

GENESIS 47:7-12 (AND JACOB BLESSED PHARAOH)

Introduction: Jacob will come before Pharaoh in today's verses and there will be a tender exchange between the two. After that, we'll see Joseph's planned care for Israel during their time in Egypt. These things, though brought about by Joseph, were actually planned by God.

Every detail that has happened in the lives of these people has been orchestrated to demonstrate His providential hand over the ages, over the elements, even over the choices that the people have made. As RC Sproul says, "There are no maverick molecules in the universe."

Every atom that flies about is known to God, every drop of water serves His purposes, and the vast distances between the extremities of the universe are traversed by Him at all times and eternally. Let's keep this in mind as we look at what otherwise seems the futility of life to those around us.

The lies of evolution and global warming show the world a God who is lacking control, ineffective in His capabilities, and unable to keep His promises. This isn't the God of the Bible. Our God is great in all ways, perfect in His very being, and holds absolute sway over the minutest details of our lives. We are in good hands.

Text Verse: "Man *who is* born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble.

² He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue. Job 14:1, 2

It's true, our days are few and they are filled with trouble, but there is purpose and there is reason for it all. Though we are like the flower that is beautiful one day and gone the next, because of Jesus Christ, we have a hope which springs eternal. The radiance of what we will be is worth the wait, worth the grief, and worth the anguish we often suffer.

Hold fast to this truth. It is the constant theme of God's superior word and so let's turn to that wonderful book again and ... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Days of the Years of My Pilgrimage (verses 7-10)

⁷ Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh;

In our last sermon, we saw the cares taken for Jacob and the family of Israel as they settled in Egypt. We also were shown that only five of the brothers had been brought before Pharaoh. The Hebrew used to describe them was unusual.

This unusual wording was used because it was speaking of those who would survive at the time of the tribulation. It would be those who are left alive by grace and who will be brought into the presence of God's Great House, represented by Pharaoh.

This verse about Jacob seems to confirm that. Jacob, during these Joseph sermons has pictured the collective body of Israel from all the ages. He represents not a tribe, but all the tribes, or the people collectively from those tribes. After the five brothers are brought before Pharaoh, Jacob is brought in. It pictures Israel in the presence of their God.

⁷ (con't) and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

To bless another carries different connotations in the Bible. We can bless someone by giving a simple greeting - "The Lord bless you." That's a nice way of hailing one another, which we more and more fail to do in our society.

It goes all the way back to the high priestly blessing in Numbers 6:24 and is first used between people in the Bible in the book of Ruth (2:4). I try to say this to anyone I greet - a cashier at the store or someone at the mall as I take out the garbage. I wish everyone would still use this type of speech, but it's fading quickly.

Another way one can bless another is from a position of superiority to one of a lesser position. In Genesis 14, Melchizedek pronounced a blessing upon Abraham. When he did, he said -

“Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
²⁰ And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” Genesis 14:19, 20

In an analysis of that blessing, the author of Hebrews says, "Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better." (7:7) In this, we found that Melchizedek is actually deemed to be greater than Abraham, even though Abraham is considered the father of the faithful.

We can also bless the Lord, such as happens many times in the Bible where someone says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul" or something like that. This isn't somehow saying we are greater than God. Rather it is using the term "to bless" in a different way; it is a term of honor and praise.

And so we are left with a question as to what this verse means when it says *v'barekh Ya'acov eth Pharaoh* - "and Jacob blessed Pharaoh." It doesn't give the blessing he pronounced and yet it makes the point that he, in fact, blessed him. So what is this telling us? Who is the greater?

The answer is that one is greater than the other in reality, and the same is lesser than the other in picture. Jacob is the living covenant patriarch. He *is* the greatest person on earth at this time in history. He is a prophet of the Lord and the one to monitor faithfulness to the family's responsibility to God, such as circumcision on the eighth day.

He is also the one who is obeyed and respected by those in the covenant line - as we have seen time and again. Joseph may be the second ruler of Egypt, but he is subordinate to his greater father, Jacob, in person. Pharaoh is no different. Therefore, Jacob's blessing is from the greater to the lesser. It is a blessing upon Pharaoh, not a hailing of Pharaoh.

