

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## GENESIS 44-47

On the day after Christmas, 2004, history's deadliest tsunami crashed into the coast of Indonesia. A 9.5-magnitude earthquake generated gigantic waves that separated beachgoers and families on holiday, *creating thousands of lost children...* One missing child was the little girl of a truck driver named Mustafa Kamal.

For four weeks after the tsunami Mustafa combed the countryside in search of his five year old daughter. Finally, his persistence was rewarded. He found his daughter, Rina, at a *Save the Children* refugee camp.

A BBC article reported the emotional moment when father and child were reunited, "Mustafa screamed when he saw her and wept as he fell to his knees to hug his daughter... *"By God's grace! I knew you were alive! I knew it!"* The relieved father sobbed as they embraced. Rina grabbed her dad and cried for joy."

Well, Genesis 46 records another emotional reunion between a father and a child. Joseph and his dad, Jacob, were victims of a tsunami of circumstance. Their close relationship was torn apart by jealous brothers, and the Egyptian slave trade. But after twenty years of separation, a reunion is about to take place...

*Let me recap the story...* A famine drives Joseph's brothers to Egypt in search of food. Joseph recognizes the brothers immediately, but they don't recognize him. It's only after he's sure they won't mistreat his brother, Benjamin, as they had mistreated him, does he reveal his identity... *that's where we pick up the story...*

Genesis 44, "And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with 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 he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken." Joseph is about to reveal his identity to his formerly ruthless brothers who had sold him into slavery, but he first intends to test them one more time.

"As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. And when they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; 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." Tasseomancy, or reading tea leaves was an occult practice originating in China. Apparently, ancient Egypt had a version. They thought they could float slivers of gold and silver in a cup and predict the future in the shapes and shadows it made.

I doubt Joseph engaged in this practice. He was just playing the role of a pagan prince. It's part of his ruse. *He's about to accuse Benjamin of stealing a special chalice.* And this will allow Joseph to see if the brothers treat Benjamin the way they treated him. *Will they stand up for Benjamin, or sell him down the river to save their own skin?* He wants to see if his calloused brothers have changed. If there's any repentance.

*“So he overtook them... Joseph tracked them down on horseback. “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 servants should do such a thing. Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves.” They were so sure of their innocence.*

*“And he said, “Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless. Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they (the brothers) tore their clothes (they were absolutely devastated), and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.”*

Verse 14, *“So 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 can certainly practice divination?”*

Again, this is part of his scheme. Joseph is hiding his identity and playing the part of a typical Egyptian prince. He claims occult powers led him to the chalice.

*“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, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found.” Remember, Judah is acting as firstborn. He's the spokesperson. Here, all the brothers take the blame. They all take responsibility for stealing the cup. *It just ended up in Benjamin's bag. Judah is trying to save his kid brother.**

Judah had promised his father, Jacob, he wouldn't let any harm come to Benjamin. Now he's pulling out all the stops to save him... Whereas, with Joseph, Judah had negotiated his brother's sell into slavery.

In verse 17 Joseph responds, *“Far be it from me that I should do so; 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."** Twenty years earlier, Joseph's selfish brothers had left him behind in a heartbeat. Now he wants to know *if they'll do the same to Benjamin?*

And this is all extremely relevant to us. For there are two prerequisites to receiving God's blessing: **faith and repentance**. And sometimes, like Joseph, God waits to bestow His blessing, until He tests our repentance.

*Are we really sorry for what we've done, and the damage it caused - or just sorry we got caught?... Do we simply want to shake off the consequences of our sin or do we want to shake up our lives and really change?... Are we willing to surrender our will, and do whatever it takes to avoid repeating the same sin?...*

"Repentance" is **the desire to change**. You've got to repent... **God will not forgive who He cannot govern**.

Verse 18 **"Then Judah came near to (Joseph) and said..."** And his words are amazing. Though Judah was fourth in birth order, here, he takes responsibility for the family, and acts like the firstborn. One of my favorite Bible commentators, Donald Grey Barnhouse, calls Judah's speech, **"the most moving address in all the Word of God."** I believe it's this attitude that ultimately explains why Messiah was born to the tribe of Judah.

Judah says, **"O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' "And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of 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 servants, '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, that we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.'**

**"But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest 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 the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall 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 in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die."** Notice, how Judah describes father Jacob's love for son

Benjamin, *“since his life is bound up in the lad’s life.”* As a dad myself, I get it! Healthy or not, a dad can view his son as an extension of himself. A dad can push his identity and ambitions on to his son, or take his son’s identity as his own. The bond between father and son is so strong, that like Jacob and Benjamin, Judah knew that the outcome of the boy’s life would insure his father’s fate.

