

A. The Precepts of Joseph (45:9-28)

1. The Enlistment of the Servants

-After revealing himself to his brothers, Joseph calls them into service.

2. The Expounding by the Servants

The details of the message

-Subject

*The brothers were to tell Jacob that Joseph was alive (45:9,26) and that he had received honor in Egypt (45:13,26).

-Solicitation

*The brothers were to invite Jacob and his family to Egypt (45:9).

*Joseph said that if they came, he would provide for them (45:11), as there were still 5 more years of famine remaining.

*Prior to this move, Jacob feared that he was near death due to grief concerning Benjamin (42:38).

*After arriving in Egypt, Jacob lived another seventeen years (47:28).

-Seriousness

"Hurry...do not tarry" (45:9)

"Hurry" (45:13)

*The conditions in Canaan were serious (47:13).

"I will provide for you" (45:11)

-Joseph would take care of them.

45:9 Hurry and go up to my father and **say to him**, 'Thus says your son **Joseph**, **God has made me lord of all Egypt**. Come down to me; **do not tarry**.¹⁰ You shall dwell in the land of **Goshen**, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have.¹¹ There **I will provide for you**, for there are yet **five years of famine to come**, so that you and your household, and all that you have, **do not come to poverty**.'¹² And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you.¹³ **You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt**, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here."¹⁴ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck.¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them ...

¹⁶ When the report was heard in **Pharaoh's** house, "**Joseph's** brothers have come," it pleased **Pharaoh** and his servants ...¹⁹ And you, **Joseph**, are commanded to say, 'Do this: **take wagons** from the land of **Egypt** for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come ... "

²¹ The sons of **Israel** did so: and **Joseph** gave them **wagons**, according to the command of **Pharaoh**, and gave them **provisions** for the journey.²² To each and all of them he gave a **change of clothes**, but to Benjamin he gave **three hundred shekels of silver** and **five changes of clothes**.²³ To his father he sent as follows: **ten donkeys** loaded with the good things of **Egypt**, and **ten female donkeys** loaded with **grain, bread**, and **provision** for his father on the journey.²⁴ ... as they departed, he said to them, "**Do not quarrel on the way**."

²⁵ So they went up out of **Egypt** and came to the land of **Canaan** to their father **Jacob**.²⁶ And they told him, "**Joseph is still alive**, and **he is ruler over all the land of Egypt**." And his heart became numb, for **he did not believe them**.²⁷ But when they told him **all the words of Joseph**, which he had said to them, and when he saw the **wagons** that **Joseph** had sent to carry him, **the spirit of their father Jacob revived**.²⁸ And **Israel** said, "**It is enough; Joseph** my son is still alive. **I will go and see him before I die**."

46:29 Then **Joseph** prepared his chariot and went up to meet **Israel** his father in **Goshen**. **He presented himself to him** and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.³⁰ **Israel** said to **Joseph**, "Now **let me die**, since I have seen your face and

The declaration of the message

-They delivered the message exactly as Joseph had instructed (45:27).

-How hard must it have been for the brothers to deliver this message?

-To deliver this message would require them to admit to Jacob what they had done.

The doubting of the message

"he did not believe them."

-Compare to his reaction upon learning of the death of Joseph (37:31-35)

-Compare to the reaction of the disciples in learning of the resurrection from Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9-11)

3. The Enabling for the Servants

-Joseph gave his brothers a significant task, as they were to bring 66 people from Canaan to Egypt (46:26).

To help in their task he gave them:

*Wagons (45:19,21)

*Clothes (45:22)

*Money (45:22)

*Food (45:23)

*Donkeys (45:23)

4. The Exhortations for the Servants

Be Fervent (45:9,13)

Be Faithful (45:24)

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*Outline for Life of Joseph: Butler, J. G. (1993). Joseph: The Patriarch of Character: Clinton, IA: LBC Publications.

