

Genesis (2011) 47A

- The story of Jacob enters the final section today
 - And this section will bring his story to a close
 - This is the story of Jacob in Egypt
 - He and his family will ride out the rest of the famine in security in Egypt
 - They were invited into the land by Pharaoh, and Joseph has a plan for where they must live
 - He has decided they should live in Goshen
 - We've learned in past weeks why Jacob's family needs to reside in Goshen
 - It's great farming land, very fertile
 - And it keeps Israel separated from the rest of Egypt
 - Joseph understood that the Lord brought Jacob's family into Egypt so they could grow into the nation He intended them to be
 - That growth must happen away from the temptation to join with other people
 - For God's people were to be a separate nation, without ties to other nations
 - So he determined that his father's family must live in Goshen
- But Joseph's plan goes deeper than merely separating Israel physically from the Egyptians
 - He needs to devise a couple of additional details to help ensure his people are properly separated from the Egyptians
 - First, he must find a way to get Pharaoh to agree to his plan
 - Secondly, Joseph needs to give Egyptians reason to leave the Israelites alone
 - And Joseph has a plan

[Gen. 46:28](#) Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out the way before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

[Gen. 46:29](#) Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time.

[Gen. 46:30](#) Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive."

- As the family departs, Jacob assigns Judah to lead the family into Egypt
 - We could say that the tribe of Judah will be the first of Israel to enter Egypt
 - But actually, Judah is the second tribe to enter
 - Joseph was the first to enter so many years earlier
 - But now as all Israel enter, it will be Judah who will lead them
 - We can assume Jacob selected Judah because of his emerging role as the leader among his brothers
 - We know he is the seed promise holder in the family, which means his tribe will eventually bear the Messiah Who reigns
- Jacob's decision to place Judah in the lead created a remarkable prophetic picture of Christ, one even the Jewish rabbis detected, though they didn't fully understand it
 - The Jewish Midrash, which is the rabbinical commentary on the Old Testament, said that v.28 tells us that Joseph will receive the kingdom before Judah
 - What the rabbis meant was that the suffering, dying Messiah, pictured by Joseph, would come to Israel first
 - And this would be followed by a second coming by the conquering, reigning Messiah who rules over the world
 - The rabbis studying the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah noticed that the scriptures spoke of two kinds of Messiahs
 - There would be one who died for the sins of the Jewish people
 - This Messiah would be mistreated and killed
 - The rabbis understood that Joseph was a picture of this Messiah

- Joseph had the birthright over his brothers, yet he was mistreated
- He was left for dead
- And then Joseph came into Egypt first, which pictures the Messiah coming into the world
- And the rabbis also understood that the tribe of Judah was the family holding the seed promise
 - So Judah pictures the Messiah leading His people as King
 - And after the suffering dying Messiah arrived in the world, then the ruling Messiah would follow
- Even in Jesus' first coming, the rabbis still thought they should have been looking for two different Messiahs Who would come in succession, first the fulfillment of Joseph and the second the fulfillment of Judah
 - They called the first the Prophet, since prophets were always mistreated and usually killed
 - They called the second Messiah, the Anointed One, which is written Christ in the Greek language
 - You can see this clearly in the way the Jewish leaders interrogated John the Baptist

[John 1:19](#) This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

[John 1:20](#) And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

[John 1:21](#) They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

- Obviously, we see this picture much more clearly than the rabbis ever did
 - We know that Joseph and Judah are picturing the Messiah, but they picture the same Messiah
 - Instead of two different Messiahs, we know that God had in mind One Messiah with two different comings
 - The first coming of Christ was the fulfillment of Joseph, the suffering dying Prophet

- While the second coming of Christ will be the fulfillment of Judah's promise of a ruling King
- So as Jacob's family enters Egypt behind Judah, they create a picture of the nation of Israel following after their King at His Second Coming
 - They enter the world represented by Egypt
 - And they come to subdue that world and receive the best it has to offer
 - Though the nation suffers for a time in this land, they eventually leave conquerers having plundered Egypt
- Joseph takes his chariot and rides from the capital of Egypt to meet his father as they arrive in Goshen
 - Goshen is located in the northern most part of Egypt
 - As the family entered into the land, they would have come into Goshen first
 - Joseph rides out to meet them there so they won't travel farther into Egypt
 - This will be their home for several generations
 - What follows next is one of the most powerful moments in all scripture
 - After twenty-two years, father and son are reunited
 - Joseph falls on his father's neck, they embrace and cry together for a long time
 - The air must have been thick with emotion, not only Joseph's and Jacob's, but also the other brothers'
 - They couldn't have watched this reunion without considering their own roles
- Jacob tells Joseph that now he can die in peace, having seen Joseph's face again
 - Jacob is 130 years at this old, and though he may feel near death, he was speaking in hyperbole
 - It was an expression of happiness and thankfulness
 - In fact, Jacob will live another 17 years in Egypt

