

**Introduction:**

- **(Call for first slide)** Do you recognize the men in this photo? Most of you don't, they are from the black-and-white television era. It's Ward Bond on the right and Robert Horton on the left. They were stars in a show called Wagon Train. **(next slide)** Ward Bond was the wagon master and Robert Horton was the scout. Set in the mid-to-late 1800's, the show told the fictional stories of small groups of pioneers travelling westward in covered wagons into the American frontier. **(next slide)**
- These were difficult journeys. No paved roads. No bridges. No rest stops. No urgent care facilities. No wagon repair shops. No U-Haul trucks. Total exposure to the weather. Unreliable water supplies. Massive swarms of insects. Hostility from the natives. Those pioneers were tough people, and those wagon trains played an important role in settling and civilizing the American west. But what does this have to do with Genesis, chapters 46 and 47? I'm glad you asked. It's the wagons. For most of human history, wagons were how stuff and people got moved from one location to another, usually more distant location. We see the early American version of the covered wagons in this painting. But there was a Genesis version, too. **(next slide)**
- Here is an artist's rendition of an ancient Egyptian wagon that could have been like the ones that Pharaoh loaned to Jacob to help relocate him, his people, and his property from Canaan to Egypt. Let's find out about a wagon train that was not one from American history, but one mentioned in Genesis that made a journey almost 4,000 years ago.

My title for the message today – **A Glorious Reunion in an Unfamiliar New Land**

**Theme: A family is reunited and reconciled by the grace and power of God**

- Let's get some narrative continuity with where we finished last week in chapter 45. Joseph sent his brothers back to Canaan to tell Jacob that he was alive and ruling in Egypt, and that he wanted Jacob to come there. Look at verses 25 through 28. **(READ)** The decision to move to Egypt has been made. **(Mention the two heading lines immediately below)**

**I. The Journey to Egypt (46:1-34)**

**A. The Vision from God at Beersheba (vv. 1-4)**

- So we go right into verse 1 of chapter 46. **(READ vs 1)**

**<sup>1</sup> So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.**

- In verse 1 we see Jacob referred to by his Given name – not the one given to him at birth, but the upper case G given name he received from God when he had returned to the Promised Land – Israel – which means “God prevails” – He will have His way!
- Note the phrase “set out with all that he had”. “All” included all the individuals in his household, all the servants, all the livestock, and all the physical property he and his people owned. It was a good thing Pharaoh sent wagons – there was a lot to be moved.
- As he travelled south, he came to Beersheba at the southern end of Canaan, down toward Egypt. This place had been significant for Isaac and his family. It was there that Yahweh had appeared to Isaac to affirm his part in the Abrahamic Covenant. As a result, Isaac built an altar to commemorate that event, pitched his tent, dug a well, and began to live there. (See Gen 26) So Jacob grew up in Beersheba, leaving when Isaac sent him away as a young man to find a monotheistic wife in Haran. So when Jacob’s wagon train came to Beersheba, he stopped and offered sacrifices to Yahweh, possibly on the same altar which his father had built. He then experienced another significant visit from the Lord. **(READ vss 2-4)**

**<sup>2</sup> God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>3</sup> He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. <sup>4</sup> I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes.”**

- This important message was not just an affirmation of the Covenant. Jacob was experiencing fear about going to Egypt. They weren’t just going for a visit. He was relocating his whole family and all of his possessions to a country that was not part of the land God had promised to Abraham and Isaac. In a famine years before, God had specifically told Isaac to not go to Egypt because it was not the Promised Land. (See Genesis 26:2,3) And, Jacob was getting old, 130 years worth of old. (I’ve heard that some older men today have the reputation of mostly wanting to stay at home, not travel.) And travel back then was dangerous. What if he died on the way and lost his last chance to see Joseph again? But God not only tells him to go, but also that Jacob’s family will become a great nation of people there, and that God would bring him back to the land promised to Abraham and Isaac, and that he will see Joseph. So God helped Jacob overcome his fear with specific assurances of the blessings that awaited him there.
- Fear is a common human emotion. Our Creator designed us to experience fear as a warning to seek protection from imminent danger. Unfortunately, we can experience the same fearful response to dangers that we generate in our speculative imagination. But we don’t have to hope for a vision from God in the night to receive reassurance like Jacob did. We have a book full of messages from God that are intended to help us walk strongly in faith, so that we’re not crippled by fear. “Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

