

# Jacob Settled in Goshen

## 47: 11-12

**DIG:** Why was it a good thing that the Israelites were isolated in Goshen? How did they remember that time? Compared to what? How different was Jacob's time in Egypt compared to his grandfathers?

**REFLECT:** Joseph wanted his family to live in Egypt, but not be of Egypt (which is symbolic of the world). Likewise, we are to live in the world, but not be of the world (Second Corinthians 10:3-6). We are to live separated, holy lives and point people to the Messiah. This is a delicate balance. We cannot shut ourselves off from the world and have no influence on it, but neither can we fall in love with the world and be stained by it (First John 2:15-17). How can we know the difference as we travel as pilgrims in this world?

So Yosef settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, Goshen, or the district of Ramses, as Pharaoh directed (47:11). This section is known in modern Egypt as Wadi Tumilat. It is a valley that is thirty-five miles long, extending from the eastern Nile to Lake Timsah. The Ramses of the nineteenth dynasty, who ruled Egypt much later than the fifteenth dynasty of the Hyksos, may very well have been named after this particular valley. Much later, in their wilderness wanderings, the Israelites would remember Goshen fondly and say: We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost - also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic (Numbers 11:5). It was a very fertile land, also called the region of Zoan, because it was one of the outlet channels of the Nile to the sea (Psalm 78:12). In general it was close to Egypt's northeast corner, more or less isolated from the bulk of the Egyptian population, which tended to concentrate more to the south and west.<sup>722</sup> The famine was still under way, so Joseph also liberally provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children (47:12).

How different is Jacob's descent to Egypt from his grandfather's (12:10-20)! Both sought out the safety of Egypt because of famine. To save his family, Jacob engages in blessing. The Pharaoh at Abraham's visit was only too happy to see Abraham return to his own country. The Pharaoh at Jacob's visit insists that Jacob would stay and settle on some choice land. Abraham retreated from Egypt, but for Ya'akov, Egypt was his new home. Abraham left Egypt lucky to be alive; however, Jacob would leave Egypt dead.<sup>723</sup>

**Joseph** took great pains to ensure that **his family** settled in **Goshen**. Matthew Henry comments: **He** would have **them** to live by **themselves**, separate from **the Egyptians**, in the land of **Goshen**, which lay nearest to Canaan, and which perhaps was more thinly peopled by **the Egyptians**, and well furnished with pastures for cattle. **He** desired that **they** might live separately, that **they** might be in less danger both of being infected by the vices of **the Egyptians** and of being insulted by **their** malice. Thus **Yosef** did not want **the Hebrews** to be assimilated into **Egyptian** culture (as **he himself** had been), so that intermarrying with **the Egyptians** might not endanger **their** national and religious identity as **the people of God**.

Ending up in bed with the world is as much of a problem for believers today as it was for **the Israelites** of old. Often one can see no difference between the way people behave and think, within the Church or messianic synagogue, from those outside it. Recent studies, for example, indicate that sexual promiscuity and adultery occur as often among believers as unbelievers. **The holy ones (Deuteronomy 33:2-3)**, however, are called to be **holy** or *set apart*. **God** says: **Be holy, because I am holy (First Peter 1:16)**. J. Wilbur Chapman, who wrote the hymn "Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners," once said, "Anything that dims my vision of the Lord or takes away my taste for Bible study or cramps my prayer life or makes godly work difficult is wrong for me, and I must, as a believer, turn away from it." This simple rule may help you find a safe path for your feet along life's road.<sup>724</sup>