

Poverty in the Bible: The Joseph Story

Genesis 47

- 1 Joseph went and told Pharaoh, "My father and brothers, with their flocks and herds and everything they own, have come from the land of Canaan and are now in Goshen." 2 He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.
- 3 Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?" "Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were." 4 They also said to him, "We have come to live here awhile, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen."
- 5 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, 6 and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock."
- 7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed [a] Pharaoh, 8 Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?"
- 9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers." 10 Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

The Origins of Poverty

Genesis 47 (cont)

- 11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed. 12 Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children.
- 13 There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine. 14 Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, and he brought it to Pharaoh's palace. 15 When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all Egypt came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? Our money is used up."
- 16 "Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone." 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock.

The Origins of Poverty

Genesis 47 (cont)

- 18 When that year was over, they came to him the following year and said, "We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. 19 Why should we perish before your eyes—we and our land as well? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate."
- 20 So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's, 21 and Joseph reduced the people to servitude, [c] from one end of Egypt to the other. 22 However, he did not buy the land of the priests, because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and had food enough from the allotment Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land.
- 23 Joseph said to the people, "Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. 24 But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. The other four-fifths you may keep as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves and your households and your children."
- 25 "You have saved our lives," they said. "May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh."

The Origins of Poverty

Genesis 47 (cont)

- 26 So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt—still in force today—that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Pharaoh's.
- 27 Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.
- 28 Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. 29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried." "I will do as you say," he said.
- 31 "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Prophecy and Exile

Micah 2:1-5

Woe to those who plan iniquity to those who plot evil on their beds!

At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it.
They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them.

They defraud a man of his home, a fellowman of his inheritance.
Therefore, the LORD says:

"I am planning disaster against this people, from which you cannot save yourselves.

You will no longer walk proudly, for it will be a time of calamity.
In that day men will ridicule you; they will taunt you with this mournful song:

'We are utterly ruined; my people's possession is divided up.

He takes it from me! He assigns our fields to traitors.' "

Therefore you will have no one in the assembly of the LORD
to divide the land by lot.





Man barricades self in foreclosed home

A man barricades himself in his foreclosed home in Carson.

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Prophecy and Exile

Isaiah 5:8-9

Woe to you who add house to house
and join field to field
till no space is left
and you live alone in the land.

The LORD Almighty has declared in my
hearing:

"Surely the great houses will become
desolate,
the fine mansions left without occupants."



Woes of Wealth

James 5:1-6

1Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.





Economic Crisis

Revelation 18:11-17

11"The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more— 12cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; 13cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men.

14"They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.' 15The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn 16and cry out:

" 'Woe! Woe, O great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet,
and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!

17In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!"

The Washington Post

Economy Strains Under Weight of Unsold Items

By Annys Shin

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“The unsold cars and trucks piling up at dealerships and assembly lines as consumers cut back and auto companies scramble for federal aid are just one sign of a major problem hurting the economy and only likely to get worse.

The world is suddenly awash in almost everything: flat-panel televisions, bulldozers, Barbie dolls, strip malls, Burberry stores. Japan yesterday said its economy shrank at an 12.7 percent annual pace in the last three months of 2008 as global demand evaporated for Japanese cars and electronics. Business everywhere are scrambling to bring supply in line with demand...”