

Genesis 181
Patriarch & King
Genesis 47:8-12
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Good morning, everybody. Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Genesis 47:8-12. The title of our message is "The Patriarch and the King."

God, at this strategic time in the Book of Genesis is using a man named Joseph. His purpose—and we are all born with a purpose, as I will explain to you today—is to be the instrument that God uses to relocate the Nation of Israel from Canaan, where they would have morally self-destructed into the land of Egypt, to be incubated for about 400 years.

- IV. Jacob's Family Before Pharaoh (47:1-10)
 - A. Joseph's report to Pharaoh (1)
 - B. Brothers before Pharaoh (2-6)
 - C. Jacob before Pharaoh (7-10)
 - 1. Joseph presents Jacob (7a)
 - 2. Jacob blessed Pharaoh (7b)
 - 3. Pharaoh's inquiry (8)
 - 4. Jacob's answer (9)
 - 5. Jacob blesses Pharaoh (10a)
 - 6. Jacob's exit (10b)

We are into that section now, where the nation, just a small group of them, 66-70 people, are leaving Canaan, and they are now sojourning in Egypt. Something very interesting happens where you have Jacob's family (that is the Nation of Israel) standing before Pharaoh. Pharaoh was the leader of the known world at that time; he was a very powerful political figure.

Joseph has reported the arrival of his brothers to Pharaoh. From these twelve brothers, Jacob's Dozen, are going to come the Twelve Tribes. They have stood before Pharaoh, and now Dad, the patriarch, is standing before Pharaoh himself (Genesis 47:7-10). I do not think this happens anywhere else in the entire Bible; it is a unique situation where you have the patriarch of the Nation of Israel now standing before the king.

Joseph has presented Jacob, the father, to Pharaoh. Jacob has blessed Pharaoh, and now Pharaoh asks a question of Jacob. It seems like an impolite question at first, but it says there in Genesis 47:8:

"Pharaoh said to Jacob, 'How many years have you lived?'"

"Hey old man, how old are you really?" I think that question is asked because of some statements that Jacob is going to make about his life, which are going to follow. You have Jacob's answer there in Genesis 47:9. It says,

"So Jacob said to Pharaoh, 'The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning.'" (Genesis 47:8-9)

"Hey, how old are you?" Answer: "I am 130 years old." I think that if I ever reach the age of 130 I would be ready to go, but what is interesting about Jacob is he is actually going to live an additional 17 years. If you go down to Genesis 47:28, you will see the total years of Jacob's life. It says,

"Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years." (Genesis 47:28)

When he was asked this question, he said, "I am 130 years old." It is interesting how Jacob describes his life; he describes it as a sojourn. In fact, the word "sojourn" in Genesis 47:9 is used twice: *"The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty years."* Then you drop down to the end of the verse and it says: *"the days of their sojourning."* Back in Genesis 47:4, Just a few verses earlier, as Pharaoh was talking to the brothers, Jacob's dozen, it says,

"They said to Pharaoh, 'We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks,'" (Genesis 47:4)

It is interesting that all of these patriarchs, or descendants of the patriarchs, looked at their life as a sojourn. What exactly is a sojourn? A sojourn is when you are passing through temporary territory en route to your ultimate destination. I cannot think of a better way to describe the Christian life. The Christian life is largely a pilgrimage; it is largely a sojourn.

Peter, in the New Testament, tells us that we are sojourners. First Peter 1:17 says,

"If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during your stay on earth." (1 Peter 1:17)

Some of your translations say, "during your sojourn" or "during the time of your sojourn." That is our posture as Christians. We are not to sink our roots too deeply because we are just pilgrims passing through. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. How tempting it is to become infatuated with the world. There are a lot of wonderful and neat things to do in this world, but we can become so captivated by the world that we forget the fact that we are just pilgrims passing through.

First John 2:15-17 says,

"Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

This is Satan's world, actually, that we are living in. It has been that way ever since the Fall of Man in Eden.

Everybody today is looking for safe investments. The truth of the matter is there are only two safe investments; there are only two things you can throw yourself into, by way of an investment, that will stand the test of time, that will leave this world and make it into the next. The first is the Word of God.

*"The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God abides forever" (Isaiah 40:8)*

Jesus said,

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away"
(Matthew 24:35).

Even this morning, you are making an investment. There are countless other things you could be doing with your Sunday, but you have chosen to come to a church like this to invest energy and time into studying the Word of God. You are pouring yourself into an investment that will last.

