

**INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.—**  
**Sunday, Nov. 28.**

JOSEPH AND PHARAOH.—Gen. 47:1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Prov. 16:31. *Commit*  
 —7-10. *Time*—1706, B.C.

**INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.**

Between the time of our last lesson and the present one, we have the brief narrative of the return of Joseph's brethren to Canaan, laden with the good things of Egypt for their father, and with vehicles for bringing their families and their father down to Egypt. The event of most importance is related in ch. 46:1-4. It seems probable that Jacob had some misgiving in regard to going into Egypt; for he must have been aware that his father, on a similar occasion, (ch. 26:1-3,) had been forbidden to go thither, and warned to remain in Canaan. Accordingly, on reaching Beer-Sheba, he repaired the ancient altar, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac, in the expectation, undoubtedly, that God would reveal to him His will in regard to his proposed journey. Nor was he disappointed; for God spoke to him in the visions of the night, and said, *I am God—the God of thy father. Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hands upon thy eyes.* Having thus obtained the divine sanction, the journey was resumed. On reaching the Egyptian frontier, Judah was sent forward to apprise Joseph of their approach, and receive instructions as to their proper route into Goshen. Joseph hastened to meet and welcome his father, and to instruct his brethren in regard to the representations of themselves and their calling which they were to make to Pharaoh on being brought before him.

**LESSON NOTES.**

(47:1) *Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh.* Everything that Joseph did was noble. Absolute independence in Egypt, and though the king had generously assured him (ch. 45:18-20) *that the fat of the land, and the good (good things) of all the land of Egypt* were his, yet he took no advantage of it in regard to his own family; but went directly to the king, and informed him of their arrival, with their flocks and herds, and that they were awaiting his pleasure in regard to their settlement.

(2) *And he took some of them, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.* Man's in-born curiosity has been greatly exercised to know who this favored five were. Dr. A. Clarke tells us that the original, literally translated, signifies—from the end, or extremity of his brethren he took five men, and enumerates six different ways that this language has been interpreted—*as, selecting at random; selecting the meanest looking,—the finest looking,—the eldest,—the youngest,—or some of the eldest and some of the youngest.* Dr. Jamieson tells us that Jewish traditions say Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Ashur were the men presented. It certainly would furnish a most pleasing suggestion if this were authenticated, since four of these were sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, whose "evil report" Joseph had once borne to his father, and who may, consequently, be supposed to have once been Joseph's bitterest enemies.

(3,4) *And Pharaoh said what is your occupation?* This inquiry had been anticipated by Joseph, and he had instructed his brothers beforehand how to answer—(ch. 46:31-34). This was done, in order that there might be the most perfect agreement between his own statement and theirs; and also, because their occupation would seriously affect the question of their settlement in the country. *Thy servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers.* This announcement, with a less generous king, or one less graciously prepared by God to favor His chosen people, would undoubtedly have been most unfavourably received. However according to Joseph's instructions, (ch. 46:34) they proceeded, with the statement of the failure of the pasturage in their own country and the request that they might dwell (that is, *sojourn*) in the land of Goshen. They had evidently accepted the promise that the land of Canaan should be theirs, and had thought of nothing more than a temporary settlement in Egypt. Thus, there is reason to hope that all the sons of Jacob were men of faith, resting in the promise God had made to their fathers. The above request they had been instructed by Joseph to make, partly because Goshen was adapted for pasturage, and partly, since their occupation would expose them to the contempt of the Egyptians it would be best for them

to be settled by themselves in a region where they would come into contact with comparatively few of them.

(5,6) *Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee—to be near thee,—to dwell beside thee (therefore) the land of Egypt is before thee. In the best of the land (that best suited to their requirements) make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell, and if thou knowest any men of activity (vigor, force), among them, make them rulers over my cattle.* The King's cattle were probably pastured mostly in Goshen, the placing of them under Hebrew shepherds would therefore be a relief to both Hebrews and Egyptians and prevent disturbances between the two nationalities.

(7) *And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh.* Jacob, as an aged man and a servant of God, proceeded at once to invoke the divine blessing upon the King. He thus virtually assumed a kind of superiority to the king, and Pharaoh evidently admitted the claim, for, as the Apostle says, *without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.*

(8) *How old art thou?* The people of Egypt did not attain the great age they did in more mountainous and less malarious regions. Jacob, then, who was 130 years old, would seem surprisingly old to Pharaoh.

