

# THE SCROLLS

## Making Lemonade: Finding Faith When Life Turns Sour | Genesis 46

### Life Lesson

Never judge the end of your story by the middle of a chapter. Jacob spent over twenty years mourning a tragedy, fully convinced his life was ruined. He had no idea that while he was weeping in Canaan, God was positioning his "lost" son on the throne of Egypt to save the world. When you are in the midst of a difficult season, your perspective is limited. You see the famine; God sees the feast. You see the separation; God is orchestrating the reunion. Trust the Author of your life. He is a patient weaver, and He is entirely capable of turning your deepest grief into a stage for His greatest glory. Don't give up in the middle of the story.

### Examine Scripture

#### Read Genesis 46

*As you read Scripture, slow down and ask these three questions to move from information to transformation:*

1. *What does this passage reveal about who God is?*
2. *How is God calling you to grow or change?*
3. *What is God leading you to do or who is He calling you to be in your everyday life?*

*-From the Sermon Series Bookmark and Sermon Notes*

### The Ultimate Reunion

For over twenty years, a heavy shroud of grief hung over Jacob's tent. He had long since concluded that his beloved son Joseph was lost: "A vicious animal has eaten him; Joseph has without doubt been torn to pieces!" (Gen. 37:33). For two decades, the old patriarch lived in a state of suspended mourning, refusing to be comforted, his soul anchored to that tragedy. Yet, God's providence is a patient, master weaver, working through famine, betrayal, and decades of silence to create a glorious tapestry of redemption.

In Genesis 46, we witness the height of this generational longing: the reunion of Jacob and Joseph. This is more than a heartfelt family story; it is a profound theological tribute to God's covenant faithfulness, the preservation of His church, and a powerful foreshadowing of our ultimate reunion with Christ.

#### Vs. 1-4

Before experiencing the joy of reunion, Jacob had to confront a difficult spiritual and geographical transition. He was leaving Canaan—the land promised to his grandfather, Abraham—to go to Egypt. Historically and spiritually, Egypt represented a place of worldly temptation, paganism, and eventual captivity. Jacob was filled with a sacred fear: Was he breaking the covenant boundary by leaving the Promised Land?

Stopping at the border city of Beer-sheba, Jacob builds an altar. He refuses to go any further without God. It is here that God appears to him in a night vision, addressing him by his old, weakened name, and then reassuring him with covenantal power: "Jacob, Jacob!"... "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also seek to bring you back up . . ." (vs. 2-4).

## Personal Notes

God reassures Jacob that Egypt is not a detour from His plan but the very crucible designed to grow a family of seventy souls into a mighty nation. Jacob could not see how the dark, foreign soil of Egypt would serve his family, but the promise of God's presence ("I will go down with you") was enough. Often, God must move us out of our comfort zones and into what seems like exile to fulfill His greatest promises.

### **Vs. 5-7**

Now, Jacob leaves Beer-Sheba. Notice who provided the transportation: "The sons of Israel took their father Jacob in the wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him" (v. 5). Joseph was so respected that Pharaoh not only allowed his family to seek refuge in Egypt, but he also provided safe passage to Egypt.

Again, this demonstrates the beautiful providence of God. God raised up Pharaoh for this moment. Without Pharaoh's approval and authority, Jacob and his family would not have been able to safely cross the land to Egypt. However, it is interesting to note that Jacob did not obey Pharaoh's command to leave all their possessions behind in Canaan (45:20). Though they would have access to all the wealth of Egypt, Jacob and his family still clung to their old possessions, a reminder of their life in Canaan. How often do we do the same? We cling to worldly things even when we have the wealth of Christ at our fingertips.

### **Vs. 8-27**

In these verses, we see a list of Joseph and his family—those who will live in Egypt. The list may seem small with only about 70 people; however, this is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in (Gen. 15:13): "Then the Lord said to Abram, 'Know this for certain: Your offspring will be resident aliens for four hundred years in a land that does not belong to them and will be enslaved and oppressed.'" Although it is a temporary deliverance, it actually fulfills the prophecy of slavery that will occur once Joseph is no longer remembered. It seems sadistic to deliver people just to see them enslaved again. However, consider that Joseph's family being spared in Egypt leads to the Israelites being enslaved in Egypt, which leads to the Passover foreshadowing the work of Christ on the cross. Again, God's providence is a beautiful work.

## Personal Notes

### Vs. 28-30

As the dusty caravans finally approach the lush pastures of Goshen, Joseph prepares his royal chariot and rides out to meet his father: “Joseph prepared his chariot and went to Goshen to meet his father, Israel. When he presented himself to him, he threw his arms around him and wept for a long time. Israel said to Joseph, ‘Now I’m ready to die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive’” (vs. 29-30).