The only other thing that I know of that will stand the test of time and make it from this transitory world into the next, are the souls of people. The Book of Ecclesiastes tells us that God has set eternity into the hearts of men (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The more time you spend invested in a person—whether it be mission work, discipleship, evangelism, mentoring, parenting, sometimes just common courtesy, treating people with respect that they deserve as image bearers of God—you are putting yourself into something that will stand the test of time. God has us all in different places. Not everyone is called to be a full-time missionary; but all of our lives, in some way or sense, should revolve around those two basic purposes, because those are what we would call eternal investments.

One of the saddest quotes that I am aware of is from a businessman who said, "I have spent my entire life climbing the ladder of success, only to discover that the ladder was leaning against the wrong wall." How important it is for us as Christians to understand how fleeting this life is, and to look at ourselves as sojourners. That is what Jacob says to Pharaoh: *"I have lived one hundred and thirty years."* He has 17 years left, and he will die at the age of 147; but he looks at it just as a sojourn.

Then he reflects upon his life. In Genesis 47:9 he says,

"...few and unpleasant have been the years of my life."

Some translations say "evil." Unpleasant evil is not necessarily talking about sins; It is dealing with the things that he went through in life, the different calamities that he experienced. Remember, he is the one that fled up north to escape Esau. He fled as a refugee, in essence; and then for most of his life he thought his favorite son, Joseph, was dead. He has just recently discovered that Joseph is alive. I think that is what he means when he says *"unpleasant have been the years"* of his life.

He says something else at the ripe old age of 130: he looks at the years of his life as if they have been few. I would understand that as the years of his life moved quickly in his mind. My wife and I were talking about that, not long ago. We keep saying to ourselves, "I cannot believe how fast things have moved." We are still recovering from the fact that we are now official empty-nesters. I know there are boomerang kids that will come back, and that is all wonderful, but the truth of the matter is we look back at different photographs, we look back at things on social media that come back up, and we cannot believe how fast it all passed, our parenting years. That is how Jacob looked at the years of his life.

I think this is related to the fact that we are living in this fallen world. Our lives pass very, very fast and very, very quickly.

Psalms 103:15-16 says,

*"As for man, his days are like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
When the wind has passed over it, it is no more,
And its place acknowledges it no longer."*

Then you have the imagery. steam coming off a cup of coffee in the morning. It says in James 4:14:

"Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

Just like steam coming off that coffee cup, dissipating. That is how fast our lives travel against the backdrop of eternity. Solomon, in Ecclesiastes 1:2 says:

*"'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher,
'Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.'"*

That is typically misinterpreted as meaning that life without God is empty. That is true: life without God is empty, but that is not what Ecclesiastes 1:2 is saying. It is what we

would call in Hebrew a superlative, meaning the ultimate. It is like saying that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is not a lord, He is not a king, but He is the ultimate lord and ultimate king. It is like calling the inner sanctuary there of the temple the most holy place. You are not just dealing with a holy place, you are dealing with the ultimate holy place on planet Earth.

When Solomon uses this expression concerning life, "Vanity of vanities," he is using a superlative—it is the ultimate. What he is saying there is, life is the thinnest of vapors. It is not just a thin vapor, it is extremely thin; it is extremely fragile; it passes very, very fast. Therefore, you have a very limited time as a human being to figure out what this whole thing called life is about, and to press into your eternal purpose.

This is why the Bible, over and over again says, *"Today is the day of salvation"* (2 Corinthians 6:2). Do not postpone salvation because life is the thinnest of vapors, very transitory. This is why Solomon, at the end of the Book of Ecclesiastes says this:

"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, 'I have no delight in them.'" (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

Given the thinness of life, the ultimate fragility of life, how important it is to understand eternal things, to embrace eternal things, and to invest one's life into eternal things. Do not think you have forever to do this, because you do not. Life itself is the thinnest of vapors. This is what Jacob is saying as he is talking to Pharaoh. He is saying, "There have been a lot of calamities that I have experienced, but I cannot believe how fast I reached the age of 130. I cannot believe I got here so quickly."