(9) *The days of the years of my pilgrimage.* Jacob's years, as he looked back upon them, and especially as he compared them with the years of the earlier patriarchs, would seem little more than days. His life had literally been a pilgrimage, a scene of weary wandering from place to place, and even then he was a pilgrim seeking a place to die in. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* The life of Jacob had been singularly full of care, solicitude, and grief. *Have not attained unto the days of the years of my fathers, &c.* Abraham and Isaac were much older when they died than Jacob was when he uttered these words: Yet Jacob, though he lived twenty years longer, evidently supposed (ch. 46:30) that his life was drawing to a close.

(10) *And Jacob blessed (gave a parting benediction to) Pharaoh, and went out.* It is doubtful if he ever again saw the King; yet who shall say that his blessing was lost, or that this amiable and unselfish monarch may not have trusted in the God of Jacob and of Joseph to the saving of his soul?

(11) *And Joseph placed (settled) his father and his brethren . . . in the best of the land.* Certainly not the best for all purposes, but the best for their use, being a pastoral people. In the land of Rameseo (the Son of the Sun)—another name for Goshen.

(12) *And Joseph nourished (fed, supplied) his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread according to their families.* Thus were Joseph's long sorrow and trial rewarded, in the sweet consciousness that to those from whom he had suffered much wrong, he had rendered more benefit, and, better still, that from being bitter and relentless enemies they were at last restored to brotherhood and peace.

**SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.**

Joseph is a worthy example of filial reverence.

As soon as he heard that his father was in Egypt he hastened to meet him, embraced him, and wept upon his neck. He was not above showing a child's tenderness to his father.

Joseph brought his father to the palace, and presented him to Pharaoh himself. He was not ashamed to let even the King see that he felt himself honored in showing honor to his father.

**QUESTION SUMMARY.**

(FOR THE CHILDREN.)

(1) What did Joseph go and tell Pharaoh? Where did he say they were? Where was that? It was the first country they would enter when coming into Egypt? Had Joseph, before this, been to meet his father and brothers?—(ch. 46:29). (2) Whom did he bring to speak to the king? (3) What did Pharaoh ask them? (4) What did they say? Had Joseph told them just how to answer the king? (ch. 46:33-34). Where did they ask Pharaoh to let them live? Why did they chose to live in Goshen? Because there was plenty of pasture in Goshen for their flocks; and because the people of Egypt did not like shepherds, so it would be best for them to live by themselves. (5,6) Where did Pharaoh tell Joseph to let his father and brothers live? What did he mean by *the best of the land*? (see note) What then did he give them? Whom was Joseph told to set over Pharaoh's

cattle? Some of his own people—his nephews, I suppose, who were strong and healthy, and able to bear fatigue. (7) What did Jacob do when he came before the king? What does that mean? He asked that God's blessing—God's peace—might be upon the king. (8) What did Pharaoh ask him? (9) How old did he say? Was that as old as his father Isaac, and his grandfather Abraham had been? How old was Abraham?—(ch. 25:7). How old was Isaac?—(ch. 35:28). (10) What did Jacob then do? (11) Where did Joseph place, or settle his father and brothers? What is Rameses another name for?—(v.6). (12) What did Joseph do for them? What do you mean by *nourished*? Fed them, that is, supplied them with food. How long? Till the end of the famine; after that all of them but Jacob could take care of themselves. Which of God's commandments did Joseph keep very perfectly? Repeat the fifth commandment. What are you told in Col. 3:20?

**TOBACCO AND INSANITY.**

A party of clergymen were discussing this subject when the case of Rev. Mr. B. was mentioned, a graduate of Andover, of high standing, and for a time very successful. He was made a raving maniac twenty years ago by the use of tobacco! remarked one of the party. Another gave his account of the man, whom he recalled vividly to mind "with his pale face, stained lips, repulsive breath, and quivering hand." The abject slave of tobacco, he chewed negro-head tobacco, a match for any man who has not the iron nerves of an African goat or horse. He preached about three years with unexampled popularity and success. His health then failed, and no one knew the cause. A few months rolled away, and he utterly broke down, yet still *no one knew the cause.* In a few months more he became a maniac, relinquished his pulpit, and was as wild as the man found 'cutting himself with stones among the tombs,' and no one knew the cause. He was then taken to an asylum for the insane, and remained twenty years! He there breathed a foetid atmosphere, paced the floor of confined halls, stared upon the outside world through iron gates, cursed himself, cursed his wife and children, and in his wild ravings 'dealt damnation round the land,' thus day and night champing tobacco as a fretted horse champs his bit. He once was pacing his room as he had aforetime, year by year, when a change came over him. He stopped abruptly, and in a sort of soliloquy exclaimed, 'Why am I here? What brought me here? What binds me here? His soul bursting with indignation, he cried aloud, 'Tobacco! Tobacco!' He walked backward and forward, then bursting into tears, he cast the last foul plug through the iron gates, and looking upward to God he said, 'O God, help! Help! I will use no more.'