Verse 31, *“So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant (he’s speaking of himself) became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.’* Judah is taking that vow seriously.

*“Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up 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?”* This is amazing love that Judah shows Jacob his father, and Benjamin his brother. Judah is willing to swap places with Benjamin. He’ll give up his life to save his brother’s life.

Another commentary states, *“This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled.”* I’ve said it before, **the definition of true manliness is the willingness to take responsibility for what is not my fault.** When a man meets a woman her prior wounds, and hurts, and debts are not his fault, but when he marries her they become his responsibility. He needs to be a healing agent in the life of his wife. The mistakes his kids will make are not his fault, but a man accepts them as his responsibility.

And here, Judah is acting manly... **He sounds so much like Jesus!** For just as Judah gave himself up for his brother Benjamin... Jesus also for the Father’s sake - and for the love of His brothers - swapped places with us. Jesus willingly died so that we could go free. *Again, this is why Jesus was of the tribe of Judah!*

Chapter 45, *“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, ‘Make everyone go out from me!’* Notice, he clears the room. He’s about to reveal himself, *but this is a family matter.* The Egyptians around him weren’t privy to his betrayal in Dothan. That’s why they don’t need to hear what’s going to be said to the brothers now. Some issues don’t need to be public. It’s just a family matter.

And **here are two marks of true forgiveness.** We know Joseph truly forgave his brothers since **he cares about their reputation.** *If you still want it known what so-and-so did to you, you haven’t truly forgiven them.*

And if the Egyptians hear what the brothers did to Joseph, they might seek retribution. But Joseph has no desire to punish his brothers. Which is the second mark of true forgiveness, **he doesn’t seek a payback.**

“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...” All the foreigners heard was Joseph’s guttural outburst. Which proves there’s nothing wrong with expressions of emotion. Tears and grief are God’s gifts. They act as a cleansing. They reset our focus after a crushing loss.

Verse 3, “Then Joseph said to his brothers...” And here’s the moment we’ve all been waiting for, *drumroll*.

Joseph spoke two Hebrew words, “*A-neh Yosef.*” And the brothers were stunned. For the first time Hebrew words fall from these Egyptian lips. This exalted prince speaks their language, “*I am Joseph.*”

The 1995 TNT movie, “Joseph,” envisions him taking off his Egyptian headdress. Now his brothers can see behind twenty-two years of hardship and weathering that has etched the lines across his face. They peer into his face for a closer look, and it’s true, *it is Joseph!*

“I am Joseph, does my father still live? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.” It’s a strong Hebrew term translated “*dismayed.*” It means “to tremble inwardly, to palpitate.”

When it hits the brothers that the prince with whom they’ve been doing business, was the kid they’d last seen riding off in the back of a slave cart, *they shake in their boots! My oh my, this is our long, lost brother, Joseph! Shazam!* They’re gripped... physically moved!

And this is how Jews in the last days will react when it hits them, that the One they rejected, Jesus of Nazareth, is “*Zaphnath Paaneah*” or “*the Savior of the world.*” That their wheaties bow down to His wheaties! Zechariah 12:10 tells us they’ll grieve as the brothers here, *when they look on Him whom they pierced.*

Verse 4 “And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.” *And at this point in the story anything can happen...*

The hammer can fall hard! Joseph can snap his fingers and torturers can bring out balls and chains, and take them prisoners. The brother sold into slavery now has the upper hand... *Is vengeance on his mind?*

**Here’s another mark of true forgiveness...** *what would you do if suddenly you had the upper hand, and the destiny of your enemies was up to you? Would you punish them, or at least make them squirm a bit?* Well, Joseph showed grace. Listen to the mercy he shows...

“But now, do not therefore be grieved nor 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 nor 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...” What a statement! *Don't be mad at yourself - don't feel bad for the evil you've done.* The pit, Potiphar's house, the prison, now the palace... was all God. **“God sent me before you to preserve life...”**

**“And He has made me a father to Pharaoh (I tell the Pharaoh what to do.), and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”** *God is at work!*

In 1981, Jewish rabbi, Harold Kushner, wrote a book titled, **“When Bad Things Happen To Good People.”** It was on the NY Times bestseller list for a year.