He also says in Genesis 47:9, that he has not attained the years that his fathers had lived during the days of their sojourning. Abraham died at the ripe old age of 175 (Genesis 25:7)—that is his grandfather. His father, Isaac, died at the ripe old age of 180 (Genesis 35:28). Jacob, as we know from Genesis 47:28, is going to die at the age of 147. Of the three patriarchs, he dies the fastest. If you do not have the patriarchs—God's work through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—you do not have the Nation of Israel. Those are three critical players. Of the three, Jacob will die the quickest; he is not going to outlive the duration or the age of either his father Isaac, nor his grandfather Abraham.

These are things that Jacob is bringing up as he is speaking to the leader of the known world, this man named Pharaoh, in this very unique conversation that is taking place here.

Then you go down to Genesis 47:10 where Jacob actually blesses Pharaoh. It says,

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence." (Genesis 47:10)

This is one of those things that, if you are not moving through the Bible slowly and chronologically, you will just pass right over. It means almost nothing to a Bible reader

who is in a rush, but if you stop and meditate on this, you will see how astounding this is. What the Bible teaches is, the one who gives the blessing is greater than the one who receives the blessing. You will see that in Hebrews 7:7. It says,

"But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater." (Hebrews 7:7)

If that is true, what in the world is Jacob doing blessing the leader of the known world, the most powerful man in the world—Pharaoh? Jacob, who is he after all? He is the leader of a little tiny "ragtag, fugitive fleet," to quote Battlestar Galactica. We know from Genesis 46:26-27 that there are only 66-70 of them in the whole group; we know from other Scriptures how small this group was. Here is Jacob, at the age of 130, having a face-to-face with Pharaoh, and he actually gives Pharaoh a blessing. Should it not go the other way around? Should it not be Pharaoh blessing Jacob, rather than the other way around? Who does this guy think he is blessing Pharaoh? He is acting like he is greater than Pharaoh.

The reason he is able to do this is because he is standing on the promises of God. He is setting aside the normal way a human mind thinks, and he is trusting completely in the revelation of God. When you back up to Genesis 46:3, God made a promise to Jacob:

"He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.'" (Genesis 46:3)

"You are not a great nation now, but you are going to become one." In fact, God has made promises to Jacob all the way through: Your descendants are going to be like the stars of heaven; your descendants are going to be like the sand of the seashore; your descendants are going to be as numerous as the dust of the earth. Up to this point in time, God has not completely fulfilled His word. There are 66-70 of them, but what Jacob is doing at the age of 130 is squarely standing on what God said. Because he would become a great nation, he blesses the most powerful man in the world, this man Pharaoh. He does not just do it once—he does it twice.

Chapter 47:7 says,

"Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

In Genesis 47:10 the exact same thing happens again:

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

Jacob would not be able to bless Pharaoh unless he completely and totally understood God's promises; stood on them, and did not look at life through the lens of the natural man. That is what we are called to do as Christians. We said earlier that this life is a sojourn. Well, how do we know that? Because God said so, and I believe what He says.

We said a little earlier that this life passes very fast. It is the thinnest of vapors. How do I know that? Why do I believe it? Because God said it is true, and I adjust my life accordingly. We saw a little earlier that God says, *"Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth"* (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Why would I do that? Everybody else is off sowing those wild oats. Why should I not do the same thing in the days of my youth? Because God told you to do it. God said, "Do it." God says, "This is the way the world works, and organize your life according to eternal things." That's what it means to walk with God. You are not following the crowd; you are not following the pattern of the world system; you are following divine promises. As we begin to do that as Christians, that becomes extremely pleasing to the Lord.

Did you know that Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him"? Lord, if I ever reach the age of 130 or 100 or 99 or 80 or even 58, I want to be like that. I do not want to be one of these people that is just following the ebb and flow of the world system. I want to be one of those people that organizes my life on eternal principles, because I take God at His Word. That is what Jacob is doing here, and that is how he is able to bless the most powerful man in the world.

Second Corinthians 4:18 says,

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

As a Christian, does that describe your life? Does that describe your walk? Or have we fallen so in love with what we can see that we are no longer organizing our lives around the things that are going to stand the test of time—things which we cannot see? Jacob becomes just a wonderful example of that at the end of his life.

Then Jacob exits. It says in Genesis 47:10:

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence."

The two separate, and there is finality. We are never told that the two came in face-to-face contact again. There is no further contact between the patriarch and the king. It is just a unique occurrence here that happens one time in the Book of Genesis.

You only glean the truth from this as you are reading the Bible chronologically and not in a hurry. People ask me all the time, "How long are we going to be studying the Book of Genesis?" Well, I do not know. We will try to keep it shorter than the 400-year sojourn, but the truth of the matter is, when you are enjoying a good meal what is the rush?