B. The Presentations of Joseph (46:29-47:10)

1. The Expedition and Joseph's Presentation

"He presented himself to him..." (46:29)

-Joseph presented himself to Jacob

"let me die..." (46:30)

-Jacob's life is now complete in terms of the joy he feels at his reunion with Joseph.

-During this reunion, Joseph prepares his brothers and father for their inevitable meeting with Pharaoh.

"every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." (46:34)

- It is unclear why shepherds were held in low social esteem by the Egyptians.

-The Egyptians may have considered foreign herdsmen competition for resources.

-It also may reflect a general disdain for foreigners from Canaan (43:32).

C. The Provisions of Joseph (47:11-12)

1. The Encampment

Goshen - While the exact location of Goshen is unknown, it can be approximately correlated with the eastern Nile delta.

Rameses - The city of Rameses was located within Goshen.

-It was the capital under Rameses II

know that you are still alive." 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. 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.' ³³ When **Pharaoh** calls you and says, '**What is your occupation?**' ³⁴ you shall say, 'Your servants have been **keepers of livestock** from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' in order that you may dwell in the land of **Goshen**, for **every shepherd is an abomination** to the **Egyptians**."

47:1 So **Joseph** went in and told **Pharaoh**, "My father and my brothers, with their flocks and herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of **Canaan**. They are now in the land of **Goshen**." ² And from among his brothers **he took five men** and **presented them** to **Pharaoh**. ³ **Pharaoh** said to his brothers, "**What is your occupation?**" And they said to **Pharaoh**, "Your **servants are shepherds**, as our fathers were." 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**. And now, **please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen**." ⁵ Then **Pharaoh** said to **Joseph**, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶ 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**."

⁷ Then **Joseph** brought in **Jacob** his father and stood him before **Pharaoh**, and **Jacob blessed Pharaoh**. ⁸ And **Pharaoh** said to **Jacob**, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" ⁹ And **Jacob** said to **Pharaoh**, "The days of the years of my sojourning are **130 years**. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning." ¹⁰ And **Jacob blessed Pharaoh** and went out from the presence of **Pharaoh**. ¹¹ Then **Joseph** settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of **Egypt**, in the best of the land, **in the land of Rameses**, as **Pharaoh** had commanded. ¹² And **Joseph provided** his father, his brothers, and all his father's household **with food**, according to the number of their dependents.

2. The Emperor and Joseph's Family Presentation

Presentation of Joseph's Brothers

-We do not know which 5 of his brothers were selected.

-The question concerning their occupation would be humbling since the Egyptians held shepherds in low esteem (46:34)

"We have come to sojourn in the land..." (47:4)

-Links Jacob's family with the God's prophecy to Abraham in 15:13.

Presentation of Joseph's Father

"Jacob blessed Pharaoh" (47:7,10)

-Jacob blessed Pharaoh with a benediction that only one in touch with God could give.

2. The Endowment

-Joseph made sure that his family was well taken care of.

Precepts

Genesis 47:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years.

Genesis 47:13 (ESV)

¹³ Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine.

Genesis 37:31–35 (ESV)

³¹ Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." ³³ And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Mark 16:9–11 (ESV)

⁹ Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

Genesis 46:26 (ESV)

²⁶ All the persons belonging to Jacob who came into Egypt, who were his own descendants, not including Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all.

Presentations

Genesis 43:32 (ESV)

³² They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

Genesis 15:13 (ESV)

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.

Provisions

GOSHEN (גֹּשֶׁן, *gashen*). A region in Egypt where the Israelites lived prior to the exodus (Gen 47:27). Goshen has not been definitively identified with any modern archaeological site. The term is unknown in any ancient sources outside of the biblical texts.

Biblical Mentions

In the books of Genesis and Exodus, “Goshen” refers to a region in Egypt where Jacob and his family settle after they are reunited with Jacob’s son Joseph, who had been sold into slavery and later had risen to power as the most important advisor to Pharaoh (Gen 37–50). The name Goshen first appears in Gen 45:10, where Joseph tells his brothers to bring their father and the rest of the family to Goshen so that he (Joseph) can provide for them during the famine. The name reappears several other times in Genesis (Gen 46:28–29, 34; 47:1, 4, 6, 27; 50:8), each time in reference to the region where Jacob and his family settle. This region also is called “land of Rameses” in Gen 47:11.

