

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

The Shrewdness of Joseph – Genesis 47:13-26

¹³ Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine. ¹⁴ And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵ And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone."

¹⁶ And Joseph answered, "Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone."

¹⁷ So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. ¹⁸ And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. ¹⁹ Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's. ²¹ As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other. ²² Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

²³ Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. ²⁴ And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones."

²⁵ And they said, "You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh."

²⁶ So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's.

Genesis 47:13-26

Reconciling Biblical Narratives with Modern Perspectives ...

"Didn't someone write a book on the biblical roots of capitalism and free enterprise? How did he handle this episode? Our hero Joseph abolishes private property, turns freeholders into serfs, and transforms a decentralized farm economy into a command-economy dictatorship. This is bad economics and worse public policy. This is China, 1949. Joseph is Chairman Mao."

From "Why Joseph is My Hero" by David Plotz

This passage (like others in Scripture) is _____, not _____ ...

Dispense with our modern notions of _____.

Joseph's actions only made in _____ what was already true in _____: The land belonged to Pharaoh (a 'god' with 'divine rights') and all its residents were his tenants ('subjects').

Consider the devastation of a famine that _____ and that _____.

This is a catastrophe on a regional+ scale. Ultimately, only _____ mattered, and this may have been the only means to ensure it.

Genesis isn't a _____ for _____ or _____.

There is a specific " _____ " this passage runs in ...

It's the story of our _____ (broadly) and Israel's origins (more specifically).

Dispense with our modern notions of _____ and _____.

Left alone, with Joseph's wise interventions, they would have surely _____.

And remember the response of the _____ themselves to what Joseph had done:

"You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh." (v. 25)

Consider what this passage is primarily about: _____ and the _____ God made with them via Abraham.

Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. (v. 27)

For our purposes today:

"... all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth." (Gen. 41:57)

1) God is a God of _____. All that took place was a work of God's _____ to protect both Hebrew and Egyptian lives – especially the " _____ " (mentioned 5x in this section)

3) God's people ought to be a _____ where they live and work. Joseph's wise rule over the land of Egypt not only ensured the peace and prosperity of his family but also saved the people of Egypt from starvation.

3) This is another specific and clear fulfillment of the _____:

"... in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." (Ge. 22:18)

As part of that covenant, these events also remind us that _____ is prosperous because of _____ and when they turn against Israel, they will lose their prosperity.

4) This section of Genesis sets the stage for what unfolds in _____ and shows us why this statement is so critical:

⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. (Exodus 1:8-12)

5) This passage shows the amazing goodness and generosity of God thru multiple generations (and often despite, not because of the people). As promised, a _____ is being formed.

²⁷ Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. (Genesis 47:27)

Israel's (and our) security is in _____ – not in where they/we live, the money they/we have, or the possessions they/we control. Everything else in this world is _____ and _____, but God.

Like He has promised us that he will never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), so God promised Israel (Jacob) "I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again ..." (Genesis 46:4). He alone is their/our _____ and _____.