However, in picture, the exact opposite is true. *V'barekh Ya'acov eth Pharaoh* - "And Jacob blessed Pharaoh." In picture, Jacob is corporate Israel, brought into the presence of God. And they shall bless God as we see in the Psalms. From a portion of the 68th Psalm, we read these words -

"They have seen Your procession, O God,
The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
²⁵ The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after;
Among *them were* the maidens playing timbrels.
²⁶ Bless God in the congregations,
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
²⁷ There *is* little Benjamin, their leader,
The princes of Judah *and* their company,
The princes of Zebulun *and* the princes of Naphtali." Psalm 68:24-27

This complex concept of blessing shows us why Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh isn't actually recorded here in the Bible. It's because in reality it was one type of blessing, but in picture it is another. This is certain because if it was one type of blessing or another, such as Melchizedek's blessing on Abraham, it would have been recorded.

*Bless God in the congregations
The Lord, from the fountain of Israel
Bless Him all you Christian denominations
And of His mighty works to all the world, do tell*

*Bless the Lord with a great resounding voice
Bless the Lord, Yes! O my soul
Bless the Lord you peoples, and rejoice
And all His mighty works shall we extol*

⁸ Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old *are* you?"

This probably sounds like a bizarre question to put forth as the very first question that you would ever ask of a person. Especially coming from the ruler of all of Egypt, Pharaoh himself. You might expect something like, "So how was your trip down here" or "I hope the royal carts weren't too bumpy on the highway, were they?"

Or maybe you might think he'd ask, "What about that Joseph, eh? The ruler of the whole world, pretty nifty!" Right? I mean anything but "How old are

you?" But considering the circumstances, it was probably the first thing that jumped into his mind.

Joseph, his right hand man, is only 39 years old. He would have been shaven as an Egyptian, youthful, and close to the prime of his life. The obvious difference in appearance between the two, especially because of the huge age difference, must have been shocking.

Jacob would have a gray head and a long gray beard, both of which wouldn't have been seen in the normal circles of Egypt. He would have been calloused in hand and foot, wrinkled in the face, bent over at the back, and for all we know he could have been wearing a favorite garment made by his beloved Rachel who had died some 30 years earlier.

The question wasn't "How old are you?" in a flat tone. It was probably, "*How old* are you?" Each word was uttered in an astonished awe. And to show that this is certainly how Pharaoh said it, we can look at Jacob's response...

⁹ And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* one hundred and thirty years;

In his response to Pharaoh, he begins with words of faith, "the days of the years of *my pilgrimage*." The word we use for "pilgrim" came from a French word *pelegrin*. This was a corruption of an earlier Latin word *peregrinus*.

This implies a stranger or a foreigner and is based on the adverb *peregre* which means "not at home." A pilgrim, throughout the ages, is a person that goes on a journey of some sort, even quite often for a religious reason.

As they aren't home, they can expect hardship and privation. And this pretty much sums up the life of Jacob in both his worldly walk and in his spiritual walk. And this is one attribute which the people of God are especially noted for. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, speaking of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, it says this -

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Hebrews 11:13

Like those who went before him in faith, Jacob also confesses that he is only on a pilgrimage. This life isn't his ultimate destination, but a walk towards something greater. Saying this to Pharaoh would be more relevant because this is what the pharaoh's believed of themselves.

They thought that they were set for an eternal life with all the trimming of bliss, wealth, prosperity, and contentment. For a commoner from another country to claim that they had another, greater inheritance, would probably have been received with unusual surprise.

In our world today, it is no different when we say, "This world isn't our home." If you ask most people if they believe in heaven, they will say "Yes", but they normally don't live in that way. Instead, life is filled with self-gratification and a hunger to complete bucket-lists, and to make as much as possible before their demise.

Unfortunately, too many Christians act in the same way. Instead of the faithful response of Jacob, we see the lusting actions of David and Bathsheba or the greedy actions of those who sold in the temple at Jesus' time. In Acts, Ananias and Sapphira are a perfect example of faithless Christians who put notoriety and profit above devotion to God.

But, if we can really hold fast to the promise of eternal life because of Jesus, the material things will find their proper perspective in this life. All we have is a blessing and it has been given by our gracious God, but it shouldn't be the consuming drive of our lives.

Finally, in finishing this thought to Pharaoh, Jacob's words to him say that "*the days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years.*" Jacob was born in the year 2169AM. He now stands before Pharaoh at the age of 130, and so it is the year 2299AM. From this statement, many important connections can be made to dating elsewhere in the Bible.

God records these things so that we will take the time to navigate through the dating of the Bible and determine where we are in human history. Joseph is now 39 and so he was born when Jacob was 91. No wonder Pharaoh was astonished. Joseph is fully grown with his own family and yet Jacob is 91 years older than him!

And one more point about what is said here is that in both the question by Pharaoh, and in the answer by Jacob, the term *yeme sheme* "the days of the years" is used.

It is the Bible's way of reminding us that we don't live by years until the years are complete. We live by days and moments. There is no control over time and circumstance by us, no matter what we may think. In the end, every day is a gift and each moment is all we have. The Bible asks us to consider this and take it to heart.

This is the reason why the Bible tells us to pay attention to the days. In the 90th Psalm, Moses said -

"So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12

When we look to the years we have lived or that we anticipate we will live, we get our vision out of focus and our thoughts out of perspective. When we count our days instead of years, we see that they are actually few, though greater in number.

James, like Moses, asks us to take to heart the fragility of life. In His little book, the 59th in the Bible, tucked right towards the end, he says this in the 4th chapter

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead you *ought* to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.'" (13-15)

⁹ (con't) **few and evil have been the days of the years of my life,**

Few were his days in relation to two things. The first is in how long his forefathers lived. But more so in relation to how long he *expected to live* because of the promise to him and to his people. In them was the hope of the Redeemer who would transform them from death to life, eternal life.

In comparison to this, his days were truly few. And evil... He says the days of the years of his life have been evil. Many of his troubles were self-inflicted, but the troubles really existed none-the-less. In his 130 years he had fled from his brother Esau who had threatened to kill him.

He served seven years for a wife he didn't want and then had to serve seven more for the one he did want. He suffered through many hardships as he served, and afterwards as well when he went to raise his own family and flocks - he had many trials and pains.

He feared for his life again as he fled from his father-in-law back to Canaan. And he feared for it when he returned to face his older brother once again. Later in Canaan, his daughter was violated by the son of a king and two of his sons killed the whole town in response. Something that made him only more fearful.

As he traveled south, his beloved wife Rachel died in giving birth and then just after that his oldest son Reuben slept with another one of his wives. But, of all of the difficulties and trials, probably the worst followed a while later when he was told his favorite son Joseph was surely dead.

The days of Jacob's life were evil, at least to him. But not everything that is evil from one perspective is evil from another. All of these events which tired him out, wore him down, and gave him grief were used by God in several ways.

In one way, they have all been used to picture both the coming Messiah, in Person and work, and also the corporate body of Israel in the future. And in another, they were all used by God to bring him and the covenant line to

the place where he now stood, in front of Pharaoh, safe, secure, and well taken care of.

Every single evil event was used as a stepping stone toward a greater good. Looking at the pilgrimage of Jacob and how God used it for this greater good - of him and others, we can put our own lives into proper perspective. The 119th psalm says this -

"Your statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.

⁵⁵ I remember Your name in the night, O LORD,
And I keep Your law.

⁵⁶ This has become mine,
Because I kept Your precepts." Psalm 119:54-56

This is what Jacob often failed to do. Instead of remembering the Lord in his pilgrimage, he wallowed in his own woe and misery. This man, Jacob, had personal visits from the Lord along with other dreams and visions from Him as well.

And yet, it took most of his life to come to the point where he was able to look past himself and to the greater good that God was using him and his trials for. Now, like the promise of eternal days instead of the few he had thus far lived, he finally had a grasp of the goodness of the days ahead in comparison to the evil ones he had experienced.

He now realized that every aspect of life, good and bad, was intended to work *for* good, and that this good is in connection with the eternal days promised through the hope of the Messiah. Not only could he look forward to *eternal* days, but He could look forward to *perfectly good* eternal days. This is the hope that the coming Promise would bring.

⁹(con't) **and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."**

Jacob is now 130 years old. He will live to 147 years, but the lives of his fathers were more. Isaac lived to 180 years; Abraham to 175. And before

them the lives of the fathers were counted in the hundreds, even to Methuselah who lived to 969 years of age.

But much of this was probably known to Pharaoh at this time in history. Jacob and Pharaoh both reached back together to their ancestor Noah who lived until the year 2006AM which was only 293 years earlier. Despite being from different sons of Noah, they ultimately shared a common humanity in their father Noah.

¹⁰ So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh

The NKJV says "So Jacob blessed Pharaoh." This implies something like "thus." The blessing came during the conversation and the Bible is acknowledging a blessing was made. Some other versions say "Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

This implies that the blessing referred to at the beginning actually was given *after* the conversation. One uses the word "then" and then adds in the word "again" to indicate two blessings. And still some other versions say, "And Jacob blessed Pharaoh." This then implies two blessings, one at the beginning and one at the end.

