

Genesis

Creation. Covenants. All Grace — study 30



ALIVE!

It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive.

-- Genesis 45:28 (NKJ)

'For I am with you,' declares the LORD 'to save you; For I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, Only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly, And will by no means leave you unpunished.'

-- Jeremiah 30:11 (NAS)

COVENANT RENEWAL or COVENANT SUSPENSION?

(46:1-47:6)

46:1-4 Despite the reassurance (v.4), might there be a subtle significance in the 3-fold ELOHIM? (Lev.26:44,45)

(1) Because the holy man is compelled to leave the land of Canaan and to go elsewhere, he offers, on his departure, a sacrifice to the Lord, for the purpose of testifying that the covenant which God had made with his fathers was confirmed and ratified to himself. For, though he was accustomed to exercise himself in the external worship of God, there was yet a special reason for this sacrifice. And, doubtless, he had then peculiar need of support, lest his faith should fail: for he was about to be deprived of the inheritance promised to him, and of the sight of that land which was the type and the pledge of the heavenly country. Might it not come into his mind that he had hitherto been deluded with a vain hope. Therefore, by renewing the memory of the divine covenant, he applies a suitable remedy against falling from the faith. For this reason, he offers a sacrifice on the very boundaries of that land ... -- **John Calvin**, *Genesis* Vol.2 p.386

A “great nation”?
What riches are
hidden in that
promise!

(2) The first note of that promise was that He would make of him a great nation

there, that is, in Egypt. How much lay concealed in that word, Jacob in all probability, did not understand. To him the promise would be interpreted as meaning great in numbers, and that it had such intention there can be no doubt; but history shows that it meant far more, for through discipline and suffering, the nation was to be made great in other ways than numerically. God only reveals to men at any given time so much as they are able to bear. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *The Analysed Bible: Genesis* p.268

46:5-27 What is the size of Israel upon its entry into Egypt?

(3) The emphasis is on *there*. He did not build this family into a nation in Palestine, where they could have been overcome by the satanic hordes around them. He took them to Egypt, where, as shepherd people near the borders, they could have all the advantages of the civilization of the greatest nation on earth. There they would be taught law and order. They would be protected while they increased to a multitude, and would learn the discipline of servitude and would mature through suffering.

The advantages of living in
an “iron furnace” – Egypt
– Deut 4:20

There Moses would be born, and be trained in the court of Pharaoh even as Joseph had been, in order to lead the people out forever. Remember this when God takes you into what seems to be an alien land. -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *Genesis* Vol.2 p.210

(4) It is more to the purpose, to examine wherefore this small number of persons is recorded by Moses. For, the more improbable it appears, that seventy men, in no lengthened space of time, should have grown to such a multitude; so much the more clearly does the grace of God shine forth. And this is also the reason why he so frequently mentions this number. For it was, by no means, according to human apprehension, a likely method of propagating the Church, that Abraham should live childless even to old age; that, after he, being increased with a moderate family, should be shut up in a corner of Egypt, and that there an incredible number of people should spring up from this dry fountain. -- **John Calvin**, *op. cit.*, p.392

46:28-47:6 While the attitude of the Egyptians is not only politically incorrect (i.e. racist) but snotty (nose in the air), what ultimate purpose does it serve? (Numbers 23:9)

(5) ... it would not have been difficult for them to become invested with offices at court. How then does it happen that Joseph, knowingly and purposely, exposes his brethren to an ignominy, which must bring dishonour also on himself, except because he was not very anxious to escape from worldly contempt? To live in splendour among the Egyptians would have had, at first, a plausible appearance; but his family would have been placed in a dangerous position. Now, however, their means and contemptible mode of life proves a wall of separation between them and the Egyptians: yea, Joseph, seems purposely to labour to cast off, in a moment, the nobility he had acquired, that

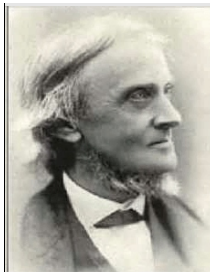
his own posterity might not be swallowed up in the population of Egypt, but might rather merge in the body of his ancestral family. If, however, this consideration did not enter their minds, there is no doubt that the Lord directed their tongues, so as to prevent the noxious admixture, and to keep the body of the Church pure and distinct. -- **John Calvin**, *op. cit.*, p.400

TWO WAYS of SEEING -- FAILURE or FULFILMENT? (47:7-26)

47:7-10 How does Jacob's life look -- to himself?

