

Genesis Chapters 46-47 Summary - John Karmelich

Let me open with my one-word title: "Preservation". As one goes through life, one discovers there will always be problems. The only thing we can control is our attitude! Of course, no one knows how long we'll live. For Christians, the only guarantee is God will preserve us until it is our time to be with Him. I've seen many Christians go through horrible things and some died in terrible pain. All I know is God preserves us until our time's fulfilled. When I say preserved, I'm talking about not losing our salvation! Given that fact, we must regularly pray for wisdom, make the best decisions we can and trust that He is preserving us! I'm currently going through a rough time, but I try my best to keep a positive attitude as I know God has a purpose for all I go through. All that leads me back to these two chapters:

The basic story is the main characters here in Genesis is "the" Israelite family moving to Egypt due to a horrible famine in all of Egypt as well as in Israel. God worked through all that mainly to as to get that family to where they could survive the famine! It led to the 400 years for that family to become a large nation (of about two million people!) That's when one of history's biggest miracles occurred to get that nation out of Egypt! Realize at that time, Egypt was the most powerful nation in the world. In effect it is in these chapters that God got the "ball rolling". It's a reminder how He preserves us through the best and worst of times! One of my favorite bible verses about preservation: (Psalm 37:5) "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." I've shared that verse with many struggling people! As we go through these chapters, consider how God preserved His people despite all sorts of issues. It should remind us (God works in patterns) how He will preserve us, till it is "our time".

Ok then, time for the details: The last chapter ended with the big moment of Joseph's life. Realize that he's the second most powerful man in Egypt, revealing who he was to his 11 brothers. They figured he was dead until that moment. The chapter ended with his 11 brothers returning to their father who's still in Israel. The father announced that he wants to see for himself that Joseph is still alive.

One thing the father (Jacob) was nervous about was going to Egypt. By the way, the text jumps back & forth between referring to Jacob by his original name (Jacob) and the new name God gave him (Israel). It appears that when he's nervous about doing God's will "Jacob" is used and when he's doing what it is God wanted him to do "Israel" is used. When Jacob got to the border he stopped to pray. Remember it was his grandfather (Abraham) and his father (Isaac) who both got in trouble for going to Egypt. That's all from previous chapters. Jacob was scared to go to Egypt due to his family's history. God reassured him it's OK and all part of His plan for the family. It meant a caravan went there, with his children and grandchildren, let alone sheep and other animals. The text basically lists the male side of the family. It lists all the males plus Jacob's two wives, two mistresses and all the male children/grandchildren with a few exceptions. The point was to give the total number: 66. Including Joseph's family who was already in Egypt, there were 70 Israelites. All that was meant to show from this point in Exodus with 70 people we will get about 2,000,000 who left Egypt about 400 years later. So "preservation" was the underlying message as God's will being done over time!

We then get a bunch of verses that lists all the names. There are a few odd notes, including one son of a Canaanite woman. (Makes me wonder where the other sons got their wives!) One of the fascinating little details is Benjamin, the youngest son (probably early 20's at that time) had 10 sons. It's logical he must have had some twins and triplets. At least we know what he's been up to! The text also mentions

of all the brothers Judah (part of the Messianic line) went up ahead to arrange the meeting between dad and Joseph. A hint of the Messiah? Probably! It is another hint of God working preservation.

After the big hug reunion scene, the next scene is to introduce the family to Joseph's boss: The Pharaoh of Egypt. (Makes me wonder when dad found out about the selling of Joseph into slavery). It is also a historical fact that the Pharaoh at this time is not the one who promoted Joseph but was his son. He did honor his father's wishes and kept Joseph in charge. Another sign of preservation! Next Joseph picked five of his brothers (not named) to tell Pharaoh what they did for a living. Another historical fact is for the Egyptians animal herders were considered the "bottom rung" of society, so the Pharaoh agreed they are to live separately from the rest of the Egyptians. They settled in Goshen (Northeast Egypt) where it is good grazing land as the Nile River floods a dry area by the sea. They also told the Pharaoh that they want to move to Egypt due to the famine being in Israel as well as in Egypt! Remember the family did not know if they would be accepted there. It is another sign of preservation. If God provided for them in a difficult time think how God will preserve us if we trust in Him to guide our lives as well as do all of the footwork to survive!

We then get a scene of Jacob blessing the Pharaoh. That's because the Pharaoh was a young man and it says Jacob was 130 at that time. Jacob stated how his life had been difficult (think about the lies he did tell his father and his brother and how God preserved and blessed him despite those mistakes!) Despite all of that he made it to that age and the text says he lived to 147! Realize people lived longer then due to more ozone protection and bible ages decreased from Noah's day till after Moses! We learn that this family settled in "Ramses" which was the name at Moses's time (400 years later)! Since Moses wrote it he wanted his audience to grasp God preserved that family in that same location! Remember there was still a famine in Egypt and Joseph was the #2 man in Egypt provided for the family until it was the end of the famine! (Again, more preservation!)

Most of the rest of the chapter dealt with Joseph as the administrator over Egypt for the rest of the time of the famine. One year the Egyptians gave Joseph all of their money to buy food. The following year all the livestock now belonged to the Pharaoh (makes me wonder how much the Israelites cared for the livestock since the Pharaoh put the Israelites in charge of his livestock as well!). The following year it was all the land in Egypt that now belonged to the Pharaoh in exchange for food. Notice Joseph didn't benefit himself other than being in charge. The text also mentions the Egyptian priests were exempt as a separate class and I wonder how much Joseph's family was exempt. Over and above whether this is a fair deal, it was important to grasp this as when Moses came along 400 years later the situation was the same as the Egyptian ruler controlled everything. It ended with Joseph saying to all Egyptians, "Work your land, with a 20% tax to the Pharaoh and the rest you can keep for yourself and profit!" I admit, if our taxes were only 20%, I'd be happy! In Verse 25 of Chapter 47, the Egyptians were grateful as they were still alive after the seven years of the famine! Again, it shows preservation in tough times!

The final paragraph of the chapter in effect talks about the last 17 years of Jacob's life. He does not die till the final chapter of the book, but this is about planning for his death! Jacob said wanted his body to be buried at the same place as his father and grandfather. That was to show he desired to be associated with the land Israel for eternity. (I mentioned in a previous lesson, the grave is in Israel today. There is a mosque over it today as Muslims honor Abraham as their ancestor!)

Obviously, this is a famous story about how God preserved a large family with an ultimate goal to lead a nation of people out of the most powerful nation in the world at that time. In fact, Egypt is referred to as symbolic of the world and God calling His people out of the world to serve Him! Most of us realize

that but I wanted to show how God preserves all of us with the goal of using us to be a witness for Him until it's "our time" or when the church is removed from the world!

On the same page as this study is a more detailed study I wrote many years back. You are welcome to email me if you want or join my list to the get the latest lesson. Thanks for reading. John