The thesis of the book is that though God loves, He is NOT all powerful. He's good, but He's not sovereign. Thus, when bad stuff happens it's because events are outside God's control. Kushner concludes we need to **“learn to love God and forgive him despite his limitations.”** Well, understand Kushner's god is not the true God. He bears no resemblance whatsoever to the God of the Bible. He was definitely not Joseph's God.

People today, if they believe in God at all, think of God as waking up in the morning and reading his newsfeed like the rest of us; *then trying to figure out what's he going to do now?* That's not Joseph's God. The true God is sovereign. He reigns over every circumstance. He arranges and orders life through His overarching will, according to His predetermined plans.

Joseph served a big God - a God without limits - a God who does what He pleases without getting our approval, or making sure His methods are reconcilable to our puny reasonings... Joseph's God is even big enough to take the sick stuff that sin releases into the world, and the evil that man musters - *and I suppose while holding his nose because of its stench* - God is still able to use man's stuff to accomplish His purposes. **The true God specializes in turning bad into good.** And if you need proof, just look to Jesus on the cross.

Joseph's life teaches us God is always in control, whether it appears so or not. Even in rough times and in dark places, Joseph remained confident God loved him and had purposes for him... *And I think it would please God if we left here believing the same!* The situations you and I face are not bigger than the God we serve. They are not the result of His failure, or life's happenstance. God is a mighty God, and a loving God, who is always in charge! Thus, we need to trust in Him.

God was behind all that had happened to Joseph and his family, and he tells them

why in verse 9, "Hurry 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, 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." Goshen was east of the Nile Delta and Egypt's capitol, Memphis. It was Egypt's most fertile region, perfect for raising livestock. Shepherds like the Hebrews would thrive in Goshen.

Joseph continues, "There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, 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 shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck." And that would've capped a nice story, but...

"Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them..." Joseph "*kissed all his brothers*," and not just those who suggested they spare his life and sell him as a slave... *but even those who'd wanted to murder him.*

"*He kissed all his brothers.*" And have you? Or is there someone from whom you're withholding your forgiveness? In Matthew 6:12, Jesus told us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Implied is that forgiveness is proportional, *you and I will be forgiven to the same degree we forgive others...*

"And after (he kissed them) *his brothers talked with him.*" A conversation we all wish had been recorded.

Verse 16, "Now 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, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households 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 - 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.'"

And this is what God says to us when we come to Jesus. Don't worry about what you're giving up, the blessings you find in Christ are "*the best.*" Come to Jesus, and leave behind spiritual poverty for plenty.

"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 to all of

them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of silver and 5 changes of garments.” Joseph gave Ben the department store!

And (Joseph) sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and 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." And here's the challenge of the Christian life. We're headed for a land of plenty. Heaven will be heavenly, so don't get distracted. *"Don't become troubled along the way."*

“Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father.” And be careful how you break the news... *they almost kill the old man.* “They told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still...” He nearly has a heart attack... “because he did not believe them.” It was just too much to grasp.

“But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, 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 notice, how the writer of Genesis manages *his name calling*. At this man's lowest points of doubt and fear he's called *Jacob or sneaky*. But when he rises up in faith he's *Israel, "prince of God or governed by God"*

It's sad that for twenty years Israel thought his son was dead, yet he was alive and well. And it's sadder still that the nation Israel has been in a similar situation for even longer - 2000 years! The Jews have assumed that Jesus is dead, when in reality their Messiah is alive and well, and He wants to reveal Himself to them.

And that's not just true of Israel, but there are people in your life who think Jesus is dead, while He's alive and wants a relationship with them. Let's pray for them, and share the news of His resurrection when we can.

Chapter 46, “So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.” Beersheba is a southern town in Israel. On the way to Egypt it's the last stop before you cross the hot sands of the Sinai.

*Apparently, it was in those hot sands that Jacob got cold feet.* Remember, Abraham faced an earlier famine and fled to Egypt, but it was a mistake. He should've trusted God and stayed in the promised land... *Jacob may now be wondering if he should do the same...*

“Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night (a dream), 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 of 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.” In the culture of the day, closing the eyelids was the last act of kindness done for a dying man. It was an honor reserved for the closest relative. Joseph would oversee Jacob’s death.

Interestingly, for Abraham a trip to Egypt was *a lack of faith* - for Jacob it was *a show of faith*. **What was wrong for Abraham was right for Jacob**. The difference was God’s will. Abraham was *fearful*. Jacob is *faithful*.