There are certain church growth experts that basically say that a sermon series should not go beyond eight weeks because you will lose the attention of people and your church will not grow. I have never been invited to one of those conferences to speak because I am of the persuasion that this is the Word of God. It is living and active.

Jesus Himself said,

"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

- V. Settlement in Goshen (47:11-12)
 - A. Joseph's settlement (11)
 - 1. Joseph's placement (11a)
 - 2. Location (11b)
 - 3. Pharaoh's command (11c)
 - B. Joseph's nourishment (12)

Then you come down to Genesis 47:11-12, and you have the final settlement there in Goshen. We have Joseph's settlement (Genesis 47:11), and Joseph's nourishment of his family (Genesis 47:12). Notice, first of all, Joseph's settlement, and Joseph's placement. Genesis 47:11 says,

"So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them possession in the land of Egypt, in the best part of the land, in the land of Ramses, as Pharaoh had ordered."

You will notice here in Genesis 47:11 that Joseph fulfills the purpose for which he was born. This is his purpose; this is why he exists. He exists to be the instrument of God—through a lot of ups and downs, and a lot of twists and turns in his life—to get this small group of 66-70 people out of Canaan, to a place of provision and incubation in Egypt. This sums up Joseph's life. It is why he exists, and it is why he was born. *"So Joseph settled his father and his brothers."*

By the way, it is not just Joseph that has a purpose. You have a purpose, and I have a purpose. Our lives are not coincidental; they are not random; they are not an accident. Of all of the eras of history, you were born in this one in which you live. God made a sovereign decision to allow you to be born at this time, because there is something specific He wants to bring forth from your life.

Now, there could be many purposes to a person's life as well, but everyone is born into the world with a specific purpose. This is something that needs to be communicated over and over again to your children and your grandchildren and your great-grandchildren, because they are coming of age in a school system dominated by evolutionary propaganda, which basically is telling them that their life is an accident. "You are nothing more than a naked ape. You are nothing more than a product of random chance."

If you are taught that over and over again, you think, "Life is pointless. Life is aimless." They give themselves to nihilism and the pursuit of pleasure, because they are trying to fill a void in their life that only God can fill. The whole thing is a lie. Satan is the father of

lies (John 8:44). It does not matter what your science teacher or your history teacher or whoever, tells you—it is a lie. You are here for a reason; you are here for a purpose; you are here because God providentially arranged your life.

Now go to the Lord with that in mind and ask Him, "Why am I here? What do You want me to do?" As God begins to unfold that to you, press into that purpose for which you were born. What a wonderful thing it is to get to the end of one's life and to look back and say, "I fulfilled what God wanted me to do."

Ephesians 2:8-9 says,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one can boast."

Most people stop reading right there—salvation by faith alone, praise the Lord—but did you notice that verse ten follows verse nine? Ephesians 2:10 explains why God saved you by faith alone and grace alone. For whatever reason, we have chopped off Ephesians 2:10 from the rest of the passage, but just keep reading because it explains to you why you got saved. Salvation is a lot more than getting your fire insurance paid up and not going to hell. Praise the Lord for that, but the Lord saved you and set you apart for His unique purpose. Your purpose is different from mine, and my purpose is different from yours. Your purpose is different from the person you are sitting next to. We all have unique callings.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."
(Ephesians 2:10)

Now the verb there "we would walk" is "peripateo." It is in the subjunctive mood. In Greek, that is the mood of possibility. In other words, maybe you will walk in the works God has ordained for you, and maybe you will not—that is up to you to turn off the lies in your mind that you are an accident and worthless, to follow God's purpose. Many people never shut those lies off, and so they wander around aimlessly, not understanding why they are even here. They will not fulfill their purpose, and only when you press into your purpose do you find fulfillment.

If I am not living for the purpose for which I was created, it is like a screwdriver that you never use for the reason for which it was created; you start using it as a hammer or something else, and you do not feel fulfillment. How could you feel fulfillment? You are a screwdriver, not a hammer. Maybe that is not the best analogy, but however you want to slice this: be what God called you to be.

