

Miracles in the Mundane

Genesis 47

Go ahead and be turning in your Bibles to Genesis 47.

Tonight's passage ties a bow on much of the current series, so let's briefly review. We're now a little over two years into the seven-year famine that followed the seven years of plenty. Through a couple of alarming dreams, God showed Pharaoh that all of this was going to happen, and God used Joseph to not only assist Pharaoh in understanding His message, but also to manage the abundant yield of the years of plenty so as to survive the years of famine. We'll see the second half of that plan executed in tonight's passage. Meanwhile, the famine drew Joseph's family out of Canaan down to Egypt where grain was available for purchase. Joseph tested his brothers to see if their hearts were ripe for reconciliation, and upon finding them so, he revealed his true identity to them and invited them all willingly and joyously, but also by command of Pharaoh, to relocate to Egypt. Last week we saw Joseph and his father Jacob reunited after about 22 years of separation; for Jacob, Joseph was literally back from the dead! Now it was time to get everyone settled, but Joseph had to do things the right way as well as the expedient way. So, picking up in verse one we read...

Genesis 47:1-6

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.

There's so much contained in that brief paragraph, and chief among them is Joseph's SHREWDNESS in his dealings. He had become a masterful administrator throughout his career, and he had done so by becoming a student of people. Some don't like that word, "shrewdness," but shrewdness and holiness are not mutually exclusive. Jesus told His followers to be shrewd (or wise) as serpents and innocent as doves in their dealings with others (Matthew 10:16), and is Joseph an Old Testament example of this. Though Joseph had promised Goshen to his family back in Genesis 45:10, he now directed them there, and their they waited. Some scholars have described this arrangement as a maneuver on the part of Joseph like a *fait accompli*, an accomplished act that was irreversible, done without consultation or discussion. Was Joseph presuming upon Pharaoh's favor and generosity here? I don't know. It's arguable that Joseph's respect for Pharaoh was too great for him to resort to such tactics, but he knew

how Pharaoh thought and behaved. Perhaps their already being in Goshen helped ensure Pharaoh's favorable response. Pharaoh had become so predictable to Joseph that he was able to reliably prepare his family for their encounter with him. Remember from last time that Joseph told his brothers, "Now...

Genesis 46:33-34

When Pharaoh calls you and says, "What is your occupation?" 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.

Isn't it funny that guys really haven't changed that much over the last 4,000 years? You get a group of guys together for the first time, and how do they start getting to know one another? *"So, uh, what do you do for a living?"* Haha! *"The more things change, the more they stay the same."* As Pastor Dale mentioned last time, Joseph essentially told his brothers, *"Just tell Pharaoh the truth."* Things always work out better that way anyway, but as I said, Joseph was MAKING MANEUVERS too. As soon as they uttered the words, **"Your servants are shepherds,"** Joseph knew that they'd be seen as an abomination. WHY WOULD JOSEPH WANT HIS FAMILY TO BE REGARDED IN SUCH A DISGUSTING LIGHT? WHERE'S THE BENEFIT? The benefit is that they would be LEFT ALONE. Again, Joseph was a STEWARD. In a lot of ways, he had become quite the POLITICIAN. HE MADE THINGS HAPPEN, and now he would make things happen for his family.

Think about what's happening. First, think about how God would later command the people of Israel to exterminate the inhabitants of Canaan during the conquest. They weren't to leave any trace of paganism in the land. To allow a single pagan to continue living and worshiping their own gods in the land was an infectious threat to God's people. Now, we know they stopped short of accomplishing this goal as a nation, and sure enough, God's people intermingled with the locals, began to embrace their made-up gods, and ultimately were destroyed by them. Now, look back at what's being arranged by Joseph in Goshen. He's arranging for his family to be undisturbed by the Egyptians, more or less separate from them and their customs, while they increase and continue worshiping the One True God.

Another wise political maneuver Joseph made was to selectively introduce his family to Pharaoh. It's true that Pharaoh had already BRIEFLY met (or perhaps just saw) all of Joseph's brothers when he revealed himself to them. Clearly no real introduction was made, so now see that Joseph presented FIVE of his eleven brothers to Pharaoh. Given the LITTLE ONES and the FLOCKS and HERDS they had to tend in Goshen, it was possibly out of necessity that Joseph only introduced these few. Nevertheless, you know he had to have CAREFULLY SELECTED the FIVE best representatives from among his brothers. He gave them their LINES, knowing how Pharaoh and the rest of the Egyptians would regard them, and they nailed them. Then they went off script!

