unkind.

But that they haven't seen that side of him yet. He's been nothing but gruff and suspicious and accusatory. The only other time he's gone before so that they're brought into his house doesn't look like a good sign.

Like, why would he take them aside like this to deal with them separately? You know, he had no reason to believe he's going to treat them kindly at this point. And so they were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house and they said it is because of the money which was returned in our sacks the first time that we're brought in so that we may and he may seek an occasion against us and fall upon us to take away, take us as slaves in our donkeys. When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house and said, Oh, sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food.

But it happened when we came to the encampment that we opened our sacks and there each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight. So we have brought it back in our hands and we brought down our other money in our hand to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks, but the steward said, Peace be with you.

Do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sack. I had your money.

What he means is my record show that you paid your money is on record here. We have

we have the money you paid. So this must be a miracle from God.

So you don't worry about it. Then he brought Simeon out to them who had been in jail for that whole year. So the man brought them in into Joseph's house and gave them water and they wash their feet and their donkey speed.

He gave the donkey speed. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. When Joseph came home, they brought him the present that was in their hand into the house and bowed down before him to the earth.

Once again, bowing as in the dreams. Then he asked them about their well-being and said, Is your father? Well, the old man of whom you spoke, is he still alive? And they answered, Your servant, our father is in good health. He is still alive.

And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me? And he said, God be gracious to you, my son. Now, his heart yearned for his brother.

So Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep and he went into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out and he restrained himself and said, serve the bread. So they set him a place by himself and then by themselves and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews for that's an abomination to the Egyptians.

There were certain cultural taboos in Egypt and one of them was that the Hebrews were dirty, partly because they were generally shepherders and the Egyptians had disdained for shepherders. They were an abomination to the Egyptians. And so it would not be so that Joseph would eat with his brothers because he's still playing the role of an Egyptian.

They don't know he's a Hebrew or that he's Joseph. So he sits at a separate table. However, their seating arrangement is something they could not help but notice.

It says, and they sat before him, the firstborn, according to his birthright and the youngest, according to his youth. And then they looked in astonishment at one another. What's that mean? It means that there were there were assigned table settings and he arranged them in order of their age.

Now they were amazed because how could he know the order of their age? There were eleven of them and they had been born over a short period of time, some of them probably within the same year with each other, because there were four women having babies there in the family. And so you know, these these boys were you couldn't tell by looking at them the correct order of their birth. You know, maybe maybe some of the older ones might look like some of the younger ones, but there wouldn't be that much

difference.

They're all in their forties. All of them. They're in there between 40 and 50 years old, and they're all within a few years age of each other.

And there's eleven of them. And yet they're all put in their proper birth order. Joseph did that to play with them a little bit and freak them out.

And it did it freak them out. They looked around. They were astonished.

Do you notice, you know, that the order we're sitting in is exactly our birth order. Then he took servings to them from before him. But Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs.

So they drank and were married with him. So they were relieved to have Simeon back with them and he was treating them kindly for all they knew. He might be fattening them for the slaughter, but why not enjoy the meal? They don't have much choice in the matter.

And Benjamin gets five times as much now, assuming they were given reasonable servings. He was given far more than he could eat, I'm sure. But why show such preferential treatment to Benjamin? Well, I think it's no doubt.

It's no doubt, because he's again setting them up for something. You know, they have been jealous of Joseph because their father had shown preferential treatment to him. And now Joseph was gone.

And Benjamin, the last surviving son of Rachel and the youngest, Joseph assumed must have moved into the place in his father's affections that Joseph himself had once had and therefore might well be the object of jealousy to the brothers also as Joseph had been. And if that was so, he wanted to stoke that and bring that to the surface. I'm sure that Joseph was trying to figure out and discover whether these guys were as hostile toward Benjamin as they had been to him.

And this would be one way to bring it out by showing an unaccounted for preferential generosity to Benjamin like this chapter 44. And he commanded the steward of his house saying, fill them in sacks of food as much as they can carry and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Also put my cup, the silver cup in the mouth of the sack of the youngest and his grain money.