Exodus mentions Goshen twice, both times in the context of the region being exempt from a plague (the swarm of flies [Exod 8:22] and the hailstorm [Exod 9:26]) because it was where God’s people, the Israelites, resided.

The Greek equivalent of Goshen, Γεσεμ (*Gesem*), is mentioned once in the deuterocanonical book of Judith (Judith 1:9) in connection to Raamses (the city).

Scholarly Debate

Meaning and Origin of “Goshen” in Genesis and Exodus

The place name Goshen in Genesis and Exodus appears to be of Semitic origin, despite attempts by some scholars to connect it to an Egyptian word. Mayani’s suggestion that Goshen is a common Hebrew noun meaning “pasture” (Mayani, *Hyksos*, 239–42) has not been widely accepted. Sarna connects Goshen with גִּישׁ (gish)/גִּישׁ (gush) in Job 7:5, referring to a clump of soil (Sarna, *Exodus*, 42; compare Cazelles, “Localisation,” 147). The Greek Septuagint (LXX) often has Γεσεμ (*Gesem*) (*Gesem*) where the Hebrew has the consonants גֹּשֶׁן (*gshn*), which the Masoretes pointed with the vowels “o” and “e” (hence, “Goshen”).

McNeile suggests that the Greek might better reflect the original word (i.e., *Geshem* or *Gesem*), and several attempts have been made to use “Gesem” as a starting point (McNeile, *Book of Exodus*, xcii). Naville suggested GSM in Egyptian place-name lists as an equivalent to the Greek designation Γεσεμ (*Gesem*) (Naville, “Geography,” 28–30), which was used by Greek authors for the 20th administrative district (“nome”) of Egypt during the mid- to late first millennium BC. Most scholars accept Gardiner’s assessment that Naville’s GSM should instead be read as ŠSMT (Gardiner, “Egyptian Equivalent,” 221–23; Jack, *Date of Exodus*, 12). Van Seters defends Naville’s reading of GSM as Goshen, and as referring to the 20th nome (Van Seters, “Geography,” 268–69); however, Van Seters finds fault in Naville’s attempt to date the use of the term to the time of Rameses II rather than to the eighth century BC, during the time of the

Saite rulers (Van Seters, “Geography,” 269). Redford also favors the time of the 26th Dynasty during the Saite or Persian period, in which Goshen is connected to the Qederite Arabs, who extended their influence westward toward the Nile Delta following Persia’s conquest of Egypt in the sixth century BC (Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 409; “Perspective,” 139–40).

Rabinowitz suggests that Γεσεμ (*Gesem*) is a reference to Gesem of Arabia, an opponent of Nehemiah (fifth century BC) whose influence was so great that the region around the Wadi Tumilat was named after him (Rabinowitz, “Aramaic Inscriptions,” 6–7). Rabinowitz explains that this is why the LXX translates Gen 45:10 as Γεσεμ Ἀραβίας (*Gesem Arabias*, “Aramaic Inscriptions,” 7). Thus, like Van Seters, Rabinowitz dates the use of GSM as a location in Egypt to the mid- to late first millennium BC, long after the exodus.

Location of Goshen in Genesis and Exodus

Although most scholars locate the Goshen of Genesis and Exodus in Egypt, this placement has been disputed. Winckler proposes that it was a North Arabian district called Musr or Musri (Winckler, *Forschungen*, 24–41). Winckler’s theory was rejected by later scholars, including Budge in 1902 (Budge, *History of Egypt*, vii–xxx).

