

**JOSEPH**  
**The Move to Egypt**  
**Genesis 46**

The providence of God is so evident in this entire story. *And even when it is not evident to those IN the story, it is still powerfully present!* God has been working throughout this story to accomplish both his purposes for the NATION of Israel, and for each INDIVIDUAL in the FAMILY of Israel. God is so FAITHFUL. We see this even further in the next page from the account of Jacob and Joseph and the tribe of Israel. And we can see some very unexpected, yet very ENCOURAGING, discoveries in these verses. **Genesis 46:1-7 NIV**

**1 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied. 3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes." 5 Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6 So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7 Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters--all his offspring.**

**One of the first things that blesses me in this passage is that Jacob SOUGHT and MET with God in Beersheba on his way to Egypt to see Joseph.** *This is more like the Jacob that we saw when he wrestled with God earlier in his life! Here was a man who was not just living at the mercy of his circumstances, but who chose to SEEK GOD at a major CROSSROADS in the life of his family.* In fact, Jacob chose to sacrifice to and seek God in a place that had great meaning to both his father, Isaac, and to his grandfather, Abraham: Beersheba.

*Beersheba was a SIGNIFICANT and SACRED place for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Abraham made a covenant for safety with a territorial leader there, and then he "planted a tamarisk tree and worshipped the Eternal God" at this sacred spot. (Genesis 21:33) It was at this same spot that HAGAR (Abraham's concubine and the father of ISHMAEL) despaired of life after Sarah sent her away with her son to fend for themselves. God appeared to Hagar and promised that he would care for her and make her son into a great nation as well. Ishmael became the father of the Arab nations. Beersheba was also the place where God appeared to Isaac and commanded him to stay in Canaan. In later Israelite history, this was where Elijah was ministered to by an angel after he called down fire from heaven in the showdown with Ahab and Jezebel!*

This meeting before the move to Egypt at Beersheba was the sixth meeting that Jacob had with God that is recorded in the Bible. **[Genesis 28; 31; 32; 35:1; 35:9-14; 46:1-4]**

**Have you ever had a special place where you met with God? I can remember several places that are precious to me because of how God met me there!**

**God saw Jacob's FEAR. "Do not be afraid to move to Egypt . . ."**

Jacob sought God in this move! How beautiful it is to see Jacob worshipping and seeking God in this passage, rather than just being pushed along by circumstances! He has his entire family tribe with him, but he stops at the border of Canaan to spend time with God Almighty. **It is actually interesting to note that Jacob must have been hesitant and even FEARFUL about going down to Egypt.** The land he was leaving had been PROMISED to him, and to leave it must have felt like abandoning the dream that God had given to him. This is why it is so important for Jacob to hear from God at this moment.

Are you fearful today? **Are you torn about which way to go in some decision before you? The most important question is: How have you chosen to seek God in your fear?** This is the KEY to your moment! **It was after Jacob had worshipped God and made sacrifices to him that the LORD appeared to him in the night.** God's words, **"I am the God of your Father Isaac,"** have an important connotation: **God was FAITHFUL to Abraham, and to his son, Isaac.** Now Jacob has chosen to serve the God that his father, Isaac, served. God's faithfulness can be communicated to our children in such a way that they serve God just as we serve God. **Which "God" do your children serve?**

### **GOD GAVE ISRAEL DIVINE PERMISSION TO MOVE (Vs. 3)**

God permitted Jacob to go to Egypt – The only time permission like this was given. Abraham had gone to Egypt w/o permission before during a famine, and it did not go well! **(Genesis 12)** It was the first time he lied to a ruler about Sarah being his sister, and it cost the Pharaoh of that day considerable pain! **His father, Isaac, also had a moment in which he was planning to go to Egypt during a famine, but God gave him different directions: Genesis 26:1-3 NIV**

**26 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the previous famine in Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelek king of the Philistines in Gerar. <sup>2</sup> The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. <sup>3</sup> Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.**

**Perhaps this is also why Jacob was fearful to leave Canaan.** Abraham's journey there did not go well, and Isaac was FORBIDDEN to go there. Should he now go, even just to see his son, Joseph? **We would be wise to follow his footsteps in this moment.** **Jacob sought God BEFORE he stepped outside of what God had formerly said to him. [Story of how we prayed about MOVING from Oakhaven.]**

### **GOD REMINDED ISRAEL OF HIS DIVINE PROMISES (Vs. 3b-4)**

#### 4 Promises God made to Jacob: **Genesis 46:2-3 NIV**

2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!" "Here I am," he replied. 3 "I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

**"I will go with you into Egypt."**

The most important truth that we have learned from the story of Joseph is this: **"The LORD was WITH him."** This is what matters. Everything else is just the supporting cast!

**"I will make you into a great nation. . . . THERE."**

Joseph thought that this hope had been COMPROMISED when Joseph, Simeon, and Benjamin were out of his sight. Now, they are all back in the fold. This HOPE had been RENEWED by the miraculous SOVEREIGNTY of God. The family was still intact and on course. **But just as Joseph had learned, the TIMING of how God will accomplish this may surprise us. He gave Jacob a clue in his promise. God said that he would make Israel a great nation THERE!** This is a promise that God would accomplish his sovereign purpose of making Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's descendants "like the sand of the sea." He told Abraham years before this that he would accomplish this among a foreign people that would ENSLAVE his descendants! **Genesis 15:12-16 NIV**

**12 As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14 But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."**

This promise to Jacob would bring HOPE and CONFIDENCE to the children of Israel when they would suffer horribly under the Egyptians years later. But the FIVE YEARS of the famine that remained would just be the beginning for these sons of Jacob. Joseph's brothers did not see the LONG-TERM potential of this move when they spoke to Pharaoh. **Genesis 47:3-4**