So the steward did, according to the word that Joseph had spoken. Now, the steward was in on this whole thing. Obviously, the steward was a trusted servant of Joseph and Joseph had this whole plot planned out and possibly had even told his steward, you know, before the brothers ever arrived.

You know, when you find 10 or 11 guys about my age coming from Canaan, draw them to my attention because I've got a plan. And the steward, he just obeys everything Joseph says. It's clear from the way he interacts with the brothers that he's helping Joseph along with this whole, this whole impression he's giving.

And so as soon as the morning dawn, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. And when they had gone out of the city and we're not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, get up, follow them in. And when you overtake them, say to them, why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my Lord drinks and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.

Now, the silver cup was something that Egyptian officials had. It was one of the just one of the things that went with the office because they actually did practice divination. Probably something on the same order of reading tea leaves, although more likely it was bits of dust, maybe even gold dust in a cup of wine and the patterns that they took and so forth were interpreted as omens.

And so that's what a couple like that was used for. Now, there's really no reason in the world to think that Joseph ever really used it for that. It was probably just one of the trappings that came with the office.

You know, when he got his mansion, there's probably that cup was there on the mantle because it's just one of the things they have there. Obviously, he didn't need it. He was willing to part with it.

He put it in the sack, although he would get it back. It's not something he had any real use for, I'm sure. But the brothers didn't know that they didn't know they were dealing with anyone other than just a pagan superstitious Egyptian leader.

And so he indicates that he needs this cup to drink from and to divine. So the steward overtook them and he spoke to them these same words. And they said to him, why does my Lord say these words far be it from us that your servant should do such a thing.

However, they should have been cautious at this point. They knew that strange things had happened before. And if there's this accusation being made, rather than the outwardly indignant, they might say, I wonder if there's something fishy going on here again.

But when people are falsely accused, sometimes their first impression is just to defend themselves and not and not suspect that there could be anything that would show them guilty, since they know they're not. Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan, the money which we found in the mouth of our sack. How then could we steal silver gold from your Lord's house with whomever your servants with whomever of your servants it is found, let him die.

And we also will be my Lord's slave. This is very much like when layman was searching for his household terror of them and taking the whoever you find it with one guy, a bit of a rash statement. And fortunately, the steward knew better than to take them at that.

He said nonsense. He said, Now let us let it be according to your words. He who with whom it is found should be my slave and you should be blameless.

So they said, you find it with one of us, kill him and the rest of the slaves. Let's recast that. If I find it with someone, he'll be my slave.

The rest of your free. And so what's going to happen? I wonder. We know it's in Benjamin's sack.

Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground and each one open his sack. So he searched and he began with the oldest. Now the steward knew which sack it was.

Any new is in the youngest, but he builds the tension and maybe gives them time to begin to wonder as each sack is searched. Come to think of it, is he going to find it in one of these sacks? You know, did someone stick that in there? Like someone stuck our money in there before it gives them time to sweat it out. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest.

And of course, the cup was found in Benjamin sack. Now this is the test. Having reached its culmination because Benjamin was now at the mercy of his brothers because they, he could become a slave in Egypt, but this time through no fault of their own.

They didn't make it happen. As far as they know, he had stolen the cup, or at least someone had put it in there against any of their wishes. So they're not responsible.

If they didn't like Benjamin, like they formerly had not like Joseph, they might be just glad for good riddance to the kid. He's going into Egypt. He's going to be a slave, just like Joseph.

And that's no skin off our nose. We're going to go home. Just tell dad, Hey, wasn't our doing this time.

We're right. It wasn't. And therefore they were in the position.

If they hated Benjamin as much as they hated Joseph to, to just surrender Benjamin to their, to his fate and to go home to their father and say, sorry, dad, you have to just deal with it. We couldn't stop it. We had no power in the situation.

It wasn't us. And they could have a clear conscience. On the other hand, if they had really become changed men, if they had true repentance about what had happened to Joseph and regretted that it happened, it would never even think of letting that happen to Benjamin.

Then Joseph would know that they were forgivable, that he could, he could forgive them for what they'd done to him because they were obviously changed. They were different than before. And this trap had been set and snapped as it was at this point in order to put them in the position to show their colors.