**Implication:** Do the worries of your daily life gradually become fears that begin to dominate your thinking and attitudes? The Lord doesn't want you to live like that. Go to Him in prayer. Go to His Word for verses on fear that are promises from Him to His children. Commit one to memory. He will, by His Spirit, calm your mind and heart with His peace as you learn, day by day, to depend on His promises to you.

## **B. Jacob and His Company Leave Beersheba (vv. 5-28)**

**<sup>5</sup> Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. <sup>6</sup> They took their livestock and their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him: <sup>7</sup> his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.**

- So Jacob and all the women and children got to ride in Pharaoh's wagons. The property mentioned in verse 6 would have included tools, clothing, tents, and household items. Like the American settlers moving west in wagon trains, I would imagine they used every square inch possible in those wagons to carry both people and their belongings. The maps of that era show the distance from Beersheba to Goshen to be at least 200 miles. The wagons were likely pulled by oxen which could have maintained a steady pace, but remember that the servants were herding and driving the thousands of animals that belonged to this large family. The road was a known trade route from Canaan to Egypt (remember the traders that bought Joseph from his brothers). So the path would have been obvious and must have had water available on the way, but even making 4 or 5 miles a day it would have taken almost two months to make that journey. (Weatherford to Childress – 212 miles – 3 ½ hours)
- Now we're only going to look at verses 8 and 9 before we jump forward to verse 26. **(READ)**

**<sup>8</sup> Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. <sup>9</sup> The sons of Reuben: Hanoth and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi.**

- Verses 10 through 25 follow this same pattern – the sons and grandsons of Jacob are the only ones counted as winding up in Egypt.. So we'll not read through Jacob's Ancestry.com printout today. Let's go down to verse 26. **(READ verses 26 and 27)**

**<sup>26</sup> All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all, <sup>27</sup> and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy.**

- Now the numbers don't seem to quite add up correctly. Keep in mind that the Scripture is only counting his sons as his direct descendants, not his daughters. But if you take 66 males, then add Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons, you come to 70, which is the total of Jacob and his sons and grandsons who came **to be** in Egypt. We can speculate that the total number of the "Jacobian" community upon arrival, counting daughters, daughters-in-law, grand-daughters-in-law, and servants, was significantly over 100. The Lord didn't provide the exact number for us, so we can only guess at an approximate number.
- Now the brothers had already been told by Joseph about a prime area of real estate, Goshen, which he would provide for them to settle in. Jacob was still leading his family, so he sent Judah on ahead to get directions for getting to that part of Egypt. **(READ vs 28)**

**<sup>28</sup> Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out *the way* before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.**

### **C. The Incredible Reunion Event (vv. 29-34)**

- What follows is a very brief description of one of the most deeply emotional reunions in all of the Scriptures. **(READ vss 29-30)**

**<sup>29</sup> Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. <sup>30</sup> Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive."**

- The father and his long-gone son came face-to-face. We can see in our mind the shocked expressions of recognition – after all, it had been 22 years since they had seen each other. Their embrace was full and lengthy, with tears that couldn't be held back. It's interesting to me how the Lord has designed tears to work. They are tightly bound to human emotions. The deepest grief will force them out of the eyes and down the face. The most intense joy can bring the same result. In this glorious reunion, the years of grief were overwhelmed by unbelievable joy. In verse 30, Jacob has just experienced fulfillment of the deepest need and desire of his heart, and he knew that he would die a happy man, even if it happened soon.

