

## **God Takes Care of His People**

Genesis 45:16-47:12

### **Intro: Will God Take Care of You?**

“Everything gonna be ok.” It’s a comfort that we often want to believe but don’t always believe, especially when we’re in the thick of difficulty and uncertainty. What will it take for you to know everything is gonna be ok?

You must know God. If you don’t know God, then you cannot have certainty everything will be ok. If you truly know God, then you can have certainty, absolute certainty, everything ...no matter how difficult, confusing, troubling, complex, trying, stressful, uncertain it is...

If you truly know who God is, then you can be sure, everything will be ok, BECAUSE...if you know God, then you know he is a God who takes care of his people. He provides what they need...always. That’s where we pick up in the story of Joseph.

[Review: famine is still strong, reconciled with brothers, going to get dad]

*God takes care of every single one of his people sometimes in surprising ways. Let's break that point down into three parts...*

### **1) God's Takes Care of His People**

The news that Joseph and his brothers have reconciled comes to the ears of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. **[vv16-20]** Right away, Pharaoh (this pagan king of Egypt) is using his power and resources to provide for God's people. The king's heart is truly in the hand of God! And God can use whatever means he wants to take care of his people.

So Joseph does what Pharaoh commands and provides for his family. Notice how many times the word "gave" is used. **[vv21-24]**

That's kind of a funny statement Joseph says to his brothers. "Don't fight with each other on the travel back to Canaan." Like, "Don't make me pull this wagon over!"

I think the point is actually, "Don't quarrel with one another as you anticipate telling dad what happened. Stay unified. Don't blame each

other. Just be honest, so you can bring him back here to Egypt.”

But did you notice all the provisions Joseph gives his brothers for their journey to Canaan AND their journey (with the rest of the people) back to Egypt? Wagons, food, clothing, donkeys, and lots of money—300 shekels of silver. (Remember, they sold Joseph for only 20 shekels of silver). So they have more than enough to make the journey there and back.

It’s interesting to reflect specifically on the new clothing he gives. As you know, clothing is a major theme in the Joseph story. They stripped Joseph of his robe in ch37 when they were mad at him, but now that they’re reconciled, Joseph provides them new clothes ...which they need because they tore their clothes in ch44 when they found that cup in Benjamin’s sack.

New clothing symbolizes the new relationship they have with each other AND their new situation. In the midst of a famine, they have an abundance. God takes care of his people.

And now Jacob himself, after all his losses in his life, needs to realize this. Look at Jacob's response when his sons tell him all that happened. **[vv25-26]** Would you? After 22 years of being convinced your son had been ripped to shreds by a wild animal, now, all of a sudden, he's to believe NOT ONLY that Joseph is alive, but that he's the Prince of Egypt!

It says, "His heart became numb." Literally, "It stopped," a euphemism for total shock. But the more they talk and the more he sees all the stuff they brought back from Egypt, he comes out of a state of shock. **[vv27-28]**

Travelling from Canaan to Egypt (250miles) would be a tough trek for an old man like Jacob. What compels him? Joseph is alive! God provided. God takes care of his people.

But you might say, "Yeah, he does for most of his people, but I'm having a hard time believing he takes care of me. I'm going through so much right now. He might take care of most of his people, but not me." This takes us to the second part of the story...

## **2) God Takes Care of Every Single One of His People.** Pay attention to how this plays out.

**[46:1]** Beersheba is on the southern tip of Canaan and it's the same area where Jacob encountered the Lord in ch28 and probably the same place Abraham planted a tamarisk tree as a sign of his encounter with God.

So this place is a reminder of God's ongoing faithfulness to his people, which is why it says at the end of v1 that he offered sacrifices to "the God of his father Isaac." He's the same God who keeps his promises from one generation to the next.

But interestingly, when there was a famine in Isaac's day, God told him NOT to go to Egypt. So maybe Jacob shouldn't go? **[v2]** That two-fold mention of his name means what he's about to say is really important. **[vv3-4]**

That is the last recorded speech of God in Genesis. The next time God speak to someone is when he shows up in a burning bush 400 years later, and tells Moses to rescue the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt.

So this is a big deal for Jacob to take his whole family out of the land of promise (Canaan) and down to Egypt—a decision that would affect generations to come. But did you notice God’s promise? End of v3, “THERE I will make you into a great nation.”

We’ve been waiting. When will this happen? He said it to Abraham, then to Isaac, and now towards the end of Jacob’s life, he says it again. He’s been saying it for 215 years!