Will they abandon Benjamin as they did to Joseph heartlessly to become a slave in Egypt for the rest of his life? Or will they not? And in verse 13, they tore their clothes and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city. As every one of them, not one of them said, come on, let's just leave Benjamin here and let's go home. Get to safety.

We've got the food we need for another year. Not, not one of them did. They all, they all went back to rescue Benjamin if they could.

But Judah, especially Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house and he was still there and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, what deed is this? You have done. Did you not know that such a man as I certainly can practice divination.

In other words, you couldn't get away with this because I divine things and I know things that others don't know and that you can't hide from me. Then Judah said, what shall we say to my Lord? What shall we speak or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. Here we are, your Lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup is found.

In other words, if he's going to slave, we're going to be slaves to the Joseph said, far be it from me that I should do so. But the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father.

Then Judah came near to him and said, Oh my Lord, please let your servant speak a word in your Lord's my Lord's hearing and do not let your anger burn against your servant. For you are even like Pharaoh. My Lord asked his servant saying, have you a father or a brother? And we said to my Lord, we have a father, an old man and a child at his old age, who is young.

His brother is dead and he alone is left with his mother's children and his father loves him. Then you said to your servants, bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him. And we said to my Lord, the lad cannot leave his father for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

But you said to your servant, unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more. So it was when we went up to your servant, my father, and we told him the words of my Lord and our father said, go back and buy us a little food. We said, we cannot go down if our youngest brother is not with us, then we will go down for, uh, he said, we can't go down.

If our younger brother is with us, then we will go down for. We may not see the man's

face unless our youngest brother is with us. Then your servant, my father said to us, you know that my wife bore me two sons and that one went out from me.

And I said, surely he's torn in pieces and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me and calamity befalls him, you should bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to your servant, my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up with the lad's life, it will happen when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die.

So your servants will bring down the gray hair of their house, of your servant, our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father's pain. If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.

Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my Lord and let the lad go up to his brothers with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me? Lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father. Then Joseph could not restrain himself.

And I can't either. I've never been able to read this story out loud. I've talked through Genesis 30 times, probably.

And I say this time I'll be able to read it out loud. But I can't. I don't know why.

I've always wondered why. What is there about this story that is so moving? But I think it's just seeing the virtue of somebody who's so changed, as Judah was. And no doubt, speaking for all the brothers, to see men who are so corrupt and so evil, but who had become so repugnant.

And Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him. And he cried out, make everyone go out from me. So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

And he wept aloud. And the Egyptians and the House of Pharaoh heard it. That's how loud he wept.

He was wailing. All the servants in the household had been sent to other rooms could hear him wailing in there. Then Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph.

Does my father still live? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. I guess it would be. This is Joseph.

Can you imagine suddenly that realization being made known to them after what they'd done? And he's been roughened up with them in his first appearance, but they're not sure what he thinks of them at this point. They're not sure if he's going to punish them. He certainly could.

If anyone could, he could. He was in a position. They were totally at his mercy.

He could have killed all of them and just or made them slaves or prisoners and just sent Benjamin home to his dad. But they just didn't know what to think. They were dismayed to know they were in the presence of Joseph.

And Joseph said to his brothers, please come near me. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

But now do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years, the famine has been in the land and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing or harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

So now it was not you who sent me here, but God. And he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hasten and go up to my father and say to him, Thus says your son, Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt.

Come down to me and do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds and all that you have there. I will provide for you, lest you and your households and all that you have come to poverty.

For there are still five years of famine and behold your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin. See that it is my mouth that speaks to you. So you should tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all that you have seen and you shall hasten and bring my father down here.

Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brothers and wept over them and after that his brothers talked with him. They finally, I mean, they got their breath back, I guess, and were able to talk and visit with him.

But again, I mean, they've got to be in one of the only three eyes. OK, this guy's not going to hurt us. This guy wants us to bring our father here, but we're going to tell our dad.