**Implication:** Is there someone from your life, a family member, or a friend from times past, with whom you need reconciliation? Choose, by God's grace and help, to seek restoration of right relationship with that person. Set aside the blame and fault-finding. Commit yourself to pray for that person and for restoration every day. Every day. Ask the Lord to provide an open door and to give you the wisdom and courage to go through it when that opportunity comes.

- After the emotions had calmed down, Joseph had some administrative details to attend to. Pharaoh wanted to meet some of his family, and Joseph advised them on the specific words they should say to him. He also gave them some insight about Egyptian culture – the Egyptians despised people who were shepherds. **(READ vss 31-34)**

**<sup>31</sup> Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who *were* in the land of Canaan, have come to me; <sup>32</sup> and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.' <sup>33</sup> When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' <sup>34</sup> you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians."**

## **II. Jacob's Family Settles in Goshen (47:1-31)**

### **A. Interviews with Pharaoh (vv. 1-12)**

- Now we come to chapter 47. At first I thought that Joseph was warning his brothers to avoid mentioning the word "shepherds" as a description of their work. Then when I read the first part of chapter 47, I thought that were either stupid or intentionally disregarding Joseph's instructions. They answered Pharaoh's question about their occupation by saying that they were shepherds. Look at verses 1-3. **(READ vss 1-3)**

**<sup>1</sup> Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen." <sup>2</sup> He took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. <sup>3</sup> Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" So they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers."**

- What??? You are shepherds??? Pharaoh might have told them to go back where they came from, and to take their stinking sheep with them!!! But actually, God was at work, providing Joseph with wisdom. The Pharaoh had already promised the best land in Egypt to Joseph before the families had even left Canaan. Goshen was the outcome of this decision and would have motivated any Egyptians dwelling in Goshen to move to other areas in Egypt. So, as the years passed by, there would have been little to no intermarriage between Egyptians and the descendants of Abraham. John MacArthur commented that this situation helped Israel to maintain separation from Egyptian culture and religion through the ensuing years. And later, when the Jews became slaves in the land, the Egyptians would have had even more distaste for being connected to these foreigners.

**<sup>4</sup> They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen." <sup>5</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. <sup>6</sup> The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock."**

- Notice their use of the word “sojourn” in verse 4, along with the phrase “your servants”. These men were asking for “green cards”, not status as Egyptian citizens. Speaking of immigration issues, over 300 years ago Matthew Henry commented that Egypt’s Pharaoh was wise to be questioning these newcomers as to their willingness and ability to work.
- Suddenly, it’s a done deal!! Goshen was their new home!! Perhaps the word on the street was that the herds and flocks of Joseph’s people really looked good. If Pharaoh wasn’t pleased with the condition of his own animals, his herdsman might have suffered the same fate as the royal baker in chapter 40.
- So then it was Jacob’s turn for an audience with the Pharaoh. Look at verses 7 through 10. **(READ vss 7-10**

**<sup>7</sup> Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. <sup>8</sup> Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How many years have you lived?” <sup>9</sup> So Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning.” <sup>10</sup> And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.**

- I’ll have to say that I was a little disappointed by this conversation. There was a spiritual component, as Jacob conferred Yahweh’s blessings upon Pharaoh before their conversation began, and then blessed him again as he departed from the ruler’s presence. In this description of the conversation, Jacob made no effort to credit Yahweh for receiving long life, for his many children and grandchildren, for his property. Had Jacob’s faith weakened after 22 years of grieving over the loss of Joseph?

**Implication:** Do you miss witnessing opportunities by not speaking of the Lord’s blessings in your life? That part of your testimony is one of the most effective ways for the door to spiritual perspectives to be opened. Yes, some non-Christians may be quick to dispute any theological truth that is shared with them. But they are usually hesitant to imply that you are lying when you share with them how the Lord has blessed you and helped you.

- Joseph remained true to his administrative skill, authority, and responsibility by making his family’s presence in Goshen legal. And we see that they also had a guaranteed share in the distribution from the seven years of abundance that remained in storage. Verses 11 and 12.