Once you learn this, you learn really fast the folly of comparing yourself to everybody else. Why would you compare yourself to everyone else when you are a screwdriver

and they are a hammer. I do not want to be a hammer; I want to be a screwdriver, because that is how God made me. You find fulfillment and significance in life when you press into the purpose for which you were born. The subjunctive mood indicates that it is not automatic—maybe it will happen; maybe it will not; it depends on you. God is the only one that can give you your purpose because He is the creator of all things.

In Acts 13:36, Paul is giving a history of the Nation of Israel. About David, one of the great kings—and not a perfect person either, but one of the great kings in Israel's history—he says,

"For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay." (Acts 13:36)

In other words, David died after God had brought forth in his life his purpose.

Paul the apostle said this at the end of his life:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

I made it to the end of my course; I made it to the end of my destination. I did what I was supposed to do, and now I am ready to go to heaven. Because of the subjunctive mood here, many people get to the end of their lives and they look back and they have nothing but regrets. They do not understand what life is about. They are bitter because health is deteriorating, and it passed by them so fast they long for the days of their youth. They have no relationship with God. Even those that have a relationship with God have never gone to God and asked this basic question: Why am I here? They look back, filled with remorse, filled with regret, not ever understanding what life is about, that it is the thinnest of vapors.

You have a limited time to understand this and to press into your purpose. They cannot say, "I finished the race, I finished the course." I do not want to be like that. I want to be like one of those people that says, "Lord, I came, and I pressed into the design that You had for me. You gave me wisdom, and, Lord, this is a great, great way to end. This is a great way to go out." These are all tremendous principles that we learn as we study Jacob.

Joseph has brought his brothers and placed them into Goshen, which was God's design for Joseph. You will notice where Joseph places them in Genesis 47:11:

"So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and he gave them possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses."

This land of Rameses is probably something that the territory within Goshen would be renamed. There is a reference to it in Exodus 1:11. This verse is how the Nation of Israel became enslaved after Joseph's death:

"So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses." (Exodus 1:11)

But what was the land of Ramses in the time of Joseph? It was not just Goshen, it was the best territory in the land of Goshen. It was the best of the best, the land of Rameses. In fact, if you look there at Genesis 47:11, you will see the word "best." God *"gave them possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land."* Not just the best, but the best of the best.

As you go back to Genesis 45:18, you will see the same thing. Pharaoh is speaking to Joseph, and he says,

"And take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land." (Genesis 45:18)

This is not just the best. This is the best of the best. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says this of the land of Ramses in Goshen:

"Furthermore, it was: 'in the best of the land,' the land of Goshen. Here it is called: 'the Land of Ramses,' which was a section of the land of Goshen. It was, in fact, the better part of Goshen, which today is known as Wadi Tumilat, a valley that is thirty miles long, extending from the Eastern Nile to Lake Timsah. The Rameses of the Nineteenth Dynasty, who came after this time, may very well have been named after this particular land. The City of Rameses was earlier known as Tanis, and before that, it was known as Avaris. In the course of time, three names changed. According to Numbers 11:5, Goshen was a place where the fish were in abundance. Psalm 78:12 states that this was called 'the field of Zoan' and it was one of the outlet channels of the Nile leading to the sea. It was a very fertile area and a very good area. Indeed, Goshen was the prime land of Egypt, and the area of Rameses was Wadi Tumilat, which was the prime area of Goshen."¹

In other words, God put them through all of these providential circumstances that we read about, not just in the best territory in Egypt, in the midst of a famine, but the best of the very best land. When we wait upon the Lord, what we discover is, many times our prayer requests are not answered on our schedule. Have you noticed that? My prayer request is sometimes, "Lord, give me patience and give it to me right now." We get very

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 616-17.

impatient with God, but we have to understand that many times in our prayer requests, God is not necessarily saying no. What he is saying is, "I have something better for you. It is not no, it is better."

Unfortunately, because we hate waiting on God, because we are sinners by nature, we have a tendency to think that a delay is a denial. Many times in God, what you will discover is it is not a denial, it is just a delay, because God has something far better down the road for you that will not only answer your prayer requests, but it will go above and beyond what you even asked for. Did you know God does that with his people?

In Ephesians 3:20, the apostle Paul says,

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us."

You mean God is in the business of giving us above and beyond what we ask for or even think? Who among us would put a limit upon God? Of course God can do that. That is God's nature. That is what the Nation of Israel got—they did not just get protection from Canaanite influences for 400 years, they did not just get preservation from famine, they did not even just get Goshen—they got the land of Rameses, which was the best of the best.