It's probable that Jacob blessed Pharaoh twice, once as he came in and once as he departed. There is a double blessing bestowed upon the Great House by the man of God.

*Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life
I've walked many miles and was often drowned in my tears
I've been through trials, hardships, toil and strife
And was at times consumed in overwhelming fears
But now I perceive that it all was intended for good
What seemed evil, it really wasn't, I now see
It took so much of my life, but I've finally understood
That God has always been there, faithfully directing me*

II. A Possession in the Land of Egypt (verse 11)

¹¹ And Joseph situated his father and his brothers,

If the time in Egypt is a picture of the people of Israel during the tribulation period, then what we see here is perfectly expected. Jesus will provide for Israel during the tribulation. It will be a time of grace during a time of hardship. And this is exactly how it is described for them in Revelation.

In this, Joseph situates his father and his brothers. What is done is for their benefit at his direction. It is no different in type than what Jesus is going to do for Israel.

^{11 (con't)} and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt,

There is a place specifically selected for Israel during their time in Egypt. Egypt means "double distress." This looks forward to the time of the Great Tribulation in the book of Revelation. Though the time is 215 years for Israel in Egypt and only 3 1/2 years for them in the future, the concept rings true for both.

In Daniel 7, Daniel 12, and Revelation 12 the term "time, times, and half a time" is used, indicating 3 1/2 years. In Revelation 12:14, it says -

"But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."

This will be the 1/2-way point of the seven years of tribulation and Israel has been brought to Egypt at the 1/2-way point between the covenant with Abraham and the Exodus from Egypt, both periods of 215 years. This pattern isn't to be missed because it points directly to the future events at the end of the age.

11 (con't) in the best of the land,

Not only is Israel given land in Egypt, it is given in the best of the land. This picture certainly isn't intended to say that Israel during the tribulation will be given the best of the land for farming, or for mining, or for water skiing.

Instead, it is saying that where they flee to will be the best possible land for their security and their safety. They will have what is needed in order to be sustained until the Lord finally delivers them.

11 (con't) in the land of Rameses,

This is the first of only five times that the Bible mentions Rameses. The debate about where this is or what is intended by this term is immense. One scholar devoted pages of possibilities as to these things. But the "where" and the "what" are less relevant than the "why." The name Rameses means "son of the sun" or "child of the sun." In Psalm 84, God is represented by the sun -

"For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield;
The LORD will give grace and glory;
No good *thing* will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11

In Malachi 4, Jesus is called the Sun of Righteousness and that passage is one which appears to telescope between His first and second advent. Listen to how these verses seem to mirror Joseph's care for his family and the Lord's future care for Israel -

"For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"That will leave them neither root nor branch."
² But to you who fear My name
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise

With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
³You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do *this*,"
Says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 4:1-3

Rameses, rather than the name Goshen, is used here because it is speaking not so much of the tribulation period, but the actual state of those God will care for during it. Israel is the son of the Sun, Jesus. As evidence of this, Israel is elsewhere called the Lord's "firstborn son."

And they are called this when Moses, picturing Christ the Redeemer, is told to speak to Pharaoh, the afflicter of Israel. What is being seen here is perfectly detailed, not just of actual events of the past, but of actual events in Israel's future. This is what it says in Exodus 4 -

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel *is* My son, My firstborn." Exodus 4:22

The name Rameses is used here to show us that Israel is the son of the Sun, exactly as the Bible has described them both. Israel the s-o-n of Jesus the S-u-n. These things that seem unusual are always given to help us weave together the patterns of redemptive history.

¹¹ (con't) **as Pharaoh had commanded.**

We have logically divided this verse into five individual thoughts. It is as if we are asked to stop and evaluate each individually. And so this is what we've done. Each has shown us of wonderful things which God has done; which God will do.

This final portion of verse 11 shows us that what was done by Joseph is at the direction of Pharaoh, the Great House. And it shows us that the actions of Jesus are all done at the direction of God in heaven. The two are working

harmoniously in redemptive history for the sake of fulfilling the ancient covenant of God.

In the time ahead, Pharaoh will take on different symbolism as the once great protector of Israel works against them. We'll have to take care to not miss the transition as that occurs.