**<sup>11</sup> So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered. <sup>12</sup> Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father’s household with food, according to their little ones.**

- Notice in verse 11 that Pharaoh ordered that Jacob and his family were to legally own this special property in Egypt. Commentator Henry Morris noted that even though Joseph was given great freedom in implementing the famine survival plan, Pharaoh was the only official who was allowed to approve the gift of a section of Egyptian land to these foreigners.

## B. Joseph Maintains Control as the Famine Continues (vv. 13-26)

- We're going to read through a larger section of chapter 47 now. In verses 13 through 26, the effects of the remaining five years of famine are described. Decisions were made by the people and by Joseph that were necessary to keep the populations of Egypt and Canaan alive. As we read through this section, think about how the people's relationship with their property changed, and how their relationship with the government changed. Verse 13. **(READ vss 13-26)**

**<sup>13</sup> Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. <sup>14</sup> Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. <sup>15</sup> When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For *our* money is gone." <sup>16</sup> Then Joseph said, "Give up your livestock, and I will give you *food* for your livestock, since *your* money is gone." <sup>17</sup> So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. <sup>18</sup> When that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands. <sup>19</sup> Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."**

**<sup>20</sup> So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's. <sup>21</sup> As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other. <sup>22</sup> Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land. <sup>23</sup> Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, *here* is seed for you, and you may sow the land. <sup>24</sup> At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones." <sup>25</sup> So they said, "You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves." <sup>26</sup> Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt *valid* to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.**

- From our perspective, the Egyptian people had a degree of freedom prior to the famine, at least as far as the ownership of property was concerned. Individual freedom in a monarchy will always be subject to the rules made by the monarch or his authorized representatives. (Many of the freedoms we enjoy as Americans are not seen in other forms of government.) But though the Egyptian citizens had some property freedom, something radical had

happened. All of the nation's money, livestock, and land had been transferred to the ownership of the state, that is, it was owned by Pharaoh. All of it. What does that tend to do in the heart and mind of men in positions of power? Well, the pride, greed, and hunger for more power inside of sinful men drives them toward gaining absolute control. With someone like Pharaoh, it can become an absolute monarchy, where all law and all control issues from the throne. But where a smaller group gains control through revolution (Russia, Cuba) or military coup (various in Central America), the country moves toward communism, where a few of the "elite" will own and control everything, including the people.

- My point in going through all this is that both the Egyptians and the immigrant Jews were blessed because of Joseph's administration of his power and authority. Yes, some freedom was curtailed, but mass starvation and anarchy were prevented. God used him, not Pharaoh, to recover from the famine and restore order and dignity to the people. Seed for food and for planting was distributed to the public. Whatever crop was produced, a 20% tax was instituted, with the individual free to use the 80% for personal need and discretionary spending. The passage implies that repurchase of the government-owned land by individuals was also part of the plan. Thus, God's blessings through Joseph on Egypt and on resident Israel continued for many years afterward.

### **C. The Famine Ends and Normal Life Resumes (vv. 27-31)**

- Well, we have a few more details to mention in finishing up chapter 47. Look at verses 27 and 28.

**<sup>27</sup> Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous. <sup>28</sup> Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.**

- Here in verse 27 is evidence that private ownership of land was resumed. Also notice that the people of Israel became "very numerous". They were good at producing babies, so over the next 430 years, their population grew to about 2 million people. It was then time for them to return to the land which Yahweh had promised them. But even though Jacob was seeing the promised great nation with innumerable people beginning to form, he wanted to get there sooner. Verse 29.

**<sup>29</sup> When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said." <sup>31</sup> He said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed *in worship* at the head of the bed.**

- Jacob knew that his time on earth was almost done, so he made Joseph swear that he would bury him with the patriarchs in Canaan. This was a testimony to Jacob's faith in the truth of God's promise about the land that would someday belong to his descendants. Joseph promised to do that, and Jacob bowed in worship to his faithful God.
- I may have made it sound like Jacob's life was pretty much done at this point, but the rest of his story still lies ahead in the final three chapters of Genesis. To be continued next week.