“Then 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. So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had 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 and his sons’ daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.” He moved his whole household.

“Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt...” And here’s the trip’s manifest, a passenger log... Israel lists twelve sons, his daughter Dinah, fifty-two grandkids, and four great-grandsons... Of note, Dan had fewest kids, just one son... Benjamin had most, ten sons... Simeon had a pagan wife, *typical of the hard-hearted guy he was....*

And verse 13, Issachar had a son named *Job*. *Is he the namesake of the book of Job?* We’re not sure.

Chapter 46:26, “All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob’s sons’ wives, were 66 persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons (Manasseh and Ephraim). “All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.”

“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.” And a grand reunion occurs in verse 29, “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.” Two grown men, father and son, *have a good long cry together* and share happy tears. “Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive.” Jacob thought he’d never see his son again, *but God...*

“Then 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 are 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 servants' 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." This is interesting... Joseph instructs his family to tell the pharaoh they're shepherds; then he adds "for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Historians tell us that at the time the land of Egypt was under the control of foreigners - the *Hyksos Dynasty*, or "*shepherd kings*." Native Egyptians hated shepherds, but the royal family would be sympathetic.

This was part of God's strategy in sending Israel to Egypt. In Canaan they were tempted to marry pagans. But life in Egypt was segregated. Native Egyptians hated shepherds and would never intermarry.

Chapter 47, "Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen. And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh." *Which five? And why five?* There was a reason, I just don't know what it was. "Then 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 dwell 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." When he dies, like all pharaohs, he was sure to become a *mummy*, but he was never a *dummy*. For he had found a brilliant overseer in this man, Joseph, and here he's thinking that excellence might just run in the family. *He's hiring!*

"Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh..." This is intriguing. Hebrews 7 tell us the blesser is always greater than the person being blessed. That means here, Jacob the man of God, assumes authority over the ruler of Egypt. Proving it's always a greater honor to be a *child of God* than even an *earthly king*.

"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." Abraham lived to be 175. Isaac died at 180. Jacob will live 17 more years in Egypt, and die as the relative baby of his family, at 147.

But compared to the ancient monuments and pyramids of Egypt his life was just a blip on the screen. One translation renders Isaac's summation of his days as "*few and hard*." His trickery and deception made his life harder than it could've been. Marrying four women didn't make it easy... *What two words would you use to sum up your days?*... At least Jacob was honest.

But notice how the old man refers to his life on Earth. In verse 9 he calls it a "*pilgrimage*." Life is not a port of call, but a voyage - a journey. Our home is in heaven. We're just passing through. This life is about what we can learn along the way. *It's preparation for eternity!*

Verse 10, "So Jacob... went out from before Pharaoh. And Joseph situated 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 commanded. Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families.

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 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." The famine was so severe the economy had collapsed. Inflation had devalued the money. Their currency had lost its value.

Verse 16, "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 the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year." Joseph's job was to enhance the Pharaoh's wealth and power. And that's what he did. He used the famine to collect ownership of people's herds as payment for food. Thus, after the famine all citizens were crown tenants of the Pharaoh.

"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; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land?" You can't eat dirt! A

thousand acres isn't any good if you're dead. "Buy 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, 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 Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands." I'm sure Joseph tried to control the pagan priests as well. Over time he could've put them out of business, but Pharaoh had given them special rations.

Verse 23, "Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed 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 it 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's." A 20% tax gets levied on Egypt.

"So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly." If the seventy Hebrews who entered Egypt grew at a rate of 6% a year – after 430 years the family would total several million people. Exactly what we'll find at the time of the Exodus.

And notice, this is the first time the chosen family of Abraham is called **Israel**. In Egypt, a nation gets born.

Verse 28 "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was 147 years. 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..." This was a means of taking a vow.

Remember, circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham's family. To place your hand under a man's thigh would be our equivalent of placing your hand on a Bible and taking an oath. You were invoking God to hold you accountable for the vow or the promise you were making. It proved your sincerity.

Jacob continues to speak to Joseph, "And deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." Jacob wants his body buried with Abraham and Isaac in the cave at Machpelah - *the only parcel the Hebrews ever purchased*. It was a token that eventually they'd own all the land God promised. This was Jacob's expression of faith in God's covenant. "And (Joseph) said, "I will do as you have said." Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him." Joseph vows to fulfill his request.

"So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed." And next week we'll *put to bed* our studies in Genesis.