If you are asking God for a career, I think He will give you the best of the best. If you are asking God for a spouse, I think God will give you the best of the best. If you are asking God for anything, I think God's nature is such that He gives the best of the best to His children. I am not a prosperity preacher, do not get me wrong. There are those that teach a life of relaxation and unlimited prosperity and unlimited health. I think that is biblically out of balance. But you know what? I have been guilty of this, too. We have reacted so aggressively against the prosperity gospel that we may have gotten a little off focus, forgetting that God is in the business of giving His people the best of the best, whatever that may be.

"But, Pastor, you do not understand. I am in the middle of a trial right now." Do you know what? That could be the best of the best for you. Did you know that James 1:2-4 teaches that God uses our trials to build our character? That is why it says:

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials."
(James 1:2)

We have a tendency to think the best of the best is somehow for us to avoid suffering. That is not biblical either, but God, at the end of the day, is a good God. This is what the children of Israel received in the land of Rameses.

Then you see Pharaoh's command at the end of Genesis 47:11. All of this is happening as Pharaoh had ordered. This is not the little ragtag group of 66-70 people taking advantage of Pharaoh's generosity; Pharaoh put them into this place. How does the

saying go? Guests and fish start to stink after three days. This is not that kind of situation either—they were welcome because Pharaoh put them there. They were not taking advantage of Pharaoh's generosity whatsoever.

Pharaoh was a polytheist, and he was a pagan. Yes, he was, but you know what? God can use pagans. Proverbs 21:1 says,

*"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord;
He turns it wherever He wishes."*

How about Cyrus? On a copy of the Cyrus Cylinder there is an inscription of Cyrus' boasts as he was conquering Babylon. You will see Cyrus in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Isaiah, who actually calls out his name 200 years in advance. It is an amazing prophecy at the end of Isaiah 44-45. Cyrus was the guy that God used to release the children of Israel from the 70-year Babylonian captivity. Babylon brought them into captivity; the Persians, of which Cyrus was part of, conquered Babylon. That is what his boasts are about on the Cyrus Cylinder.

God used Cyrus in that position to take them out of Babylonian captivity, because now the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians and allowed the Nation of Israel to go back into their land. This guy was not a believer at all. Isaiah 45:4 says this of Cyrus, 200 years before he was born:

*"For the sake of Jacob My servant,
And Israel My chosen one,
I have also called you by your name;
I have given you a title of honor
Though you have not known Me." (Isaiah 45:4)*

This guy had no relationship with the Lord at all; yet, what does the Book of Proverbs say? The king's heart is like water in a watercourse. As far as God is concerned, He directs it any way he wants. The paganism of Pharaoh did not stop God's purposes. Maybe that is why we ought to be praying for our leadership.

"I could not vote for so-and-so. Don't you know they own casinos? Don't you know they use profanity? Don't you know that they don't really act in a Christian manner?" Okay. Do you think God is somehow limited because someone is not acting in a Christian manner, that He cannot use that person?

We will spend so much time on social media complaining about this person or that person. How much time do we spend in prayer? Not understanding that God can direct the heart of an unsaved person? I do not know if such and such politician is saved or unsaved—people can debate that till the cows come home—but the truth of the matter is, God is completely capable of directing someone's heart into His will by responding to the prayers of His people.

Are we spending more time complaining? I am like a Complainer-in-Chief. I will complain about it, but the Holy Spirit will convict me and say, "You spent a lot of time today complaining, are you praying?" In 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Paul, writing to Timothy, says,

"First of all, then, I urge entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

"But, Paul, I did not vote for that person or him or her." Paul says, "I did not ask you who you voted for." You do not pray for people based on whether you voted for them or not. You pray for them because God, in His sovereignty, put them into a place of authority. We are to pray that they would be pliable vessels in accomplishing God's will. Paul actually says here that as we do that, the gospel can travel more freely, and more people can get saved, which is what God wants, because He desires all *"to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

God wants people everywhere to hear, understand, and believe the gospel. A pagan person in a position of influence does not stop God. It did not stop Pharaoh from giving Israel the best of the best. It did not stop Cyrus from releasing the Nation of Israel from the Babylonian captivity. What an important lesson that is for us.

We end here with Genesis 47:12, where Joseph is now nourishing his family.