- And now Joseph explains his plan to keep the people of Israel separated

[Gen. 46:31](#) Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me;

[Gen. 46:32](#) and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.'

[Gen. 46:33](#) "When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?'

[Gen. 46:34](#) you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians."

[Gen. 47:1](#) Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen."

[Gen. 47:2](#) He took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.

[Gen. 47:3](#) Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" So they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers."

[Gen. 47:4](#) They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen."

[Gen. 47:5](#) Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you.

[Gen. 47:6](#) "The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock."

- Joseph's plan is to leave his family in Goshen in northern Egypt
 - Then he will go to Pharaoh and explain that the family is now settled in Goshen
 - Joseph also plans to casually mention that they are staying in Goshen because they are shepherders that need grazing land
 - And then Pharaoh will call for Joseph's family to present themselves before Pharaoh
 - When they get the word that Pharaoh and Joseph are waiting for them in Memphis, they are to come Pharaoh
 - When Pharaoh asks Jacob's occupation, Jacob must say he is and always has been a keeper of flocks
 - This is the only thing the people of Israel know how to do
 - And therefore, it will be the only thing they will ever do

- Joseph's purpose in these instructions becomes clear in the end
 - Egyptians were shepherd-phobic, as we might say today
 - They literally loathed shepherders
 - So Joseph's plan was to gently lead Pharaoh in the direction Joseph wanted him to go
 - Pharaoh needed to endorse the plan for Israel to live in Goshen
 - The easiest way to accomplish that goal was to lead Pharaoh to loathe Jacob's family
- We're watching God at work to keep His people separate from the Egyptians, and this principle continues to work in God's people today
 - God has always called for His people to remain unstained by the world, distinct and unique among mankind
 - This is a command for both the nation of Israel and to the Church
 - We must forever maintain a degree of separation from the world to suit God's purposes

2Cor. 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

**"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**

2Cor. 6:17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord.

**"AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR;
And I will welcome you.**

2Cor. 6:18 "And I will be a father to you,
And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,"
Says the Lord Almighty.

- Paul reminded the Corinthian church that they have become a temple of God, by virtue of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
 - And as God's people, they must observe a separation from the world
 - The Law created that separation for Israel, by establishing ritualistic clean and unclean distinctions

- The idea was simple: if God is among us, then it becomes our duty to abstain from things that are contrary to God's perfection and holiness
 - Don't drag the Lord's Spirit into unclean experiences through your personal sin
- But Christians can take Joseph's example and Paul's command and run too far, in the wrong direction, and thereby miss God's purposes
 - God isn't asking us to remove ourselves from the world
 - Notice that Jacob's family entered Egypt, which was God's intent
 - They came into Egypt, yet even so they remained separate from the people
 - Likewise, we're called to be in the world but not of the world
 - Jesus prayed to the Father for exactly that balance in the Church

[John 17:14](#) "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

[John 17:15](#) "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

[John 17:16](#) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

[John 17:17](#) "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

[John 17:18](#) "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

- Jesus acknowledged that His disciples were not of the world, because our faith makes us citizens of a heavenly kingdom
 - Yet for a time they remained in the world with a mission to testify to Jesus and the Gospel
 - Jesus says He sends us into the world, just as Jacob was called into Egypt
 - Which is why Jesus clarifies that He did not want the Father to remove His disciples from the Earth
 - So we shouldn't strive to remove ourselves from the world entirely
 - We must be in it to impact it
- So what does it look like when we're in the world but not of the world?

- First, we must seek to fulfill the mission Christ gave His Church
 - We must associate with those who need to hear the truth
 - We must have unbelieving neighbors, associates, even friends
 - We must visit places where unbelievers gather, work, play and go to school
 - We must go into Egypt, as it were, so that we may influence their understanding
- Nevertheless, we must remain separate within those places we go
 - We cannot share in their sin or participate in their world in such a way that it defiles us and pollutes our message and witness
 - We must remain distinct even as we move and live among them
- We cannot hope to influence the world by our difference if we choose to blend in too much
 - Have you ever told someone at work or school that you were a Christian and they were surprised to learn that?
 - That's a warning sign that should convict us
 - We are called to be salt and light in a dark world
- Secondly, our difference must be based on the truth of God's word
 - Notice Jesus said in John 17 that we would be kept from the world by being sanctified in the truth of God's word
 - The word sanctify means to be set apart for holy purposes
 - Therefore, the church achieves its separation from the world by holding to the truth of God's word
 - We may attend the same schools, but while they hold to the enemy's lies of Evolution, we hold to the truth of Creation in Genesis
 - We are in their world, but we remain distinct by virtue of God's sanctifying truth
 - We don't create separation in our own, fleshly way

- We don't become judgmental, surpasses looking down our noses at sinners
 - Instead, we remember we were once sinners too, so we display grace and mercy
- We don't live in isolated compounds, dress in weird ways, drawing attention to ourselves through outward appearances and making other people feel unnecessarily uncomfortable in the process
 - Instead, we remember Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors, laughing, drinking and enjoying Himself
 - We make sure that the word of God living in us creates that distinction so that our message is different, not our appearance
- Finally, when we do these things, a few will follow as the Lord appoints, but we shouldn't be surprised when most hate us because of our message
 - Joseph ensured that Pharaoh left Israel separated and distinct within Egypt
 - But notice he achieved this end by calling Pharaoh's attention to something loathsome
 - This is the pattern throughout scripture
 - In John 17:14 Jesus said that the world will hate Jesus' disciples because they hated Him first
 - So we follow Jacob's example when we enter the world willingly while remaining distinct
 - We live among those who God intends to influence
 - But we don't allow that influence to defile us
 - We maintain our distinction through a strict adherence to the word of God, and a lifestyle that reflects that belief
 - Not by artificial attempts to show off our differences
 - And as we live a sanctified life, we expect we will receive some into faith while the rest hate us just as the world hated God Himself

- Then after hearing Jacob's story, the Pharaoh reacts exactly as Joseph had hoped
 - He welcomes the family to settle in the land of Goshen
 - Furthermore, the Pharaoh invites Jacob's family to assume care for Pharaoh's herds
 - The Pharaoh probably assumed that if Joseph's oversight had blessed the nation, then his family might also bless him in their care of his herds
 - And he was probably right

Gen. 47:7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

- At this point, Joseph brings Jacob before Pharaoh for a formal moment
 - And in that moment, Jacob bestows a blessing on Pharaoh
 - This is significant because of who blesses whom
 - Hebrews explains that the one who bestows a blessing on another is always the greater, spiritually speaking

Heb. 7:7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.

- So Jacob's movement to bless Pharaoh rather than the other way around reflects his awareness that he had something to offer Pharaoh
- His blessing was a prophetic word from the Lord
 - This Pharaoh was indeed blessed by the presence of Israel in the land
- This is exactly what the Lord intended when he brought His people into Egypt
 - The Jewish people would benefit from their time in Egypt
 - And while they sojourned in the land, they would likewise become a blessing to those they lived among
 - Even though Jacob's family was small, virtually powerless, nevertheless they could by God's power bring a blessing to Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt

- Consider that pattern as you strive to serve God in this world
 - The Lord has left you in this world, as Jesus said, to accomplish a mission
 - You are not wise or mighty by the world's standards
 - You will be despised at times and you will always remain separate
- But you have been left in the world for a time to be blessed and to be a blessing to the world
 - You and I are blessed to be in the world because we have opportunity to serve our Lord
 - To please Him by our obedience
 - To earn our eternal reward
 - To grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ
 - And we are a blessing to a lost and dying world by our witness and our message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ
 - We exist in this world for a time to serve as Christ's ambassadors
 - So make every day a day we rub elbows with the citizens of this foreign nation
 - Speak the truth of Christ, demonstrate His love, allow others to experience our joy and hope
 - And invite them to immigrate into our heavenly kingdom