Genesis 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. And now, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

Whoa! They just went for it, and Joseph probably held his breath. So far, they had simply pulled over for a pit stop in Goshen; maybe they were presuming upon Pharaoh's favor toward Joseph. However, they now sought to get OFFICIAL CONSENT from him. They REALLY wanted to live in Goshen. WHY? What made Goshen the perfect place for Jacob and his family?



Well, if you look on this map just down and to the left of the words "Lower Egypt," you'll see "Goshen." It's widely agreed upon that Goshen was EAST of the Nile River Delta. Being in lower Egypt, it was well watered, enough so that the land was able to sustain livestock even in the midst of famine, and that livestock included the ROYAL CATTLE. Pharaoh would refer to the region as "**the best of the land**" and also as the "**land of Rameses**," though many scholars believe this reference is probably anachronistic, only being called that multiple generations later, but used here to help the reader understand the region being discussed. It's also believed to have been located near to the royal residence, which made it so that Joseph wasn't far from his family. Joseph's family really wanted to sojourn in the land of Goshen, so they went for it! They made the BIG ASK, and Pharaoh's response couldn't have been better!

Genesis 47:6

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.

Pharaoh didn't just agree to their request to live in the best, most lush, most ideal land in Egypt, but he also gave them a JOB OFFER, and not just any job! He offered to put them in charge of the ROYAL LIVESTOCK! Pharaoh was looking for "**able men**," which means "**men of skill**." If you're a self-starting, honest worker, not given to mere eye-service but driven to pursue excellence, you will automatically rise to the top. Such a work ethic honors God, and it's sought after, even by kings like Solomon who said...

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see a man skillful in his work?

He will stand before kings;

he will not stand before obscure men.

This was a no-brainer for Pharaoh. He had already observed how he and the nation of Egypt as a whole had been blessed by the administration of Joseph. It's clear that Pharaoh now sought to multiply blessing by having even more of his affairs managed by those of the same stock as Joseph. WHEW! WHAT AN OUTSTANDING RESPONSE FROM PHARAOH! A home and a livelihood! Once again, God had moved on behalf of this chosen family. Joseph's brothers would now stand before the king as keepers of the royal livestock, and the introductions weren't over. In verse seven we read...

Genesis 47:7-10

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.

In this moment, we once again catch a glimpse of the Messiah to come. We've already seen how Joseph was sent into a distant land by the father to look after his brothers just like Jesus was sent from heaven by the Father to rescue His brethren of the house of Israel. Like Jesus, Joseph was despised and rejected by his brethren, who sold Him into slavery, separating him from his father for their sake. In spite of this terrible treatment, Jesus would save His people by giving His life for the world. Joseph would rescue Egypt and the surrounding lands from famine, and in so doing, God would use him to bring about the salvation of his family, the house of Israel. Now these foreigners from Canaan found themselves in Pharaoh's court. They were NOBODIES, yet they stood before arguably the most powerful man in the world. Why? How? Because of something they had done? No way! They had an audience with Pharaoh BECAUSE OF JOSEPH.

Joseph has already "**presented [his brothers] to Pharaoh**," and now we watch him present his father to Pharaoh. This scene is truly precious. Can you see it in your mind's eye, this frail, little old man being held up by his son so that he is able to stand before Pharaoh? Joseph is presenting his beloved father to Pharaoh; he is causing him to stand before him because he had neither the status nor the strength to stand before this ruler on his own. This is what Jesus does and will do for us. The brief book of Jude

ends with one of the most beautiful doxologies in Scripture, in my opinion. The ESV captures it well, but I want to read it to you from the NET Bible. Jude says...

Jude 1:24-25 NET

24 Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence, 25 to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and now, and for all eternity. Amen.