"Joseph provided for his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to their little ones." (Genesis 47:12)

God is in the provision business. Where God guides, God provides. If God is guiding you to do a certain thing or go a certain direction, I can guarantee you provision will be available. Look at the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt after these 400 years. They are going to pass through the Red sea; they are going to make their way to Mount Sinai.

As they are coming out of Egypt and making their way to Mount Sinai, there is about a two-month period; and what starts showing up like clockwork is the manna. You know what manna means in Hebrew? "What is it?" It is your provision. The children of Israel saw it on the ground, and a lot of them tried to hoard it, grab it, and stash it away, and it would rot. They could only collect it for that day. God was teaching His people moment-by-moment, day-by-day dependence on Him.

This crowd coming out of Egypt, although saved, how would you like to be the pastor of that group? It is like kids when you take them on a trip. "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" That's what is happening here: they are complaining and grumbling the whole way. Yet the manna fell like clockwork. These are the people that built the golden calf.

When you build a golden calf you only violate the first two commandments, right? "No gods before me, and no graven images." Yet the provision came.

These are the people that would not have enough faith up north to enter the land, because they saw giants in the land. They went into unbelief, and they should have trusted God, because look at all the things that God had done for that generation. Yet through all of that apostasy and rebellion, there is the manna every single morning. "You can collect more than a day's worth if it is the Sabbath coming, because you are not supposed to work on the Sabbath; but otherwise, trust Me."

That generation wandered around in the wilderness; most of them died; and God started to work with their kids, bringing them east through the Transjordan. Do you know what was falling for those 40 years? Manna, like clockwork. They finally entered the land of Canaan under Joshua. Only when they entered the land of Canaan—when the land itself could sustain its inhabitants, because it flowed with milk and honey—did the manna stop. God provided every single day. It shows you the provision of God.

God, by the way, is very creative with His provision. God may be providing right now for you through your job, but if you lose your job, it will not stop the provision because God is not handcuffed to your job. He can use anything. Just ask Elijah about that when he was fed there at the brook by ravens. Talk about creative provision.

David, in Psalm 37:25, says,

*"I have been young and now I am old,
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Or his seed begging bread."*

"I have seen it all, but I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or their children, via the provision of God."

Who can forget the famous teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount—Matthew 6:25-34. Why are you worried about what you are going to eat and what you are going to drink, and what you are going to wear? Does not God take care of the flowers and the birds? Will He not take care of someone more valuable than a flower and a bird? Oh, ye of little faith.

This issue of provision and money probably causes people more anxiety than any other single thing. Yet the Christian—if you believe what God said—is alleviated from that worry, because God is a provider. Paul, in Philippians 4:19 says,

"And my God will supply all of your greeds"—Whoops! It doesn't say that.

*"And my God will supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory
in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)*

Jesus taught us to pray this way: *""Give us this day our daily bread.""* (Matthew 6:11)
That is provision.

Paul, as he was leaving Malta, making his way to Rome, says in Acts 28:10:

"They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with all we needed."

Paul is saying, "I never wanted on this journey to Rome—the provision of God was there all the way."

That is what you see there in Genesis 47:12: the provision of God for His people, through Joseph, in Goshen, in the land of Rameses.

"Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to their little ones." (Genesis 47:12)

We are entering some strange times here in the United States. Economic things that we have really never seen before, like inflation and things of that nature, are panicking a lot of people. It is so important to stand on promises like these in the midst of economic difficulties. I do not know what is going to happen tomorrow, but I do know Who holds tomorrow—and that is God. God is a provider for His people.

When we talk about the provision of God, do you realize there is an ultimate provision? Second Corinthians 8:9 says,

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

Second Corinthians 9:15 says,

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!"

The ultimate provision that God has made for us is that He has fixed our sin problem through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. His final words on the cross were, *""It is finished!""* (John 19:30). The ultimate provision of God, for a problem that we have that we cannot fix on our own, God fixed it for us through what Jesus did for us.

Rather than us working through religiosity to try to gain this prize, He offers it as a free gift; and the only way to receive a free gift from God is to trust or believe in the One whom He has sent. I would challenge anyone within the sound of my voice: today is the day of salvation. I would encourage you, even where you are seated, even where you are listening, or watching, choose to place your trust for your eternity, your forgiveness of sins, the safekeeping of your soul exclusively into the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

That is how you become a Christian. It is not a matter of joining a church, walking an aisle, or giving money. It is a matter of privacy between you and the Lord where you hear the proclamation of the gospel, which is our ultimate provision, and you trust in it.