(6) The biographical details of Jacob's life read like a catalogue of misfortunes. When he was finally able to make his escape and set out for home after two decades in the service of his scoundrelly uncle, he found his erstwhile employer in hot and hostile pursuit of him. No sooner had this trouble passed than he felt his life to be in mortal danger from his brother Esau. Arriving at last, at the threshold of Canaan, Jacob experienced the mysterious night encounter that left him with a dislocated hip. His worst troubles awaited him in the land of Canaan. His only daughter, Dinah, was violated, his beloved Rachel died in childbirth, and the first son she had born him was kidnapped and sold into slavery, an event that itself initiated a further series of misfortunes. All the foregoing makes quite clear Scripture's condemnation of Jacob's moral lapse in his treatment of his brother and father. In fact, an explicit denunciation could hardly have been more effective or more scathing than this unhappy biography. -- **Nahum M. Sarna**, *Understanding Genesis* p.184

(7) The interview of Jacob with Pharaoh is pathetic and beautiful. The old man comports himself, in all the later history of Joseph, as if done with the world, and waiting to go. 'Let me die, since I have seen thy face,' was his farewell to life. He takes no part in the negotiation about Goshen, but has evidently handed over all temporal cares to younger hands. A halo of removedness lies round his grey hairs, and to Pharaoh he behaves as one withdrawn from fleeting things, and, by age and nearness to the end, superior even to a king's dignity. As he enters the royal presence he does not do reverence, but invokes a blessing upon him. 'The less is blessed of the better.' He has nothing to do with court ceremonials or conventionalities. The hoary head is a crown of honour, Pharaoh recognises his right to address him thus by the kindly question as to his age, which implied respect for his years. The answer of the 'Hebrew Ulysses,' as Stanley calls him, breathes a spirit of melancholy not unnatural in one who had once more been uprooted, and found himself again a wanderer in his old age. The tremulous voice has borne the words across all the centuries, and has everywhere evoked a response in the hearts of weary and saddened men. Look at the component parts of this pensive retrospect. Life has been to him a



ALEXANDER
MACLAREN
Jacob before
Pharaoh –
“pathetic and
beautiful”

'pilgrimage.' He thinks of all his wanderings from that far-off day when at Bethel he received the promise of God's presence 'in all places whither thou goest,' till this last happy and yet disturbing change. -- **Alexander Maclaren**, *Expositions: Genesis* p.276

47:11-26 How does Joseph typify Christ?

(8) All the Egyptians became crown tenants of Pharaoh, and a sort of feudal system was instituted. Critics have accused Joseph of making a nation of slaves, but the Egyptians were not slaves. They were free tenants who paid a twenty percent income tax; that was not heavy, in the light of history. Sayce says, "The power of the old aristocracy was broken as completely as it has been in Japan in our day." -- **Donald Grey Barnhouse**, *op. cit.*, p.217

(9) By the centralisation of authority in one head, he precluded the possibility of the harassment of the Hebrew people by the Egyptians, and the rivalries of petty princes. Of course, it is equally true that by this very action he made possible what subsequently happened, the enslaving of the whole people by the will of the supreme Pharaoh. Thus again the hand of God was seen operating through Egyptian policy for the immediate safety of His people; and ultimately for the long discipline of slavery and suffering through which they were to pass. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op. cit.*, p.272

(10) The history of Joseph is so far the opening of the history of Israel, and a type of the path of the Church and the Church's Head from humiliation to exaltation, from bondage to freedom, from suffering to glory. The treatment he received from his brethren turned by the message of God to their safety and that of the nation descending from them, is a type of the treatment Christ received from His people, which the counsel of God turned to the world's salvation, and will at last turn to the salvation of Israel. -- **Franz Delitzsch**, *New Commentary on Genesis* p.252

Review:

What promises to Abraham are in course of fulfilment already?
(46:3;47:7; cf. 12:2,3)