Using the biblical descriptions and results of modern archaeology, it appears that Goshen would have included the area on the eastern Nile Delta at least as far north as Avaris/Tell Dab’a, as well as the western part of the Wadi Tumilat. However, how far east along the Wadi Tumilat or how far south toward Heliopolis that Goshen might have extended cannot be determined with certainty.

Clues to Goshen’s location are based on the description of the region, seemingly close to the Nile River, and the mention of Pithom and Rameses (Exod 1:11) as supply cities built by the forced labor of the Israelites who were living in Goshen. The general consensus is that Goshen was somewhere along the eastern part of the Nile Delta, probably in or near the Wadi Tumilat, a fertile valley connecting the Nile Delta east to Lake Timsah (e.g., see: Aharoni, *Land*, 196; Sarna, *Exodus*, 42; Thompson, *Bible and Archaeology*, 52). However, the precise locations of Pithom and Rameses have long been debated among scholars.

Location of Pithom. Several sites have been suggested as the location of Pithom:

- Pelusium, on the easternmost bank of the northern Nile Delta, near the Mediterranean Sea. In the Jewish Targums of Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti on Genesis and Exodus, Pithom is associated with Pelusium.
- Heliopolis/On, in the southern part of the Nile Delta. Uphill suggested On because the most important temple of Atum was located there (Per Atum [“house of Atum”] = Pithom; Uphill, “Pithom and Raamses” [1968], 292–99). However, the LXX clearly lists Πιθωμ (*Pithōm*), Ραμεσση (*Ramessē*), and Ων (*Ōn*) as separate locations (Exod 1:11).
- Tell el-Maskhuta, on the eastern side of the Wadi Tumilat.
- As a result of his excavations in the late 19th century, Naville identified Tell el-Maskhuta as the location of Pithom based on some inscriptions and indications that the city was founded by Rameses II (Naville, “Geography,” 32–36).

- Later scholars began to identify Tell el-Maskhuta with the biblical Succoth (the place the Israelites head toward after departing from Rameses; t-k-w [Tjeku] in Egyptian) instead of Pithom (e.g., Aharoni, *Land*, 196; Cornfeld, *Archaeology*, 38). However, subsequent excavations at Tell el-Mashkuta indicated that, aside from a brief occupation in the Middle Bronze Age, it was not settled until the seventh century BC when it was built by order of Pharaoh Neco II during the 26th Dynasty (Finkelstein and Silberman, *Bible Unearthed*, 66; Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, 119–21; Van Seters, “Geography,” 261–63).
- Tell er-Retaba, near the western side of the Wadi Tumilat. Gardiner offered Tell er-Retaba as a different possibility for Pithom (Gardiner, “Geography,” 95; see also: Bruckner, *Exodus*, 24–25; Cassuto, *Commentary*, 11; Noth, *Exodus*, 22). Tell er-Retaba was rejected by Van Seters as the location of Pithom on the basis of the University of Toronto’s excavations in the Wadi Tumilat (Van Seters; “Geography,” 262–63); instead, he suggested that Pithom and Succoth refer to the same place, Tell el-Mashkuta, with Succoth understood as the name of the region, not a city.

The location of a city called Pithom during the most likely times for an exodus of Israelites from Egypt remains uncertain. However, the Wadi Tumilat does have strong connections to the worship of Atum, and it therefore remains a logical choice for the general region in which the biblical Pithom may have been located.

Location of Rameses. Most scholars understand Rameses as referring to Piramesse (for an argument against this identification due to the lack of the “pi-” prefix in the biblical name, see Redford, “Perspective,” 138–39), Rameses II’s capital city, which he built during the 19th Dynasty (13th century BC).

The author of Psalm 78 identifies the land in Egypt as “Zoan,” which the Greek Septuagint translates as “Tanis,” in the northern part of the Nile Delta. The Targums Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti have “Tanis” where “Rameses” appears in the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text.

Although Gardiner initially suggested Pelusium as the location of Piramesse, he retracted this option in favor of Zoan/Tanis after Montet’s excavations at Tanis, which seemed to tie the location with Piramesse definitively (Gardiner, “Tanis,” 122; see also, Aharoni, *Land*, 195; Cassuto, *Commentary*, 11; Cornfeld, *Archaeology*, 35).

