



Study Guide: Genesis – Chapter 47

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Genesis Chapter 47 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Genesis Chapter 47 marks a pivotal moment in the narrative of Joseph and his family in Egypt. This chapter advances the story by detailing how Joseph manages the settlement of his family during a severe famine and how he administers the resources of Egypt. It contributes to the book's flow by showing the fulfillment of God's providential plan through Joseph's leadership, highlighting themes of provision, stewardship, and divine sovereignty. Readers should watch for the interplay between human agency and God's overarching plan, as well as the social and economic changes that Joseph's policies bring to Egypt.

Context

The immediate literary context of Genesis 47 follows Joseph's reunion with his father Jacob and the migration of Jacob's family to Egypt in response to the famine. This chapter is situated within the broader covenantal framework of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which include the preservation of their descendants and the establishment of a nation. The key speakers in this chapter are Joseph, who acts as the Egyptian official overseeing the famine relief, and Pharaoh, who interacts with Joseph regarding the settlement of Jacob's family. The setting is Egypt during a time of severe famine, where Joseph's administrative skills are crucial for survival and the preservation of the family line.

Outline

The chapter begins with Joseph presenting his family to Pharaoh and securing their land allotment in Egypt's region of Goshen. This is followed by a description of the economic measures Joseph implements to manage the famine's impact on the Egyptian population, including the transfer of livestock and land ownership to Pharaoh in exchange for food. The narrative then shifts to Jacob's final days in Egypt, including his blessing of Pharaoh and reflections on his own life. The chapter closes with a summary of the family's growth



and Joseph's continued care for his father and brothers, setting the stage for the unfolding story of Israel in Egypt.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1–3: Joseph brings his father Jacob before Pharaoh, introducing him and his family as shepherds who have come to dwell in Egypt. Pharaoh grants them the best land in Goshen, recognizing their distinct occupation and need for pasture.

Verses 4–6: Joseph settles his father and brothers in Goshen, providing them with land and ensuring their well-being during the famine. This relocation is strategic, preserving the family's identity and livelihood.

Verses 7–10: The famine's severity is emphasized as Joseph supplies food to his family and the Egyptians. The people's desperation leads them to sell their livestock and land to Pharaoh in exchange for sustenance.

Verses 11–12: Joseph's management extends to the entire land, consolidating resources under Pharaoh's control while maintaining a system to feed the population. This reflects Joseph's administrative wisdom and the centralization of power.

Verses 13–18: The economic transactions continue as the people surrender their land and themselves to Pharaoh, effectively becoming servants. Joseph institutes a system where a fifth of the produce is given to Pharaoh, ensuring ongoing provision and control.

Verses 19–22: Joseph provides for his family by giving them seed to plant, ensuring their future sustenance and stability. This act contrasts with the general population's loss of resources and highlights Joseph's care for his kin.

Verses 23–26: The chapter notes the continued growth of Joseph's family, including the birth of Ephraim and Manasseh. Joseph's wealth and influence increase as he accumulates livestock and land, reflecting God's blessing.

Verses 27–31: Jacob lives in Egypt for seventeen years, aware that his death approaches. He requests to be buried in Canaan, affirming his connection to the promised land and the covenantal heritage.

Key Themes



One key theme is divine providence manifested through human leadership. Joseph's role demonstrates how God can use political and economic systems to fulfill His promises. Another theme is the preservation of identity amidst assimilation, as Jacob's family maintains their distinctiveness in Goshen. The chapter also explores stewardship and resource management during crisis, highlighting Joseph's wisdom in balancing survival with future sustainability. Lastly, the theme of covenant faithfulness is present in Jacob's desire to be buried in the ancestral land, underscoring the enduring significance of God's promises.

Cross-References

Genesis 45:7-8 provides background on Joseph's earlier recognition that God sent him to Egypt to preserve life, which clarifies the providential aspect seen in chapter 47. Exodus 1:7-22 contrasts the initial favor shown to Jacob's family with the later oppression, deepening the understanding of their settlement in Egypt. Psalm 105:16-22 recounts Joseph's rise and God's guidance, reinforcing the theme of divine sovereignty. Finally, Romans 8:28 offers a New Testament perspective on God working through all circumstances for good, echoing the chapter's message of providence through hardship.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Joseph's example of faithful stewardship and wise leadership during times of crisis. The chapter encourages believers to trust God's providence even when circumstances seem dire, recognizing that God can work through human decisions and systems. It also challenges the church to maintain its distinct identity and values within broader society, much like Jacob's family in Goshen. Additionally, the text invites reflection on how to manage resources responsibly for the benefit of community and future generations, emphasizing generosity and care. Finally, it reminds believers to hold fast to God's promises, even when physically distant from spiritual heritage.

Summary

Genesis 47 presents a crucial phase in the story of Joseph and Israel, where divine providence is enacted through Joseph's leadership in Egypt during famine. The chapter outlines the settlement of Jacob's family in Goshen, the economic restructuring under Pharaoh's authority, and the preservation of the family's identity and future. It highlights themes of stewardship, faithfulness, and God's sovereign plan unfolding amidst human



history. This passage sets the foundation for Israel's growth in Egypt and the eventual fulfillment of God's covenant promises.