I mean, you just can't. You can't get Jacob in on this picture without telling him what happened to Joseph and why Joseph was in Egypt in the first place and the guilt of his brother. So now that they have shown that their hearts are changed, they now are going to make confession of their sins to their father.

We don't read of them making that confession, but that's obviously it had to happen. You

can't just go say Joseph's alive and hope that their dad never finds out that they're the ones who sold him into Egypt. So the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house saying Joseph's brothers have come.

So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. Well, and Pharaoh said to Joseph, save your brothers, do this, load your beasts and depart and go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father in your household and come to me.

I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded to do this. Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives.

Bring your father and come. Also, do not be concerned about your goods for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours. Then the sons of Israel did so and Joseph gave them carts according to the command of Pharaoh and he gave them provisions for the journey.

He gave all of them to each man changes of rain garments. But Benjamin, he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of garments. Now, 300 pieces of silver might not know exactly what that's worth.

We do know that a slave sold for 30 pieces of silver, so this is he could have gotten 10 personal slaves for that amount of money. That's not likely what he spent on, but that's the amount of money it was. And gave him a five changes of garments by the changes of garments.

We all have a lot of changes of garments in our rooms and we probably only brought a small portion to the school with us of what we have at home. But a change of garments is really an expensive item in biblical times. Cloth was not manufactured on looms.

It was, you know, dyes were not manufactured in in laboratories. To make cloth was a really labor intensive thing, and therefore cloth was very expensive and most people didn't even have, but maybe one change of clothing is the peasants often didn't even have one change. They would have to bathe in the clothes they wore because they didn't have any clothes to replace it with.

They kind of wash themselves and their clothes in the same action. And so I mean to give five changes of garments is really to give what is a great luxury in that day. It's an item of great value.

I give him five sports cars or something like that, you know. And he sent to his father these things, ten donkeys loaded with the goods, the good things of Egypt, ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread and food for his father for the journey. So he sent his brothers away and they departed and he said to them, see that you do not become troubled along the way.

Then they went up out of the out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob, their father, and they told him, saying, Joseph is still alive and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart stood still because he did not believe them. So he died.

No, he didn't die. Almost. But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them and when he saw the carts that Joseph had sent to carry him, his the spirit of Jacob, their father revived.

Then Israel said it is enough. Joseph, my son, is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.

And this really is kind of the climax of the story of Joseph. But it's not over. There's a lot of somewhat we might think anticlimactic chapters ahead of us.

Still another five chapters to go. And and most of the information is just kind of administrative stuff. Not much drama, not much human interest stuff.

It's mainly administrative how Joseph administrates the the economics of the famine, how the blessings are distributed to the sons of Jacob and of Joseph. But we do have that material still to cover. But this truly is really the high point of the story.

It's the happy ending right here. Jacob finds out Joseph is alive. I mean, in a movie, that's where it ends.

You know, it's what you've been waiting for. After that, what else is there? And the truth of that is, there isn't very much else in Genesis, but because it's not a novel and because it's not fiction, because it is a record of things that really happened, there are other things that happened beyond the climax of the story. And so we will have to finish those up.

So in Genesis 46, Joseph is invited his father and brothers to come to Egypt, where they'll be sustained for the remaining five years of the famine. Of course, once they went down there, they stayed a lot longer than that. But at this point, the next five years is all that's really in view.

So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father, Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of night and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here I am.

And he said, I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again.

And Joseph will put his hand on your eyes. And Jacob arose from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried their father, Jacob, their little ones and their wives in the carts,

which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their livestock and their goods, which they'd acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him.

His sons and his sons, sons, his daughters, his sons, daughters and all his descendants. He brought with him to Egypt. So the whole nation, as it were, wasn't a nation yet.

It's just a family. But the whole nation of Israel ends up going down in Egypt. The one thing about this section that might be worthy of note is that God actually took the trouble to appear to Jacob in a dream and to tell him, Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt.

Now, he's the third generation in a row who experienced a famine in the land of Canaan and had Egypt as an option to consider. Abraham had had a famine in Canaan in Genesis 12 and had gone down to Egypt. Isaac at a later point in Chapter 26, there was a famine in the land when he was there and he was told not to go to Egypt.