*A possession in the land while the famine rages
Care for the people of God at the hand of Jesus
These beautiful things are seen so clearly in the Bible's pages
The marvelous things God has done for all of us*

*He gives us the best of all things as He watches over us
His attention never slacks as He keeps us safe from harm
And He does these things through His Son, our Lord Jesus
He is fully capable to keep us, by the power of His mighty arm*

III. Bread to Sustain (verse 12)

***12 Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in *their* families.**

Without being Jacob's favorite son, the brothers would never have been jealous of him. Without their jealousy, his dreams wouldn't have enraged them. Without their hatred they would never have thrown him into a pit nor sold him off to the gentiles.

Without being sold off to the gentiles, he never would have ended in Potiphar's house. If he weren't there, he never would have been in the royal prison. If never in the royal prison, he never would have heard the dreams of Pharaoh's officials. If he never heard those dreams, he couldn't have given their interpretation.

Without their interpretation, he never would have been brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. And God gave Pharaoh those dreams which were otherwise not able to be interpreted. Without his interpretations, he never would have been exalted to ruler of Egypt. And if

this were the case, then Egypt would have suffered and perished in the famine.

Without the famine, there would have been no need for Israel to get grain from Egypt, or if there was a famine and Egypt had no grain, Israel would have perished. Without coming to Egypt, Israel would never have been reconciled to Joseph and without that, they would never have been brought to this place of safety.

If you were to substitute "Joseph" for "Jesus" and say the same thing I just said again, you'd see that all of history has had an exacting purpose and it is all leading to the end times and it is all about Jesus and Israel. The church is an insert. And thank God we got that chance. Had the Jews not crucified Christ and sent him to the tomb, we wouldn't have had this chance.

But if they had accepted His resurrection, we still wouldn't have had that chance. The kingdom age would have come without there having been a church age. But they didn't accept Him and we were given God's grace during this time.

Joseph married a gentile bride, and we are Christ's gentile bride. But despite this, there is still a future for Israel. God is good and He is good all the time. Israel will be brought out of Egypt by God's mighty power during the exodus, and Israel will be sustained through the tribulation by a great and mighty work of God as well.

Nothing is left to chance, nothing is haphazard, there is no error or confusion in God's superior word. There is only harmony, wisdom, love, and a marvelous display of God's glory. If we just look close enough, it is right there for us to see.

So, let's keep our eyes open as we go through life. Let's look at the difficulties, the trials, and the many terrible things that arise as a part of God's greater plan for us. Yes, Jacob had personally talked to the Lord and yet his faith floundered often. But we have something more than he did.

We have Jesus, we have the Bible, and we have the past 6000 years chock-

full of fulfilled prophecy to validate both. Let's not let our faith flounder, but let's be continually built up in our walk with the Lord.

Closing Verse: A man's heart plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps. Proverbs 16:9

Next Week: Genesis 47:13-26 (What Will a Man Give in Exchange for His Soul?) (118th Genesis Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you and He has a good plan and purpose for you. Call on Him and let Him do marvelous things for you and through you.

And Jacob Blessed Pharaoh

Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father
And before Pharaoh him he set
And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, not another
But Pharaoh was not done yet

Pharaoh said to Jacob,
"How old are you?"
And Jacob said to Pharaoh
My years have been evil and few

The days of the years of my pilgrimage, full of strife
Are one hundred and thirty years
Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life
I've lived through many trials and tears

And they have not attained to the days
Of the years of the lives of my fathers' span
In the days of their pilgrimage
Since the Lord created man

So Jacob Pharaoh he blessed
And went out from before Pharaoh

After Pharaoh had been addressed

And Joseph situated his father and his brothers
And gave them a possession in Egypt the land
In the best of the land, suitable to their druthers
In the land of Rameses, just as God had planned

It is as Pharaoh had commanded
And truly God never left Israel stranded

Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all to be fed
All his father's household, he provided them with bread

According to their families' number
Nothing for them did he encumber

This is how God cares for His children
For those who live by faith and not by sight
God looks down upon the sons of men
And those who live this way are His delight

God chose Israel for His own people
And He chose us in the church as well
So let us proclaim His glory from every steeple
Let us this wondrous saving message tell

Jesus, beautiful Jesus, our Lord and our King
To Him all honor and all our praise belong
Let us forever to Him our voices sing
At all times let us glorify Him in song

Hail the Lord who does marvelous things for us
Hail the splendid and glorious name of our Lord Jesus

Hallelujah and Amen...