Jesus set out to do this "**before all time,**" it's His ongoing ministry in our lives "**now,**" and because of who He is and what He's done, He'll do this "**for all eternity. Amen.**" When your heart's desire is to follow Christ, but you still struggle to do so, when the Spirit within you is willing but the flesh is weak, stop trying to stand in your own power and let Him hold you up! I find myself saying this often to others, that a life lived to please Jesus because of all He's done for us is NOT about greater personal effort but about greater personal SURRENDER. Give Him permission to RULE your life, and watch as He gives you the POWER to let Him, and you know what else? Jude said that that the Lord's able "**to cause you to stand, REJOICING,**" and some interpret that to mean that it's His joy to do this in your life (and I believe it is), but I believe it could also be interpreted to mean that He's able to hold you up, and give you strength, and BE YOUR SOURCE OF JOY, and I believe that's just as biblical! As we cease striving and recognize that He is God (Psalm 46:10), and just let Him hold us up as we give Him our lives, THERE'S JOY! Are any of you wore out tonight? It could be because you're attempting to stand in your own strength. Rest in Him! Are you lacking peace, or hope, or joy tonight? It could be because you've made worldly circumstances your source of joy instead of Him, or because you've allowed your circumstances to divert your gaze from your enduring source of joy. Again, like Jacob did with Joseph, rest in the arms of Jesus and let Him cause you to stand.

Joseph helped his frail, aged father to stand before Pharaoh, and the first thing Jacob did was bless Pharaoh. In fact, as you read, Jacob blessed Pharaoh coming and going! To some, it may seem odd for this man of God to ask God to bless this pagan man, but to most, I believe it makes perfect sense. This is the man who ultimately made a place for his son, who had provided grain for his family and even transportation and provisions for them as they traveled to Egypt, and who had invited them to settle in the CHOICEST region of his kingdom as they weathered this great famine. This is actually the fulfillment of God's promise to Abram when He said...

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

And we see this promise passed on from Isaac to Jacob when he told him, "**May [God] give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you,**" just before sending him away to live with his uncle Laban. It was God's will to bless the nations through Abraham and the seed to be born from him, and ultimately in Christ we have been blessed. It was God's will to bless this Pharaoh because of the blessing he had been to Joseph and the blessing he was now to Jacob and his family. Conversely, in Exodus, we

see the other side of this promise, the curse that comes upon a Pharaoh who didn't know Joseph and dishonored Jacob's family.

Pharaoh asked Jacob, "**How many are the days of the years of your life?**" and Jacob's response is powerfully instructive. In a parallel yet somewhat contradictory fashion, Jacob responded, "**The days of the years of my SOJOURNING are 130 years.**" He said, "*I'm on a SOJOURN.*" That fits well coming off of the "Sojourners" series we did just before this series, doesn't it? It describes the lives of all of the Patriarchs, for that matter, and that's because it is the appropriate, biblical attitude of every man and woman of faith. The writer of Hebrews describes the life lived by faith this way...

Hebrews 11:13-16

13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

This world is not our home, just as Canaan or Egypt wasn't Jacob's. Just like we've been singing on Sunday mornings recently...

***Blessed are those who walk with Him
Whose hearts are set on pilgrimage with Jesus
They'll see His glory***

We're all sojourning, and in the grand scheme of things, it's a short trip. To give Pharaoh a number, Jacob said, "130 years," but he qualified that number by saying...

Genesis 47:9b

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.

He seemed to understand that his life would never reach the 175 years of his grandfather Abraham or the 180 years of his father Isaac. He said, "**few and evil have been the days and years of my life.**" Paul certainly took this summation to heart and made it known to the Ephesian believers when he wrote...

Ephesians 5:15-17

15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Everyone's days are evil! They're all fleeting, a VAPOR as James said, blown on a cold morning and gone before you can say, "Look!" How sad it is that most people begin to live with such an eternal

perspective only upon nearing the end of their temporary lives in this world! We say that Christmas comes faster and faster every year, but we're so often hypnotized by the world that we seldom reorganize our lives to act upon that understanding and prioritize what's eternally significant. How do we effectively alleviate this disparity between our knowledge of this reality and our tendency to do nothing about it? Moses prayed this way...

Psalm 90:12

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

What would we eliminate from our lives, or what would we add if we knew how many days we had left on this earth? What if we just went ahead and allowed the Lord to make those changes tonight? The wisdom that comes with our understanding of the brevity of life is a powerful safeguard against a life given to foolishness, a life spent on everything but the will of God, as Paul described.