And so Jacob at this point, of course, it seems natural to go to Egypt. That's where Joseph is. But he no doubt needs some kind of release about that.

Isaac, during a famine, had been specifically told not to go to Egypt. God apparently felt like he should give Jacob the clear green light on this. And so he appeared to us as don't be afraid to go down there.

That's where I want you to go. Verse eight. Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons who went to Egypt.

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. The sons of Reuben were Hanock, Palu, Hezron and Carmi. Now, Frank pointed out during the break that when Reuben was trying to persuade his father to send Benjamin down to Egypt, he said, Slay my two sons if I don't bring him back.

And yet there are four sons of Reuben here mentioned who went down to Egypt with them. And this was about a year after Reuben made that statement. So it's possible that Reuben had his wife had twins during that year.

He mentioned he had two sons, but apparently there were two more sons that eventually went down with him only a year or so later. But that's not impossible. He could have had a pregnant wife at the time, could have had two sons serially or or two sons as twins in that time.

It says the sons of Simeon, which is the second born were Gemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Now these Levites, the people of Levi became eventually in the days of Moses, the people who attended the tabernacle and the various branches of that tribe

were there were three branches, the Gershonites, the Kohathites and the Merarites.

And they were from these three sons of Levi eventually. But that's much later, generations later. The sons of Judah were Ur, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah.

Now Ur and Onan didn't go down to Egypt with them because they had died, you remember, in the incident with Tamar. And it says so here in parentheses, Ur and Onan died in the land of Canaan. So it was really only Shelah, Perez and Zerah that went with Judah down.

The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamel. So some grandsons of Judah went down to. This is why we were talking about the difficulties of fitting everything from chapter 38, which was the story of Tamar and Judah and so forth, fitting all that into the time period that was available.

Because if if the sons of Jacob were all born during the second seven years he spent with Laman, rather than some of them in the first seven and some of the second seven. And that was something that we discussed with different theories about that. If if, let's say, Judah, the third son was born only after the first son had been born in the seventh year, Judah would be born no sooner than maybe the ninth or the tenth year.

That may be about 10 years old when they left Canaan. Now, from the time I mean, left for Canaan, left Paddan Aram and went to Canaan. Am I right to say? Yeah, there are six years plus maybe four.

Seems right. So if Judah was about 10 years old when he left Canaan, he had to have sons that grew up who married Tamar serially. And then when they were dead and his youngest son had grown up, Judah had had a child with Tamar.

But then one of those children had sons by the time they came down to Egypt. So we got like four generations there. And the amount of time between the departure from Paddan Aram and the going into Egypt is 33 years.

That's that just can be calculated from various ways. I'm not going to go into right now, but it was 33 years they spent in Canaan between going from Paddan Aram to Canaan at the beginning and going into Egypt. Now, that 33 years in Canaan has to be added to whatever age Judah was when they came to Canaan from Paddan Aram.

Let's say he was 10 years old. That means there's altogether 43 years of Judah's life that have to somehow have four generations. You've got to have kids and grandkids.

Now a man can be a grandfather at age 43. It's not impossible, but you have to have him marrying, you know, at age 13 or 14, and then his son's marrying at a similar age and possibly having infant children. So because of that bit of a problem, I mean, it's not impossible, but some people believe that we have to have the birth of Jacob's sons

taking place during the first seven years.

Also, that is, with living and not starting at the end of that period. If I'm confusing you, it's only because that that story is far enough behind us that our discussion of it is now forgotten. And it is confusing if you're not looking at the data in the story itself.

Anyway, the main thing to point out is that Judah had some grandsons by this time, two of them. They could have been infants, but he couldn't have been, he couldn't have been more than 50 years old, even at the most optimistic. 49 be the oldest he could possibly be.

And yet he had some grandchildren. I mean, lots of people at 49 have grandchildren. This is the time where, yeah, let's see.

Well, there was a period of time there between Onan to grow up. Yeah, right. Yeah.