Consider the powerful contrast of this moment. Joseph was the Prime Minister of the greatest empire on earth, dressed in fine Egyptian linen, wearing Pharaoh’s signet ring, and used to the strict, composed decorum of the court. Yet, when he sees the fragile, weathered figure of his elderly father, all royal dignity is swept aside. He wraps his arms around Jacob and weeps “for a long time.” These tears wash away twenty years of unanswered questions, the pain of betrayal, and the ache of forced separation.

Charles Spurgeon, contemplating the overwhelming goodness of God in this passage, observed how God consistently outperforms our wildest expectations: “Jacob had said, ‘I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.’ But God had a better plan for Jacob than Jacob had mapped out for himself... He saw his son, and he saw him in honor, and he lived to see his son’s children to the third generation. God does not only give us what we ask for, but He gives us what we never dared to expect.”

Jacob’s exclamation, “Now I’m ready to die,” is not a cry of suicidal despair but of deep, Sabbath-like contentment. The bitter root of grief that had suffocated his heart for twenty years was suddenly dissolved by witnessing Joseph’s life. He had seen Yahweh’s faithfulness, and that was enough.

Lastly, Joseph gave strict instructions to his family: “When Pharaoh addresses you and asks, ‘What is your occupation?’ you are to say, ‘Your servants, both we and our ancestors, have raised livestock from our youth until now.’ Then you will be allowed to settle in the land of Goshen, since all shepherds are detestable to Egyptians” (vs. 33-34). Shepherds were detestable to the Egyptians, yet Pharaoh allowed them to stay. We see the same attitude toward shepherds in the New Testament, where shepherds were considered to be of low class, yet the angels announced the birth of Christ to them while they were in their fields. So, God uses the lowly, humble, outcasts to

## Personal Reflection

1. Are you willing to move forward when God calls, even if it means leaving your comfort zone? What "Egypt" (a new season, an unfamiliar challenge, or a daunting transition) is God asking you to step into right now?
2. Where are you allowing past griefs or unanswered prayers to distort your view of God's goodness?
3. How can you improve practicing patience in God's timing instead of forcing your own outcomes?
4. Are you settling for small expectations, or are you trusting in the extravagant grace of God? When you pray, do you tend to limit God to what you think is realistic, or do you leave room for Him to out-give your wildest expectations?
5. Does the promise of your ultimate reunion with Christ anchor your soul during earthly seasons of loss?

## Commentaries

*Expositor's Bible Commentary  
(Abridged Edition): New Testament*  
Edited by Kenneth Barker

*New Bible Commentary* Edited by D.  
A. Carson

*NIV Application Commentary:*  
*Genesis* by John H. Walton

## Mt. Zion's Mission

*Mt. Zion Baptist Church exists to  
**MAKE, MATURE, and MULTIPLY**  
disciples of Jesus Christ.*

accomplish His perfect will. In the same way, God uses difficult moments to bring about His purposes.

The Puritans were skilled at comforting the soul with this precise truth. Thomas Watson, in his well-known treatise *All Things for Good*, wrote: "God is a wise physician, and he knows what medicine is best for us... God often brings us to heaven by the gates of hell. He brings order out of confusion, and light out of darkness." Every sorrow Jacob faced was actually a part of the medicine for his survival. If Joseph had never been sold, he would never have been in Egypt to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and the covenant line of Abraham would have perished in the famine. What man meant for evil, God orchestrated for an unimaginable, generational good.

Theologically, Genesis 46 offers a masterclass in God's sovereignty. Jacob spent years believing that a terrible tragedy had destroyed his life. What he did not realize was that while he was mourning in Canaan, God was arranging his "lost" son to be the ruler of Egypt, serving as the savior of the world.

Ultimately, this earthly reunion acts as a powerful symbol—a prophetic shadow—of a much greater spiritual reality. Like Jacob, we often live in a state of spiritual mourning, broken by the separations, losses, and deaths of this world. But the Gospel whispers a promise of a more glorious reunion. A day is coming when our eyes will see the Greater Joseph—Jesus Christ—who was dead but is alive forever, reigning on His throne.

When we finally see His face and fall before Him in glory, the decades of earthly sorrow will seem, as Spurgeon once noted, "but a small moment" compared to the weight of eternal joy. The tears of our earthly exile will be swallowed up in the laughter of His presence.

Therefore, let us step into our unknowns with the same confidence given to the old patriarch. The God who went down into Egypt with Jacob is the same God who walks with us through every dark valley today. And a day is coming when our faith will turn to sight, our long-suffering will turn to singing, and we will finally see the face of our King—the true and greater Joseph—and know that every tear we shed along the way was held safely in His sovereign hand.