And now, finally, we hear: “After you take your family down to Egypt...THERE, in exile, in a foreign land...THERE I will make you into a great nation.” God fulfills his promises in unexpected ways (which is supposed to be my third point, so hold onto that thought).

For now, consider the way God makes this promise to Jacob. The word “you” is in the singular. “I will make YOU into a great nation... I myself will go down with YOU... I will also bring YOU up again.” This promise is personal.

And now doubt, when the original readers (the descendants of Jacob called Israel) read this, they would NOT have thought: “Oh, God just made this promise to Jacob alone.” No, they would’ve personalized it for themselves.

They would’ve personalized the promise, “I will bring you up again.” Yes, that’s God telling Jacob he will bring him back to the promised land again one day. But Jacob will die in Egypt. So there’s double meaning here. Yes, his body will be carried back to Canaan to be buried, but God intends not just for Jacob’s corpse to return, but for Jacob himself to return!

There’s a hint of resurrection here. And this would’ve greatly reassured the original readers who were on the brink of entering back into the promised land—that God would get them there and keep them there...

BECAUSE God takes care of every single one of his people. Notice how that principle continues to play out. **[vv5-7]** Notice the repeated phrase, “ALL his offspring.” Every single one is provided for.

Then they're named. I'm gonna read, **[vv8-25]**  
Such specificity because God takes care of every single one of his people. I wanted to read all the names so you could feel that truth.

Now notice the repetition of "the word all" in **[vv26-27]**. That word "all" is actually used ...about 8x in relation God's people in ch46.

No dropouts! God takes care of every single one of his people. He loses none! If that was true with OC Israel in Jacob's time, how much truer is it of the NC church, for whom Christ shed his blood?

- Jesus said in John 10, "I give [my sheep] eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."
- Paul says in Rom. 8, "[NOTHING] will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God takes care of every single one of his people, ultimately. BUT in this life, he doesn't always take care of us in ways we expect. This takes us that last part of the story.

### **3) God's Takes Care of His People in**

**Surprising Ways [46:28]** It seems Jacob is beginning to see Judah as an emerging leader among his brothers. So Judah leads the way to Egypt. **[v29]** The picture of Joseph watching for the arrival of his family and then running to meet his father. After not seeing each other for over 2 decades, it makes sense they would just hug and weep for a while. **[v30]**

Why is he ready to die? We've gotten hints that Jacob thinks Joseph is the one through whom the promises Messiah would come. Now that he sees him alive, Jacob can rest, knowing God will fulfill that promise through him.

BUT...we're gonna find out, the promise of the Messiah will not come through Joseph's line, but through Judah's line! BECAUSE God provides for his people in surprising ways. Notice how he continues to provide. **[vv31-34]**

We don't know why Egyptians detest shepherds, but Joseph knows that if Pharaoh knows their occupation, he might let them settled in Goshen BECAUSE Goshen has the

kind of land perfect for tending flocks AND Goshen is far enough away from the rest of Egypt to allow separation between the Egyptians who detest shepherds and the people of Israel who are shepherds.

All this highlights God's unexpected provision for his people. They're gonna maintain their distinctness as a people...not assimilating with the Egyptians and their religion, losing their unique covenant relationship with God. AND they'll flourish and multiply as a people living in the lushest part of Egypt.

God takes care of his people in surprising ways. Notice how that theme continues to play out when Joseph talks to Pharaoh. **[47:1]** He's planting a little seed in Pharaoh's mind: "They're already in the land of Goshen. Maybe that's a good place for them to stay?" **[vv2-4]**

Notice they say they just want to *sojourn* in Goshen, *not settle*. They're thinking they'll head back to Canaan after the famine is finished in 5 years. Little do they know their descendants will stay 400 years...

BECAUSE God provides in surprising ways. He's gonna provide for them *while they're in slavery*. That's when they're gonna flourish as a people. And then he's gonna miraculously and powerfully rescue them from slavery, showing he takes care of his people. **[vv5-6]**

So much favor shown to them from this pagan king! Which would've shocked the original readers because the stories they heard of the Pharaoh who enslaved them were ruthless. It once again proves that the king's heart is controlled by the Lord, and he can take care of his people, even through a pagan king.