'Now we believe in no miraculous cure in this case. Mr. B.—dropped his tobacco, and the sad and dark eclipse fled from his beautiful mind, and it came out from the horrible storms and tempests of insanity, clear as the sun and fair as the moon. He soon regained his health and vigor, again preached the Gospel of the blessed God, in the Presbyterian connection, and after ten years of arduous service he died, revered and beloved, and passed, as we believe, into the better world.' *Prof. Thayer's 'Facts About Tobacco.'*

**HE ALSO SERVES WHO WAITS.**

I once knew a working man, a potter by business, who had one small invalid child at home. He wrought at his trade with exemplary fidelity, being always in the shop with the opening of the day. He managed, however, to bear each evening to the bedside of the "wee lad," as he called him, a flower, or a bit of ribbon, a fragment of crimson glass, indeed any thing that would lie out on the white counterpane, and give a color to the room. He was a quiet unsentimental Scotchman; but never went home at nightfall without some toy or trinket, showing he had remembered the wan face

that lit up so when he came in. I presume he never said to a living soul that he loved that boy so much. Still he went on patiently loving him. And by and by he moved that whole shop into positively real and unobtrusive fellowship with him. The workmen made curious little jars and teacups upon their wheels, and painted diminutive pictures down the sides before they stuck them in the corner of the kiln at burning time. One brought some fruit in the bulge of his apron, and another some engravings in a rude sbrap book. Not one of them whispered a word, for this solemn thing was not to be talked about. They put them in the old man's hat where he found them, so he understood all about it. And I tell you seriously, that entire pottery full of men, of rather coarse fiber by nature, grew quiet as the months drifted, becoming gentle and kind, and some of the un-governed ones stopped swearing, as the patient fellow-worker's face told them beyond any mistake that the inevitable shadow was drawing nearer. Every day now somebody did a piece of his work for him, and put it up on the sanded plank to dry, thus he could come later and go earlier. So when the bell tolled, and the little coffin came out of the door of the lowly house, right around the corner out of sight, there stood a hundred stalwart working-men from the pottery with their clean clothes on, most of whom gave a half day of time for the privilege of taken off their hats to the simple procession, filing in behind it, and following across the village green to its grave that small burden of a child, which probably not one of them had even seen with his own eyes. *Methodist Protestant.*

**CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.**

Rev. Mr. Christopher once called on an aged class-leader, and after having prayer with the family, said:

"Brother, how is it you have been a church member so long, and yet are not a converted man?"

"Are you my judge?"

"I know you by your fruits. You have no family worship."

"Do you know that I have no family worship?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Well; it is true but I would like to know who told you."

"No one told me, but I know that had you been in the habit of having family worship, that cat would not have jumped out of the window, frightened, as it did, when we knelt to pray."

The jest was true in that case. The brother confessed that he had omitted family worship because he did not wish to hinder his workmen. He was touched with the reproof and immediately set up an altar, and years afterward testified that he had found it profitable, even financially, to acknowledge God in the house. Since he had made his religion real in his daily life his workmen had become more industrious and faithful.

**WHAT CAN RUB IT OUT?**

"My son," said his mother to a flax-haired boy, who was trying to rub out some pencil marks he had made on paper: "My son, do you know that God writes down all you do in a book? He writes every naughty word, every disobedient act, every time you indulge in temper, and shake your shoulders, or pout your lips, and, my boy, you can never rub it out."

The little boy's face grew very red, and in a moment tears ran down his cheeks. His mother looked earnestly at him, but said nothing more. At length he came softly to her side, threw his arms around her neck, and whispered, "Can the blood of Jesus rub it out?"

Dear children, Christ's blood can rub out the record of your sins, for it is written in God's holy Word, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin."