

## Reunion and Reward

### *Joseph and Jacob are Reunited*

**Text:** Genesis 46:1 – 47:12

#### **Introduction:**

1. This section of Genesis deals with the journey of Jacob and his family to Egypt and his reunion with his beloved son Joseph.
2. These are the glory years for Joseph. The pain of the past is behind him, he is reconciled with his brothers and reunited with his beloved father Jacob.
3. There are more faith lessons to learn from this account as we follow Jacob's journey to Egypt to meet Joseph and as we see Joseph take wise steps to ensure his family would be preserved physically and spiritually in Egypt.
4. We will study this section under **four headings**.

#### **I. THE REASSURANCE OF JACOB'S FAITH (46:1-7)**

Jacob begins the journey to Egypt but pauses on the way to seek the Lord before leaving the land of Canaan.

##### **A. The Seeking of Faith (Vs. 1)**

1. The place of Jacob's seeking – Beersheba. Beersheba was at the southern end of the land of Canaan. Beersheba was a very special place to Jacob, for there Abraham had dug a well (Gen. 21:30) and there Abraham lived after offering Isaac on Mt. Moriah (22:19). Isaac had also lived at Beersheba (26:23, 32-33), and it was from the home in Beersheba that Jacob left for Laban's house to find a wife. At Beersheba, God had appeared to Hagar (21:17) and to Isaac (26:23-24), and now He would appear to Jacob.
2. The principle of Jacob's seeking. Even though the Providential workings of God had made it clear Jacob was to move to Egypt, he still sought the Lord for reassurance a short distance into the journey.
  - a. Prov. 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
  - b. Prov. 16:3 "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established."

##### **B. The Sure Promises of Faith (Vs. 2-4)**

God rewards Jacob's seeking of Him with a personal visitation and revelation of Himself in a vision for the eighth and last time, so far as the record goes (Gen. 28:13; 31:3; 31:11; 32:1; 32:30; 35:1, 9; 46:2).

1. The Call of God (Vs. 2)

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- a. God speaks – “And God spake unto Israel” (Vs. 2a). The walk of faith is guided by Revelation. Jacob had the spoken Word of God to guide him. We have the written Word to guide us!
  - b. Jacob surrenders – “Here am I” (Vs. 2b). This is the appropriate response when God calls us. Jacob was willing to be guided by God.
2. The Character of God (Vs. 3a)
- a. “I am God” = the reality of who God is gives infinite value to what God says. The value of a promise is connected to the character of the person giving it. The Hebrew word for God here is ‘El’ which emphasises strength (i.e., “the mighty one”).
  - b. “the God of thy father” = Jacob was dealing with the same God who had dealt faithfully with his father Isaac. Here the Hebrew word for God is “Elohim” which emphasises God’s power as Creator and Master.
3. The Comfort of God (Vs. 3b)
- a. Evidently Jacob felt conflicted about leaving the land of Canaan. To hear “fear not” from God at this critical time in his life must have been very comforting for Jacob as he took such a huge step in his sunset years. This was the last major move in Jacob’s walk of faith. It was the home stretch of his earthly journey.
  - b. Jacob had Joseph’s word of assurance to encourage him to come to Egypt but now he had God’s word of assurance which was even more valuable.
4. The Covenants of God (Vs. 4)
- God now gives Jacob 4 promises to undergird and strengthen his faith. The first three commence with “I will” and the fourth includes the word “shall”; a reminder of the certainty and trustworthiness of God’s promises.
- a. The promise of God’s power – “I will there make of thee a great nation”. This was one of the primary purposes of God in taking Israel and his seed into Egypt at this time. God had promised Abraham that he would make of him a great nation (Gen. 12:2) God had also prophesied to Abraham that his descendants would spend 400 years in a strange land. Genesis 15:13 “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; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.”
  - b. The promise of God’s presence – “I will go down with thee into Egypt”. What a comfort for Jacob to know God would be with

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him. The Personal Presence of God in the lives of His people is a great comfort.

- c. The promise of God's preservation – "I will also surely bring thee up again". God would preserve His people in Egypt for over 400 years and then bring them back to the promised land. Praise God He not only saves but also preserves His people.
- d. The promise of Joseph's personal touch – "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes". Israel would not only live to see Joseph again. Joseph would be there personally at his side when he died to lovingly close his eyes in death.

### **C. The Step of Faith (Vs. 5-7)**

1. Jacob continues in his journey to Egypt, undergirded and reassured by the promises of God. Faith involves hearing (Rom. 10:17) and acting upon God's Word (James 2:26).
2. It is noted that Jacob's sons used the wagons provided by Pharaoh to transport their elderly father, their little ones and their wives.
3. The children of Israel journey to Egypt with their cattle, goods and families. None of Jacob's seed is left behind. He comes with his sons, grandsons, daughters and granddaughters.

## **II. THE RECORDS OF JACOB'S FAMILY (VS. 8-27)**

At this critical juncture in the development of Israel as a nation, we have a record of Israel's seed. The genealogy starts with the children of Leah and her maid Zilpah then the children of Rachel and her maid Bilhah.

### **A. The Sons & Grandsons of Jacob by Leah (Vs. 8-15)**

1. The sons of Reuben (Vs. 8-9)
2. The sons of Simeon (Vs. 10)
3. The sons of Levi (Vs. 11)
4. The sons of Judah (Vs. 12). Hezron, the son of Pharez would be a part of the lineage of Christ.
5. The sons of Issachar (Vs. 13)
6. The sons of Zebulun (Vs. 14)
7. Total (Vs. 15): 33 souls

### **B. The Sons & Grandsons of Jacob by Zilpah (Vs. 16-18)**

1. The sons of Gad (Vs. 16)
2. The sons of Asher (Vs. 17). It is of interest that Serah, Asher's daughter is mentioned. She is the only granddaughter mentioned by name in this lineage of Jacob.
3. Total (Vs. 18): 16 souls

### **C. The Sons & Grandsons of Jacob by Rachel (Vs. 19-22)**

Interestingly Rachel is mentioned at the start of this section, not the end like the other wives.

1. The sons of Joseph (Vs. 19-20)

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2. The sons of Benjamin (Vs. 21)
3. Total (Vs. 22): 14 souls

### **D. The Sons & Grandsons of Jacob by Bilhah (Vs. 23-25)**

1. The sons of Dan (Vs. 23). Only one son is mentioned.
2. The sons of Naphtali (Vs. 24)
3. Total (Vs. 25): 7 souls

### **E. The Sum of the Sons and Grandsons (Vs. 26-27)**

1. Number of those who came with Jacob into Egypt (Vs.26) It was 66 excluding Jacob's son's wives.
2. Number of those who were born to Joseph in Egypt (Vs. 27a).
3. Total number of Jacob's seed in Egypt: 70 souls (Vs. 27b)
  - a. The number 70 must include Jacob.
  - b. The number 70 became a significant figure in the nation of Israel. Henry Morris elaborates, "The number 70 seems to have been associated in a particular way with the nation of Israel ever since the time when these seventy apparently became its official founders. There were seventy elders (Num. 11:16), seventy years of captivity (2 Chr. 36:21), seventy "weeks" determined on the people of Israel (Dan. 9:24), seventy members of the Sanhedrin in the days of Christ and seventy "witnesses" to Israel sent by Christ (Lk. 10:1)."

## **III. THE REUNION WITH JACOB'S FAVOURED SON (VS. 28-29)**

### **A. The Direction for the Reunion (Vs. 28)**

1. Jacob puts Judah in charge of leading them to Joseph. What an amazing change! Judah had been instrumental in Jacob's separation from Joseph (he suggested the idea of selling Joseph). Now he was instrumental in seeing Jacob and Joseph reunited.
2. They come to the land of Goshen which Joseph had already promised them in Gen. 45:10. Goshen was in the northern, Nile delta region of Egypt and was prime pasture land. It was in the Lower Egypt region.<sup>1</sup>

### **B. The Presentation of the Reunion (Vs. 29a)**

1. The word 'presented' according to Keil is a translation of a Hebrew word "generally used only of the appearance of God" and was "selected here to indicate the glory in which Joseph came to meet his father."
2. Can you see Joseph? The news arrives at Joseph's royal mansion that his father has arrived in Goshen. Quick, sharp orders are given and his servants hurriedly prepare his royal chariot and horses. Joseph puts on his finest robes of state. It is hard to describe the

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<sup>1</sup> On the map it is up the top and therefore seems to be "higher" but topographically, it was lower, in the downstream area of the Nile River.

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emotions that are surging within him as he climbs into his chariot and gives the order to his driver to go forward. The chariot lurches forward as it quickly picks up speed. They are on their way. Joseph is about to see his beloved father for the first time in 22 long years. Jacob arrives in Goshen after the long trip. He climbs out of the wagon, his staff in hand. Judah informs him that Joseph is on his way. There he stands waiting. One hundred and thirty years of age. His weather-beaten face reveals some of the hardship and sorrows he has endured and yet at the same time the sweet holiness of a man who has learnt to walk with God for many years. Perhaps his eyes are a little dim at this age. He leans on his staff as he waits. Judah nudges him gently. "Father, I see a chariot coming in the distance. It's Joseph." Israel straightens. His eyes strain to see into the distance. As Joseph nears, he hears the clatter of horses' hooves and the rattle of chariot wheels. He can feel the ground beneath his feet vibrate somewhat as it draws near. As Joseph enters his field of vision, tears begin to well up in his eyes. There can be no mistaking it. That's Joseph! Even after 22 years apart, the loving eyes of the aged father had no difficulty recognising his beloved son, even dressed in all his Egyptian finery. He would recognize that face anywhere. It reminded him so much of Rachel. Joseph had the same handsome features and form. Flashbacks pass through the old man's mind. Joseph as a baby, cradled in his mother's arms. Joseph as a young boy, playing happily around his tent. The days of his youth as he grew strong and developed in looks and talent. The days of teaching the young lad how to care for sheep and livestock. The fateful day when he sent Joseph on an errand to check on his brothers, not knowing it would be the last day he saw his beloved son for 22 years. His brothers return with the blood-soaked coat and the heart-breaking story that Joseph was dead. The days where he felt so overcome with pain, he thought the grief might kill him. The gnawing hole in his heart that had been there all those years with such a loss. His thoughts are interrupted. The chariot comes to a halt near Jacob in a little cloud of dust. Joseph leaps to the ground. A few quick paces and he is in his father's arms. Neither can speak to begin with. The rivers of tears say it all. Tears over the pain of the past burst forth like a dam opening its floodgates and intermingle with the tears of the joy in the present reunion. "Father", Joseph croaks eventually. "Joseph my son, you're alive"!

### **C. The Emotion of the Reunion (Vs. 29b-30)**

1. They weep on each other's shoulders for a long time (Vs. 29b).
2. Finally, Jacob expresses his joy by stating his readiness to die now that he has seen Joseph (Vs. 30)

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### D. The Application of the Reunion

1. Imagine the splendour and glory of Joseph's coming that day. How much more glorious will be the coming of the glorified Jesus when he descends from heaven on a white horse, accompanied by the armies of heaven, clothed in glorious white garments with the words "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" emblazoned on his robe.
2. Imagine the reunion we will one day experience with the saints who have gone on before us. What a day that will be!

## IV. THE RELOCATION OF JACOB TO FERTILE LAND (VS. 31-47:12)

### A. The Aim of living in Goshen (Vs. 31-34)

1. On a material level, Goshen would keep the children of Israel **sustained**.
  - a. As previously mentioned, Goshen was a well-watered, fertile region that would be ideal for the Israelites with their flocks and herds. Goshen was "the best of the land" (Vs. 6 & 11). "This region seems to have been bordered on the west by the Nile, since the Israelites "did eat fish freely in Egypt" (Num. 11:5). According to Psalm 78:12, their property must have included "the field of Zoan", which was on one of the outlet channels of the Nile fairly near the sea. 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." (Henry Morris)
  - b. The Israelites would also be under the loving watch care of Joseph. He would ensure their needs were met.
  - c. Joseph provided them an abundant place. We are reminded that when we get saved, we are saved to an abundant life (John 10:10). The Israelites were blessed to have a relationship with Joseph. We are so blessed to have a relationship with the Lord Jesus!
2. On a spiritual level, Goshen would keep the children of Israel **separated**.
  - a. This is the most important aspect. Joseph wanted the fact they were shepherds to be particularly emphasized to Pharaoh as he knew that would ensure they were settled in Goshen, separate from the main Egyptian population centres.
  - b. Joseph was no doubt concerned about **the danger of assimilation**. If God's chosen people assimilated with the Egyptians, it would not be long before they were influenced by Egypt's paganism and their purity would be lost. In fact, they