Now, this part of the story closes with Jacob coming into the presence of Pharaoh. And their exchange is surprising. **[v7]** "I will bless those who bless you." Jacob is enacting the Abrahamic promise in quite the audacious way! HE blesses Pharaoh? This nobody, whose the head of a small/insignificant people, blesses the most powerful king in the world? Clearly, Jacob serves a God more powerful than Pharaoh. **[v8]**

In other words, “How old are you?” An interesting conversation starter. Why ask that? Well, Jacob probably looks old AND Egyptians valued long life. Their ideal age was 110. To them, old age is a sign of divine favor. [v9]

That sounds like a negative, and perhaps bitter, response. “My life has been short and terrible.” It makes us wanna say, “Bro! You’re 130 years old! AND the Lord has provided for you again and again.” One person said, “God has been with Jacob from the day he left his father’s house with nothing other than the staff in his hand until the point he has become a family of more than seventy person.” (ESV, 403)

God really has taken care of him every step of the way. It doesn’t mean his life was easy. But I’ll tell you what is easy: To focus on how hard life is to the neglect of seeing God’s kind provision all along the way.

Jacob is standing before his son whom he thought was torn up by an animal. His sons are now reconciled with each other. His family is saved from a famine.

Though it may not be the way he expected, God took care of him his whole life. Don't get bitter like Jacob...overlooking all the kind graces of God because all you can see is the hardship. God takes care of you, even if it's in surprising ways. You just gotta have eyes to see. **[vv10-12]**

That word "number" literally reads "mouths." There was food for every mouth...BECAUSE God takes care of his people, every single one, sometimes in surprising ways.

*At our most recent Sunday evening Prayer and Praise service, we heard a few testimonies of members for whom God provided. They were without work for some time, and things were getting really tight. Both of them admitted their struggle to believe whether God would provide. And after he did, they see his careful, unexpected provision.*

*Here's what one said, "I can now see how God was providing at every step, even when it didn't feel like it at the time. My position at work was suddenly eliminated. At the time, it*

*felt scary, but I was offered a PRN position at a health clinic that gave me just enough shifts to meet my basic financial needs. During that transition, God also provided through my church family, friends, and even strangers who showed support in really unexpected ways.*

*A month after I moved near the clinic where I was working PRN, someone unexpectedly quit, and I got a call right away asking if I wanted the full-time position. Looking back, the timing of everything, from the unexpected move, the old job ending, to the PRN work, to the full-time role opening...it all aligned in a way that showed: God provides.”*

*Another member shared his story, “I searched for employment for over two months, filling out applications online every day, as well as searches for any type of day labor I could do just to put food in the fridge.*

*The end of my lease drew nearer, and it felt like I was standing on a floor of shifting puzzle pieces. I knew God had come through for me in situations when I had less, but I still didn’t*

*know how he was gonna provide in this situation, and I really couldn't see a solution.*

*There were several times where I didn't even have money to eat, and were it not for my church family at Kinney, I truly do not know what I would have done. With one week to go until my lease was up, I had no job, I was petrified of winding up homeless, and then I got a call from Monica Moore, a member of Kinney, who told me about a café that opened recently that she helped the owner find their building to lease.*

*I applied for the job and got an interview, and the manager interviewing me just so happened to be my former manager at a previous restaurant I worked at, whom I love. He hired me on the spot.*

*I never expected in the slightest for God to come through in such a big way like he did. It was truly such a powerful demonstration and reminder of his kindness and goodness, so far beyond what I deserve.”*

## **Conclusion**

God takes care of his people, every single one of his people, sometimes in surprising ways. How can you be sure that's true? I'm asking that especially of you who are really going through it right now? You look at your situation and think, "There's no way out! How could God take care of me?"

How do you know he will? We read a passage earlier that provides the most certain and unshakeable reason for believing God will take care of you. Rom. 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" **[Repeat]**

In other words, if God did the hardest thing in giving up his Son for you—dying on the cross, taking care of your greatest need; namely, paying the penalty for your sin—then why wouldn't he do the much easier and lesser thing of meeting your needs in this life?

Getting you food on the table is nothing compared to paying for your sin. Giving you

endurance through your health struggles is nothing compared to God giving up his own Son to die for you on a cross.

Of course, this doesn't mean that God will give you everything you want. It means he gives you what you need. And if he's not giving it right now, it means you don't need it right now.

But you can trust his heart and his plan. Why? Because he already gave up his Son for you.

**[Gospel appeal]**

God takes care of his people, every single one of them, sometimes in surprising ways...the most surprising way is the cross. So expect God to take care of you, but also expect him to do it in ways you don't expect.