



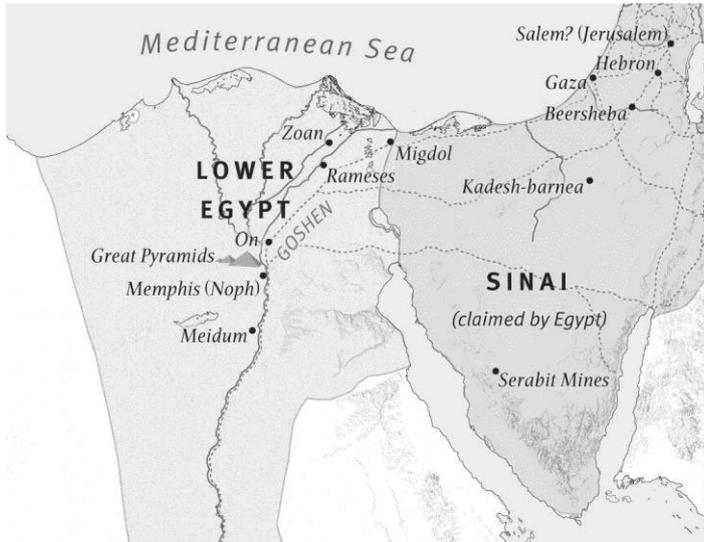
Lesson 28

The Family in Egypt

In our last lesson we saw how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. All their past quarrels were forgotten and he understood that God had sent him before them into Egypt to be their saviour. Jacob and the rest of the family travelled to Egypt to stay there during the terrible famine.

The Land of Goshen

Joseph now had to get permission from Pharaoh for his family to stay in Egypt. His approach to the great king shows how great his love for his family had become. He had to declare that he was the son of a shepherd from Canaan – and the Egyptians despised shepherds. In this act of love we see the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for his disciples.



“For he who sanctifies (makes holy) and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers... he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

Hebrews 2:11-17

Just as Joseph was not ashamed of his brothers and interceded for them before Pharaoh, so Jesus is not ashamed of us if we believe in him as our saviour. He intercedes for us before his Father, Almighty God.

The family was given the land of Goshen to live in. It was fertile land in the northeast of Egypt, next to the River Nile, well watered and ideal for sheep and cattle. This was very generous of Pharaoh – he shared his kingdom with them and he did it for Joseph’s sake saying to him:

“The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.”
Genesis 47:6

Once again we see how these chapters point forward to the work of the Lord God through His son, for Jesus said to his disciples:

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”
Luke 12:32

Next, Joseph brings his father, Jacob, to Pharaoh and formally presents him to the king. Pharaoh asks him how old he is and Jacob tells him that he was 130 years old. It seems from the conversation between them that Pharaoh was surprised at Jacob’s great age – people did not live this long in Egypt!

Jacob’s reply to Pharaoh shows his faith – he saw his life as a ‘pilgrimage’ (Genesis 47:9). The word ‘pilgrim’ means a stranger, someone who has no real home and who spends his time journeying from one place to another. It tells us of Jacob’s faith in God’s promises – the day would come when he would share the land of Canaan with Abraham and Isaac forever in God’s kingdom. Meanwhile he simply saw his life as an onward journey, waiting for the fulfilment of the promises.





The Famine

The famine got worse and all of Egypt depended on Joseph to feed them. Because of the dreams he had about the famine and because of the preparation he made for it, there was food for everybody. Joseph saw this as an opportunity to buy up all of the land of Egypt for the king and it became a strong, united kingdom for the first time. Once again we see in this record a picture of the future. When Jesus returns, he will rule over the earth for 1000 years for his Father. At the end of that time all opposition to God will have disappeared and the whole world will be fully united in obedience to the Lord God.

“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death...

When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.”

1 Corinthians 15:24-28

Jacob blesses Joseph’s two sons

Jacob was dying and Joseph was sent for. He took his two sons with him, Manasseh (his name means ‘Forgetting’) and Ephraim (his name means ‘Fruitful’). Jacob spoke to the boys about his calling by God to be the father of God’s people, and of the promise made through Abraham that they would inherit the land of Canaan forever.

Jacob wanted to bless his two grandsons, he was almost blind, and could not see them clearly - but he crossed his hands in order to put his right hand upon Ephraim’s head! Joseph tried to change this - Manasseh was the elder and should have received the greater blessing, but Jacob refused to move his hands. He said that Ephraim would be the greater, but that God would also bless Manasseh.

Notice that in this chapter (chapter 48), the Bible uses the new name God gave Jacob when he committed himself fully to God. At that time God told him that his name would now be ‘Israel’ and gave him a great promise to go with it.

“And God said to him (Israel), "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body.

The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”

Genesis 35:11-12

Now, inspired by God, Israel gives a similar blessing to Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph, saying ‘*his (Ephraim’s) offspring shall become a multitude of nations*’. The idea behind the phrase ‘a multitude of nations’ is that of a large, full nation. Many years later this prophecy was fulfilled when ten of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel, led by a man called Jeroboam from the tribe of Ephraim, left to form their own nation which at times was simply called ‘Ephraim’ as it was the biggest and most powerful of the tribes.

SUMMARY

In this lesson we have learned:

- Joseph interceded for his family before Pharaoh, asking that the great king might accept them. So Jesus intercedes before Almighty God for his disciples.
- Pharaoh gladly shared his kingdom with the family, giving them the land of Goshen just as Almighty God will be pleased to share the kingdom with us.
- During the famine, Joseph took the opportunity to unite the kingdom of Egypt under the rule of Pharaoh. When Jesus returns to the earth he will unite the whole earth under his rule for his Father.