3 Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?" "Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were." 4 **They also said to him, "We have come to live here for a while, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen."**

Sometimes, the plans of God do not move at the PACE that we desire. His DETOURS may feel like DERAILEMENT to us, but we have to TRUST him. Scripture confirms that the people of Israel did spend over 400 years in Egypt where they became slaves to the Egyptians. We know how that story ends, don't we? **But did you hear WHY God had them go on this 400-year DETOUR?** This is what Simon Peter wrote about the heart of God: **2 Peter 3:8-9 NIV**

**8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

God's promise to Israel was never intended by God to END in EGYPT. Egypt was just the INCUBATOR for this infant nation while God was providing TIME for the AMORITES in the land of Canaan to either REPENT of their sin, or for their sin to run its course. **God's MERCY and JUSTICE were driving his DELAY.** God is so good! **This is a reminder that God's promises are FOR US, but they also go BEYOND US.** We cannot assume that God's promises are just about our struggles and needs.

Meanwhile, his 4-fold promise to Jacob gave reassurance that, though the delay would be long, he would bring them back home.

**"I will bring you back into the Promised Land."**

When Jacob dies 17 years from this point, he makes Joseph SWEAR that he will bring his bones back to Canaan and bury him there. Joseph makes his surviving brothers commit to the same thing concerning his bones as well before he dies. This request was a DECLARATION of FAITH! **It was the recognition that Egypt was NOT their permanent HOME.** It was in Egypt that Jacob got to see his son, Joseph, alive and well and prospering. It was also in Egypt that Joseph spent 13 difficult years. and then 80 good years as a ruler in the land. But Egypt was not to be the permanent home of his descendants, and **God's presence would lead them back to the Promised Land!**

The LAND where the nation of Israel currently sits is still a very special place! **[My Visits to Israel].** It is the place where Jesus was born and then gave his life for all of us on that horrible cross, and then was RESURRECTED. It is also the spot on Earth where Jesus Christ will descend and place his foot in our future. It is the place where God will demonstrate his SOVEREIGN POWER over the devil and all of his demons, and over all of rebellious humanity, in the final battle against wickedness and sin. **We can see in the current crisis that the Land of Israel is still a place of enormous significance. We should pray for the nation of Israel in this horrible war, and we should allow this war to REMIND us that God is still guiding humanity toward him. It occurred to me the other day that to pray, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," is to pray that things GET WORSE so that they can GET gloriously BETTER.** We have to TRUST HIM with the unfolding of his plan!

God also gave Jacob a very COMFORTING personal promise: **“Joseph will “close your eyes” when you die.”** [You will not be separated from him again!]

## **GOD WAS SOVEREIGNLY FULFILLING HIS DIVINE PLAN FOR ISRAEL**

### **Genesis 46:28-34 NIV**

28 Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, 29 **Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. 30 Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."** 31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' 33 When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' 34 **you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."**

**ALL of Jacob's family went with him into Egypt!** This was part of the promise.

**The FAMINE served to drive the WHOLE FAMILY TRIBE of Jacob to move together to Egypt.** This would fulfill the PROMISE that God made to them that they would become a great NATION rather than being dispersed among so many other peoples in the land where they dwelt. In order for this to happen, they could not intermarry with people outside of their Hebrew heritage. Remember, we know that at least 2 of Jacob's children married Canaanites (Reuben and Judah). This could not continue!

God knew what he was doing, and WHY he was doing it. **It is amazing how God sovereignly uses the BROKENNESS of humanity to accomplish his purposes!** We all would acknowledge the EVIL of RACISM in our world. It is a horrible sin of PRIDE and PREJUDICE that oppresses and abuses people because of the color of their skin. There is no excuse for racism, but it is a CONSTANT reality of humanity. I have always marveled at God's sovereign ability to navigate human wickedness in such a way that he is GUILTLESS of the sin of humanity, yet he employs that sinfulness for his REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES! This can be clearly seen in how God used the placement of his people in Egypt at this time. **Egyptian RACISM toward other ethnicities would help to ensure that they would not intermarry with Jacob's family.**

God was working in the DETAILS as he guided his people through his redemptive plan. He can be trusted! Do you trust God to lead you where you are today in our broken world? You can! I am so grateful for the Word of God that allows us to develop a PERSPECTIVE of FAITH that presses us toward our sovereign heavenly Father. His PROVIDENCE is not just evident in Joseph's story, it is evident in our story as well!

Let's pray.

**JOSEPH**  
**Olive Branch Week 8 Facilitation Guide**  
**The Move to Egypt**

**Start talking**

What was the most difficult move (Change of address) you have ever made?

**Start thinking.**

Describe how do you seek God when facing a significant decision.

**Start sharing.**

[Read Genesis 46:1-7](#). Why do you think Jacob stopped at Beersheba to make sacrifices to God? How often do you struggle with fear when facing major decision? Why?

[Read Genesis 46:2-4](#). Talk about the 4 promises that God made to Joseph. How do you think they comforted Jacob? How do the promises of God to his children give you courage and confidence?

[Read Genesis 15:12-16 and 2 Peter 3:8-9](#). How did God's promises to Jacob (46:2-4) go far beyond the lifetime of Jacob? What do God's words to Abraham tell you about God's character? How do Simon Peter's words help us to see God's patience in his plan of redemption?

[Read Genesis 46:31-34](#). How did God's plan take Egyptian racism into account to help protect the development of the Israelite nation? Talk about how God's sovereignty has been a key focus throughout Genesis 37-46.

**Start praying.**

Pray for those in the group that may be facing a difficult decision this week.

**Start doing.**

Pray for the pastors at all of our CH campuses as they seek God and serve our people.