However, subsequent excavations revealed that the Ramesside monuments and inscriptions at Tanis were not original to the site, but had been taken from Tell el-Dab’a, about 19 miles (30 km) south of Tanis, near Qantir (Van Seters, “Geography,” 265; see also: Bietak, “Canaanites”). This identification of Rameses at Tell el-Dab’a, the site of the Hyksos capital of Avaris, is now widely accepted (e.g., Bruckner, *Exodus*, 24–25; Propp, *Exodus*, 739; Thompson, *Bible and Archaeology*, 58; Van Seters, “Geography,” 265).

Date of Goshen Mentions in Genesis and Exodus

Although the exodus is often linked to the reign of Rameses II (13th century BC), another proposed timeline (15th century BC) seems to fit the evidence relating to Goshen.

Moret records periodic Asiatic occupation in the eastern Delta region near the end of the Old Kingdom (ca. 2360 BC) and following (Moret, *Egyptian Civilization*, 221–34). Excavations at

Tell el-Dab'a reveal a multicultural Middle Bronze Age settlement, including significant Asiatic influence, such as an 18th-century BC seal of the Phoenician god Ba'al Zephon (Bietak, "Canaanites," 43). This is near the time that the Hyksos established their capital city at Avaris, modern-day Tell el-Dab'a, during their control of the eastern Delta.

Inasmuch as inhabitation by Israelites in Egypt is concerned, the relevant time of occupation would be directly tied to royal occupation and building projects in the Nile Delta. Two periods of history fit this description (see also: Kenyon, *Bible and Recent Archaeology*, 31): (1) the Hyksos occupation (ca. 17th to mid-16th century BC); and (2) the establishment of Piramesse as the capital city by Rameses II (13th century BC). Thus, Jack suggests that the Hyksos were the ones who welcomed the Israelites into Egypt (Jack, "Date of the Exodus," 219–20) and that the king "who did not know Joseph" (Exod 1:8) was Ahmose (early to mid-16th century BC), who expelled the Hyksos (Jack, "Date of the Exodus," 242–43).

The pharaoh during the exodus is often thought to be Rameses II (e.g., Cornfeld, *Archaeology*, 35) or his son Merneptah (e.g., McNeile, *Book of Exodus*, xciii–xciv). However, Jack favors Thutmose III (early to mid-15th century BC) as being the oppressive pharaoh in Exod 1, thus making his successor, Amenhotep II, the pharaoh of the exodus itself (Jack, "Date of the Exodus," 242). Jack insists that both Thutmose III and Amenhotep II would have kept a residence in the north, probably near Memphis, based upon a scarab discovered by Petrie (Jack, "Date of the Exodus," 250).

Goshen in Joshua

In Joshua 10:41 and 11:16, Goshen is listed among the regions conquered by Joshua and the Israelites. Aharoni suggests that Goshen in Josh 10–11 refers to the area between the hill country of Judah and the Negev (Aharoni, *Land*, 41). He also tentatively identifies Goshen with Tell el-Khuweilifeh (Aharoni, *Land*, 201), though it is unclear whether Aharoni distinguishes Goshen in Josh 10–11 from the reference in Josh 15:51.

Joshua 15:51 refers to Goshen as a town in the hill country of southern Judah, which Janssen suggests might be edh-Dhahiriye, four miles northeast of Anab (Janssen, "Gosen," 887). Grove considers the town as completely separate from the Goshen mentioned in Josh 10–11 (Grove, "Goshen," 941). In contrast, Janssen notes that it is unclear whether the region got its name from the town or was included with the town (Janssen, "Gosen," 887).

North does not exclude the possibility that the Goshen in Joshua is the same location as the Goshen mentioned in Genesis and Exodus (North, *Archeo-biblical Egypt*, 83).

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