So it's not clear exactly how all that fits, but it can fit. It's just tight. The sons of Isishar were Tola, Puvah, Job, not the Job in all likelihood, although it was suggested in one conversation that this might even be the Job of the book of Job.

But then you have to find some way to have him departed from the family at a certain point in going to the east, even east of the Edomites and becoming a powerful man there. I think it more likely we've got a different job than you here, but anyway, the name is the same. And Shimon, the sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elan and Jalil.

These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram and his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters were 33, meaning all the grandkids and stuff. All of that branch of the family.

The sons of Gad were Ziphion, Haggai, Shunni, Esben, Eri, Erod and Erel. The sons of Asher were Jemna, Isuah, Esui, Beriah and Sarah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malkiel.

So some grandkids there, too. These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah, his daughter, and these she bore to Jacob, 16 persons. And the sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin.

And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar, the priest of Oam, bore him. The sons of Benjamin were Bila, Becher, Asphal, Gerah, Neheman, Ehi, Rosh, Mupim, Hupim, these two might have been twins, and Ard. These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob, 14 persons in all.

Now, the main issue that we have to note there is that when Benjamin went into Egypt, he was probably not much more than about 20 or 22 years old, but he had 10 kids, which means he either married really young or had a fair batch of triplets once in a

while, because at age 20 or 22, probably, I would think, is that what you'd calculate? 23, maybe? I mean, if he got married at age 13, which is not impossible, and had a kid every year, he'd have 10 kids. That'd be perhaps unusual. His father and grandfather and others got married much later in life, like at 40 is more common.

But a lot of these boys seemed to have married young, and had, maybe in their teens, and had kids and grandkids in this period of time. In any case, Benjamin had 10 sons. Of course, if he had twins every once in a while, I mean, in some families, you know, they do have multiple sets of twins.

That would mean he could have gotten married a little later in life, in his mid-teens, perhaps, and then still had the same number of children by the time he was in his early 20s. The sons of Dan were Hushim. Excuse me, the son of Dan was Hushim.

There's just one there. The sons of Naphtali were Jazil, Guni, Jaser, and Shilam, or Shilam. These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel, his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob, seven persons in all.

So all the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons, wives, were 66 persons in all. Now, if you add to that Jacob himself and Joseph and his two sons, the total number of Israelites that were in Egypt was 70. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons.

All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were 70. Joseph, of course, went to Egypt earlier, and Joseph's two sons apparently are counted as those who went to Egypt, although they were born in Egypt, but in their father they went to Egypt. I mean, they were in Joseph when he went there, at least in the manner of speaking that the Bible would normally speak.

Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph to point out before him the way to Goshen, and they came to the land of Goshen. So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. And he presented himself to him and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

And Israel said to Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive. And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, My brothers and those of my father's house who were in the land of Canaan have come to me. And the men of our shepherds for their occupation has been to feed livestock, and they have brought their flocks, their herds and all that they have.

So it shall be when Pharaoh calls you and says, What is your occupation that you shall say your servant's occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers, that you may dwell in the land of Goshen for every shepherd is

an abomination to the Egyptians. So he's saying, Tell Pharaoh that your shepherds, which was true, that was not a lie, but it was so that they would be granted an area to live by themselves, separate from the Egyptians, because, as we said, shepherds are an abomination to the Egyptians, shepherds, just they were uncultured people, generally speaking. I mean, Jacob's family is probably much more of a cultured family than the average, because they were rich and all.

But lots of shepherds were just, you know, rough folks and uncultured and dirty and stuff. And the Egyptians consider themselves too cultured and too sophisticated to really associate with such a rabble. And so he's saying, Let Pharaoh know that your shepherds, because then he'll know that he should give you someplace to live separate from the rest of the Egyptians, since the Egyptians in general are not fond at all of shepherds.

We're actually take one more chapter here before we break, because we can. Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh and said, My father, my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess have come from the land of Canaan. And indeed, they are now in the land of Goshen.

And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. I don't know why five, maybe just twelve would seem like a crowd and five would be enough as a representative of the family. And Pharaoh said to his brothers, What is your occupation? And they said to Pharaoh, Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers.

