

After revealing his identity to his brothers, Joseph has invited them and his father to come down to Egypt with their families so that he can provide for them during this famine. This lesson describes the extended but temporary relocation of Jacob and his family from Canaan to Egypt and Jacob will live out the rest of his days there under the provision and care of his son Joseph.

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### Genesis 46

<sup>1</sup> And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

It took some effort to convince Jacob that Joseph was still alive and that he was the governor over all of Egypt (Gen. 45:26-28), but he finally believes and wants to see Joseph again before he dies. On his way to Egypt, he stops by Beer-sheba, a favorite place of worship of both Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 21:33; 26:25). There he offers sacrifices in worship of God and to show his gratitude for being allowed to see his son Joseph again.

<sup>2</sup> And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am I*. <sup>3</sup> And he 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: <sup>4</sup> I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

**“And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am I*”** – God is either appearing to Jacob in a vision at night or more likely a dream while Jacob slept.

**“And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt”** – The LORD identifies Himself as the God that Jacob’s father Isaac had served. He then assures Jacob that he had nothing to fear by going to Egypt. Jacob knew that it had been God’s will that he live in Canaan and that the bulk of the promises that the LORD had made to Abraham, Isaac, and himself had centered around them and their descendants abiding in the land of Canaan. But now the LORD assures Jacob that this relocation to Egypt was in accordance with His will and purposes. In fact, the LORD had already told Abraham that this would happen in **Gen. 15:13-14**: *“<sup>13</sup> And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; <sup>14</sup> And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”*

**“for I will there make of thee a great nation”** – God reveals his purpose for Jacob and his descendants going to live in Egypt: He will use Egypt as an “incubator” to protect Jacob’s descendants while they grow from being merely a family clan to being a nation of people. The descendants of Jacob might have remained scattered throughout Canaan or possibly attacked and oppressed by the more numerous Canaanites had they remained in Canaan. However, in Egypt they could thrive and multiply under Joseph’s care. Thus we also see God’s reason for bringing the famine: in order to bring the children of Israel into Egypt to be protected while they grow into a nation.

**“I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*”** – God promises to be with Jacob and his descendants while they are in Egypt. He also promises that they will not permanently live in Egypt, intermarrying and losing themselves among the Egyptians. God promises to bring them back out of Egypt and restore them to the land He has promised them.

**“and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes”** – God promises that Jacob will be reunited with his son Joseph because he will be the one who puts his hand upon Jacob’s eyes to close them when he dies. This statement also indicates that Jacob’s descendants will not leave Egypt until after his death.

<sup>5</sup> And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

**“And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba”** – Beer-sheba was just a stopover during their journey to Egypt.

**“and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives”** – This was not a vacation or temporary trip. They were carrying everything they owned and were bringing their complete families.

**“in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him”** – Pharaoh, who loved Joseph, had provided the wagons for Joseph’s family to use to carry all their possessions to Egypt.

<sup>6</sup> And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: <sup>7</sup> His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

This is a complete relocation of Jacob and his family because they left nothing and no one behind. They do not leave their livestock behind until their return but bring them along with the rest of their possessions. It’s possible that they realize that they will spend the rest of their lives in Egypt under Joseph’s care.

**Verses 8-27:** These verses list the descendants of Jacob that came with him to Egypt, concentrating on the males. Verses 26-27 give us a count (excluding the wives of his sons) of the souls that came to Egypt with Jacob plus the two sons of Joseph: 70.

<sup>28</sup> And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

Joseph had already decided that Goshen was the part of Egypt where his family should live, where there would be plenty of pasture land for them and their livestock (Gen. 45:10). Jacob sends Judah ahead to meet with Joseph to make arrangements and get directions so that they can make their way to Goshen.

<sup>29</sup> And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. <sup>30</sup> And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou *art* yet alive.

**“And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen”** – After being notified by Judah that his father and family were arriving in Egypt, Joseph goes to be reunited with his father.

**“and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while”** – We can imagine the emotion being expressed as father and son, who had believed that they would never see one another again, come face to face after over two decades of separation.

**“And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou *art* yet alive”** – Jacob is satisfied and he considers that his life is now complete because he has seen Joseph again with his own eyes and knows that he is alive. He had believed Joseph to be dead for over 20 years and seeing him again has healed his broken heart.

**Verses 31-34:** Knowing that Pharaoh will want to meet his family, Joseph instructs them on how they should speak to Pharaoh and answer his questions.

**Genesis 47:1-10:** Joseph’s brothers meet Pharaoh and they behave as Joseph instructed them, asking permission to dwell in Goshen and being honest about the way they supported themselves. Pharaoh instructs Joseph to employ any capable men in Joseph’s family as managers of his livestock. When Joseph brings in his father, Pharaoh asks Jacob about his age. Jacob tells Pharaoh that he is 130 years old then blesses Pharaoh as he leaves.

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#### Genesis 47

<sup>11</sup> And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, 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.

Joseph “placed” (made a place for them to dwell and got them settled there) his father and brothers, giving them property in the best part of Egypt, which is here called Rameses. Goshen was later called Rameses, so Moses may be using the name that was more contemporary at the time he wrote this. Pharaoh obviously held Joseph in high regard and wanted to give the best of Egypt to Joseph’s family. Notice how God is sovereignly providing for Jacob and his descendants so that they can grow into a nation.

<sup>12</sup> And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father’s household, with bread, according to *their* families. <sup>13</sup> And *there* was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and *all* the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.

The famine was preventing people from providing food for themselves and the only source of grain was the supply that Joseph had collected during the seven years of plenty immediately prior to the famine. Joseph, being in charge of this supply, provides bread for his father and brothers’ families so that they have plenty to eat.

**Verses 14-26:** Joseph uses his management skills to increase Pharaoh’s power and wealth over Egypt during the remaining years of famine. He sells grain to the citizens of Egypt until their money runs out. The next year he gave them grain in exchange for their livestock. The following year all they had was their land and themselves and so Joseph buys their land and then makes a sharecropping arrangement with the people so that they could survive. The people would work the land, Pharaoh would provide the grain for seed, and they would give back to Pharaoh twenty percent of what was grown each year. This arrangement becomes a permanent law in Egypt.

<sup>27</sup> And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.

Even though in the prior verses the name “Jacob” and “Israel” are used interchangeably to refer to Jacob the man, in this verse “Israel” apparently refers to the descendants of Jacob as a people or nation because it says “they” had possessions. This verse seems to summarize the coming years in which Jacob’s descendants would dwell in Goshen, prosper, and grow into a nation of people as God’s plan for them progresses.

<sup>28</sup> And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years.

Jacob lives another 17 years after coming to Egypt and dies at the age of 147. His last days and words are recorded in chapters 48 and 49, where he blesses Joseph’s sons and then calls for all of his sons to come to him so that he can speak prophetic blessings over them.

**Verses 29-31:** As the day of his death was approaching, Jacob called for Joseph and made him promise to not bury him in Egypt but to take his body back to Canaan and bury him where his fathers were buried. He wanted to be in the land that God had promised to his family. Perhaps he was looking forward in faith to the day when God would resurrect him to live in the land of promise. Joseph will make a similar request on his own deathbed in Gen. 50:24-25.