The days are indeed evil, as Jacob said. They're evil in that they're few and fleeting, but they're also evil because of the trouble we find in them. Think of everything Jacob had experienced...

Esau's murderous hatred of Jacob...

Laban's treacherous dealings with Jacob...

The rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah...

The death of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel...

Reuben's treachery and incest with Jacob's concubine Bilhah...

The apparent death (loss of 22 YEARS) of Jacob's favorite son Joseph...

As Jesus said, we'll find trouble in this world (John 16:33), but we'll cause a lot of it. How many of those troubles did Jacob bring upon himself? Maybe not all, but most. Don't you reckon that there was a hard conversation that was had between Canaan and Egypt explaining how Joseph was still alive? Do you think it's possible that Jacob made this remark about his days being "**few and evil**" with the understanding in the back of his mind that he had brought so much of it upon himself? After Jacob's second blessing upon Pharaoh, we read in verse eleven...

Genesis 47:11-12

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.

This is a MIRACLE. A group of foreigners, abominable shepherds no less, are GIVEN a possession in the best of the land of Egypt by command of Pharaoh himself. Then, in the midst of an unprecedented famine, Joseph is able to provide his family with all the food they need. In a moment, we'll read how the rest of Egypt and the surrounding land fared during the famine, but from the way this is worded, not to mention Joseph's promise in Genesis 45, Jacob's family was GIVEN all the food they would need. From

scarcity, God brought abundance, and in a fearful time, He brought security. As it's been well said, "God loves to surprise us."

Genesis is a book of EXPLANATIONS. God is explaining how things came to be and how they carried on. As I said, tonight's passage truly ties a bow on the whole account. We see the culmination of God's prophecy to Abraham regarding his descendants' sojourn in Egypt, the famine He would use to start the move, and the administration of the young man He had sent ahead of the rest of his family to make preparations and save them all through it! Jacob's family is now settled in Egypt as the worst of the famine hits. As we read, keep in mind that Pharaoh was just DOUBLY BLESSED...

Genesis 47:13-22

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. 14 And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone. 16 And Joseph answered, Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock, if your money is gone. 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. 18 And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land. 19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.

20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. The land became Pharaoh's. 21 As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other. 22 Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived on the allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

We're now in year THREE OF SEVEN in the famine, so it's taken about three years to deplete everyone's money (47:14). At the end of the third year or in the fourth year of the famine, Joseph sold grain for livestock (47:17). At this point, Joseph has accumulated all the money and all the livestock for Pharaoh. Finally, in what appears to be the fifth year of the famine, Joseph sold grain in exchange for land and servitude (47:20-21). Apart from Joseph's family who seems to have had an allowance of food automatically provided for them, the only other inhabitants of Egypt who weren't included in this arrangement of selling their land and themselves for food was the priests. They had a **"fixed allowance from Pharaoh."** Priests wielded a fair amount of political power in ancient Egypt; therefore, Pharaoh sought to curry favor with them by providing for their needs. In this way, their political power became his political power.

So, five years into the seven-year famine, Pharaoh possesses all the money and all the livestock and all the land and all the people of Egypt and the surrounding lands. All the Egyptians had become SERFS for Pharaoh; they no longer owned their land, but they could live on it and work it in exchange for a FIFTH of its produce. Would you say that God blessed Pharaoh? You better believe it!

Now, some might look at Joseph and ask, "*How could he be so ruthless? How could he take advantage of people like that during such a difficult time?*" as if he was supposed to just give them food. I would respond that that is a 21st century, westernized way of reading the Bible. There was no state welfare system in Egypt or Israel. You worked and acquired what you needed with what you had. If you couldn't pay your debts or you couldn't earn enough to sustain yourself, you would settle debt or sustain yourself by selling yourself into slavery, which was more akin to INDENTURED SERITUDE. It was done out of ECONOMICAL EXPEDIENCE. Many a critic of the Bible love to point to passages like this as evidence for inconsistency or moral deficiency in the Bible, but this was nothing like the shameful slave era of our nation's history. It was a MEANS OF SURVIVAL when a person could no longer pay his debts or afford to provide for his own needs, and you can tell that this was an acceptable, even favorable, arrangement by the way the people responded. We read...

Genesis 47:23-26

23 Then Joseph said to the people, Behold, I have this day bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. 24 And at the harvests you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and as food for yourselves and your households, and as food for your little ones. 25 And they said, You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to Pharaoh. 26 So Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt, and it stands to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; the land of the priests alone did not become Pharaoh's.

The people AGREED GLADLY! The NET Bible translates their response, "**You have saved our lives! YOU ARE SHOWING US FAVOR, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves.**" This was a moment of RELIEF and REJOICING! They weren't like Harry in "Home Alone" when he got angry. "FRIDGI... FRACHA... FRIDGI... FRACHA!!!" Yes, Pharaoh now essentially OWNED the Egyptians, but they wouldn't starve to death. They wouldn't have to watch their children starve! THEY WERE GOING TO MAKE IT!

They would rather be living slaves than dead free men. How about that? How about you? Now, I know that Patrick Henry famously declared, "*Give me liberty or give me death!*" and many a red-blooded American echoes that sentiment. It certainly applies when faced with an oppressive government who views its citizens as little more than subjects to be mastered to one's advantage. However, what was going on in this situation? The Egyptians tell Joseph, "**You have saved our lives!**" Of course, we'll serve Pharaoh!"

This ought to be the response of every born-again believer. "**You have saved our lives; may it please my lord, we will be servants to [God].**" Paul essentially spells this out in Romans when he said...

Romans 6:20-22

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Paul told the Corinthian believers that they had been **“bought with a price,”** and so it is for us, that price being the blood of Jesus Christ shed as full payment for our sin. Now in this instance, Paul was actually addressing the rampant sexual sin in the Corinthian church, but this statement nevertheless holds true for all who have called upon the Lord to save them from their sin. He told them, **“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19b-20).** For anyone who chafes under such expectations, I would simply ask, *“Is Christ not worthy?”* Paul urged the Roman believers, saying...

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

The last phrase “spiritual worship” can also be faithfully translated “REASONABLE SERVICE” or “REASONABLE WORSHIP.” Jesus laid down His life for you. He didn’t just offer to do it; HE DID IT. The Father BUTCHERED His Son, pouring out ALL of His wrath for sin upon Him so that you could be saved! Giving God control of your life—the TRUE and ETERNAL LIFE that you have only because of Him—giving Him control is just what’s REASONABLE. The Egyptians deemed Pharaoh WORTHY of their servitude; he had saved their temporary lives in this world. How much MORE so is Jesus WORTHY of our lives for saving them ETERNALLY! HE’S WORTHY!

So, now we see how Egypt became so enriched for all the magnificent building projects and cities that would be built dynasties later, how Pharaoh came to control so much. We see how Egypt survived such a bleak ordeal. Genesis EXPLAINS these things, and the bow on this whole account is beautifully cinched tight by Moses’ recap...

Genesis 47:27-28

27 Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. 28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years.

“Israel settled in the land of Egypt...and multiplied greatly.” That was the point. By tucking His people in the middle of the world's greatest superpower of that time, even though they’d eventually become slaves, they could multiply in safety without alarming surrounding nations, inciting their attacks and turning God's progress in fulfilling His promise of growing a family into a nation into a two-steps-forward-one-step-back prospect.

Jacob's family prospered in Egypt. Pharaoh prospered, and even the people of Egypt prospered in that they LIVED. God showed up in so many ways throughout this time of testing. He had shown Himself faithful, and for those who took His faithfulness to heart, THEIR FAITH GREW, and we see that in one of the final scenes of Jacob's life...

Genesis 47:29-31

29 And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place. He answered, I will do as you have said. 31 And he said, Swear to me; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

We'll see more of Jacob's faith in the chapters to come, but believing that God would fulfill His promise to give Canaan to his descendants, Jacob asked to be buried in the family burial plot in the land he knew they would one day possess, and Joseph swore to honor his father's wishes.

What blessing God brought out of such hardship! This is the power and the sovereignty of God, His great love and wisdom. He has not ceased to work in such ways either. The folks in this account were under tremendous stress. They lived in an extremely difficult time that likely came to be viewed as typical, at least for the multiple years of famine yet to be endured. All the while, God was using the mundane and the miserable to bring about the miraculous, and He can do that because He's God. It's my prayer that we would SEE IT, that we would see God's continued faithfulness in our day-to-day lives and allow such glimpses of Him to grow our faith too.