And they said to Pharaoh, We have come to sojourn in the land because your servants have no pasture for their flocks. For the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land.

Let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock. Then Joseph brought in his father, Jacob, and said him before Pharaoh and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Interesting, because the lesser man is always blessed by the better man. And that Jacob would pronounce a blessing over Pharaoh, suggest Jacob's moral superiority or spiritual superiority over Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Jacob, How old are you? And Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years.

Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. He's had a harder life than his father's had, he says, and they live longer, but he's prematurely aged

only 130 years old. So Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from there from before Pharaoh and Joseph situated his father and brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt in the best of the land in the land of Ramesses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

It apparently was also the land of Goshen. Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers and all his father's household with bread, according to the number of their families. Now, the rest of this chapter tells or most of it, at least, about how Joseph administrated the the feeding of the starving.

And basically what it boils down to is over the next years of the famine. Each year he took more from the people until everything had been taken from them, except their lives. And even they were became slaves of Pharaoh.

Now there was no bread in all the land for the famine was very severe so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. And Joseph gathered up 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.

So when the money failed in the land of Egypt, that is when the Egyptians who needed more grain didn't have any more money because they'd already spent it all on the grain they had eaten. When the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, give us bread for why should we die in your presence for the money has failed. That doesn't mean they had an economic crisis for the paper currency, you know, lost its value.

Money has we've run out as well. There's no more money. The supply is gone.

Then Joseph said, give your livestock and I will give you bread for your livestock. If the money is gone, so they brought their livestock to Joseph and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses and flocks and cattle and herds and for the donkeys. Thus, he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year.

So these people are giving up all their resources just to stay alive each year. They're going to be poorer, but only having their lives to cling to. When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, we will not hide from my Lord that our money is gone.

The Lord also has our herds and livestock. There is nothing left in the side of my Lord, but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes? Both we and our land by us and our land for bread and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh.

Give us seed that we may live and not die that the land may not be desolate. Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. For every man of the Egyptians sold his field because the famine was severe upon them.

So the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he moved them into the cities for one from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end. Only the land of the priests he did not buy for the priests had rations allotted to them by the Pharaoh, and they ate their rations, which Pharaoh gave them.

Therefore, they did not sell their lands. Then Joseph said to the people, indeed, I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is feed for you and you shall sow in the land and it should come to pass in the harvest that you should give one fifth to Pharaoh.

Four fifths shall be your own as feed for the field and for your food for those of your households and as food for your little ones. So they said, you have saved our lives. Let us find favor in the sight of my Lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.

And Joseph made a law over the land of Egypt to this day. That Pharaoh should have one fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh. So the priests, because they were already on the public dole, didn't have to sell what they own.

They weren't desperate. They already were eating freely from the grain that had been stored up because they were government employees. But everyone who is not a government employee had to.

Well, they had to collectivize their wealth. They initially were a free enterprise system. They had their lands, they had their livestock, they had their produce.

They could exchange things in the marketplace and get money. But soon they became dependent on the government for those things. And they had to give up their money first.

Later, they had to give up their breeding stock. And, you know, basically what would amount to the factory equipment and stuff in a modern society, the stuff that you use to generate income. You had to give that up, too.

They still had their lands, but that became government property, too. And eventually they themselves became slaves of Pharaoh. Now, the arrangement that Joseph made with them was not extremely oppressive for that of slaves.

Basically, Egypt became a slave state. It was totally a socialized state. And because people were dependent on the government, they became slaves of the government.

And and yet Joseph was not a real tyrant type. He had to take something from them in exchange for grain, because that was his job to enrich Pharaoh. And and, you know, when people are buying the supplies, he didn't have a welfare state.

But it was nonetheless. Well, it was it became a welfare state. Basically, when they didn't

own their land or their money or their bodies anymore, he moved them into cities.

Now, generally speaking, most of the population didn't live in cities in those days because cities are confined by walls and you can't grow crops in them. There's not enough land in agrarian societies. Almost everyone has fields and land and they grow crops.