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could easily have ceased to be a distinct people group if they were absorbed into mainstream Egyptian culture. As a godly man who had by God's grace and power had lived victoriously in sensual, idolatrous Egypt, isolated from the fellowship of other believers, Joseph knew better than anyone the spiritual dangers and perils that abounded there.

- c. As the people of God, they were going to dwell in Egypt for over 400 years. However, it was vital that while they were in Egypt they not be of Egypt (in the world but not of the world principle).
- d. Interestingly, God would use the Egyptians disdain for the humble, shepherd lifestyle of the Hebrew people to help keep them separated. The Egyptians despised shepherds and their sheep and would therefore seek to keep the Israelites separated from their company.
- e. Sometimes in our day, we lament the fact the world is increasingly hostile to the humble, holy lifestyle of the born again, blood washed, Bible believing Christian. But it's probably a good thing as it may help keep the church pure! Better to have the world spit at the church than to have it attempt to lure it into its seductive embrace.

### **B. The Appeal to live in Goshen (47:1-10)**

1. Joseph's audience with Pharaoh (Vs. 1). Even though Joseph was second ruler of Egypt, he still needed Pharaoh's approval to settle his family in the land.
2. The brother's audience with Pharaoh (Vs. 2-6).
  - a. Joseph brings 5 of his brothers as representatives of the family to see Pharaoh. Pharaoh asks them of their occupation and the brothers answer him as previously instructed by Joseph (Vs. 2-3).
  - b. Pharaoh grants the request to dwell in Goshen and also offers positions of leadership over his cattle to Joseph's brothers (Vs. 5-6)
3. The father's audience with Pharaoh (Vs. 7-10)

Look at this fascinating encounter between the elderly patriarch and the powerful Pharaoh of the most powerful nation on earth at that time:

  1. The Blessing – Jacob blessed Pharaoh twice; once at the beginning and once at the end of their audience (Vs. 7, 10). The “less is blessed of the better” (Heb. 7:7). The godly, separated man of faith towers in spiritual stature above the man seated on the throne.
  2. The Discourse – Pharaoh asks Jacob his age. Jacob's response is instructive and a window into his perspective on his own walk of faith. Jacob speaks of:

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- a. The period of his life (Vs. 9a)
  - i. He had lived for 130 years at this time. He would live a further 17 years in Egypt bringing him to a total of 147 years.
  - ii. Jacob viewed the days of the years of his life as being “few” in number in comparison to his fathers. Both Abraham and Isaac lived longer than Jacob. Abraham (175 years) and Isaac (180 years).
  - iii. Jacob’s words are true. Our days on earth are few when compared to life after death in eternity. Make sure you are saved and ready to die! Make sure you make the few days you have here on earth count for Christ!
- b. The pain of his life (Vs. 9b). Bad things had happened in Jacob’s life and yet through it all, God had been faithful and God had blessed.
- c. The perspective of his life (Vs. 9c). Notice how Jacob refers to his life as a ‘pilgrimage’. Jacob had the pilgrim mindset and this is the mindset we should all have as believers.
  - i. Hebrews 11:13 “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”
  - ii. 1 Peter 2:11 “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”
  - iii. “This is the true perspective for every believer. He should regard the present life as a pilgrimage, not as a place in which he is to live permanently, but one through which he is to hasten, looking off from self and circumstances to Him who has gone before us as the Captain of our Salvation to bring many sons to glory. The thought of life as a pilgrimage will inspire and cheer the heart under the storm and stress of earthly discipline, for amidst all troubles and trials, shadows and sorrows, the heart will ever be darting forward in hope and expectation of “the rest that remaineth to the people of God.” (W.H. Griffith Thomas)

**Conclusion:** Are you being guided by God in your life? Are you resting on his promises?