A small percentage live in cities and do the administrative stuff for the government and maybe have shops and things like that. There was not very much manufacturing in ancient times and there was no industrialization. So there was not really any.

It wasn't really practical for most people live in cities. They had to be out farming. But these guys now didn't have farms.

All the land belongs to Pharaoh. And so he relocated the people into the cities. It's amazing how this corresponds with some of the trends in our own modern society today.

The government definitely is. Well, our society now, most people have moved into cities. We don't have many farmers anymore.

I forget the percentage used to be. It used to be like 93 percent of Americans were farmers, like 150 years ago. Now, three percent of Americans are farmers and they they grow all the grain for the whole country and for most the rest of the world to three percent of our population.

The rest of us are at least suburban, if not urban dwellers. You know, there's there's not much that we do to subsist off the land anymore. And that's OK.

That's just the way our society has turned out, because there's more jobs in the area of industry and business than there are in the area of agriculture these days. But it does mean when people become city dwellers, they become totally dependent on the system because they just can't go out and pick food off the sidewalks to eat. It's all paid.

They they have to be part of the machine. They have to be part of the system. They're not independent people anymore.

Only when people have some land. Was it I think it was Benjamin Franklin that said that if every person had one acre of land, if every family, one acre of land, there could be no tyrants, you know, because a person couldn't grow his own food and he wouldn't have to submit to tyrants. But when you don't grow your own food and everything's collectivized and the government owns it all, then you depend on them.

They can set the terms. You become a slave of the government because you depend on the government. And that's really what happened here.

Now, is Joseph the bad guy then because he did this? No, they saw it as good. He was

their savior. Of course, many times socialism is accepted by a society because they see it as the salvation of the poor.

And no doubt it is helpful to the poor. It's not real good for the rich. But this situation is not exactly parallel because there were no rich.

The government had all the resources to begin with and simply was keeping people alive in exchange for everything else they had. But Joseph only took 20 percent from them. That's how much they were taking during the good years.

You know, they're storing up food during the seven good years. Twenty percent was taken in per year and it was enough apparently to feed them through the bad years. So people already have been accustomed to laying out that much of their income.

And now he's saying, that's all I'm going to you. You can still keep 80 percent for your families and stuff like that. But just give the government 20 percent.

That still is much less oppressive than any modern Western economy that I know of. The governments always take more than 20 percent of the income of the citizens. And yet we are moving more and more into the direction of that kind of collectivist mentality that, you know, we just give it all to the government, let them take care of us.

We're like their children. It's a nanny state. And that's what that's what Egypt became a nanny state.

These people were like children who had to depend on the government for everything, whereas before they've been more self-sufficient. They had their farms. They had what they could take care of themselves.

And I don't know that this fared badly for them in the long run. We don't know very much how this worked out for them in the long run. But it did become a permanent law, it says.

And apparently even he says even to this day in verse 26, now to this day, whose day is that? The writer's day. And who's the writer? Moses. Moses knew Egyptian law.

He was raised in the Egyptian pharaoh's court. He was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was familiar with Egyptian law in his own day.

And as he's telling the story, he says, you know what? Even today, this law that Joseph enacted, it's still it's still on the books. It's still the way things are handled in Egypt today. And that was hundreds of years later.

So there was a lasting legacy that Joseph left upon even the government policies of Egypt. Not only did he save his family and save the world from famine, but he was a statesman. He was a lawmaker, a legislator.

He was all those things and everything he did, he apparently did well. Now, verse 27. So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goshen.

And they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years. So the length of Jacob's life was 147 years because he came there when he was 130 years old, he said.

When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, Now, if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh. Again, that's how an oath was taken in that society. We saw when Abraham had his servant do the same thing to take an oath.

And deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my father's. You should carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.

And Joseph said, I will do as you have said. Then he said, swear to me. And he swore to him.

So Israel bowed himself on the head of his bed. Now, at this point, we will take a break. And what remains really in chapters 48 and 49 are the various blessings to the sons of Joseph and the sons of Jacob.

And then chapter 50, of course, just wraps up the story and eventually has the death of Joseph. And so just have three chapters left of Genesis, and we will take those in our next session.