

JACOB IN EGYPT

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 45:16-28; 46:1-7, 28-34; 47:1-12.

LESSON 39 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 45:16-28;

16 ¶ And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

18 And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.

20 Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

21 And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.

22 To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

NOTES:

The Long Journey

Pharaoh and the members of his court appreciated the great work Joseph had done in taking care of the food so that the people could live through seven years of famine. When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had come to Egypt, and that his father was still alive, he made Joseph even happier by inviting the whole family to Egypt to live. He promised them the best part of the country for their home, and that they should "eat the fat of the land." That meant that they could have all they wanted to eat of the very best food there. And they did not need to bother with their household goods, because Pharaoh was going to give them all they would need when they got there.

The brothers were sent home with wagons in which they could carry their aged father and their wives and little children the long distance to Egypt. In those early days it may have been that the people in Hebron did not have wagons; but the Egyptians were enjoying a more industrialised civilization, and they had vehicles for transporting merchandise and, in this case, some type of carriage for people to ride in.

Joseph was very happy that his family would soon be with him to stay, and he wanted the brothers to be careful that nothing should upset their plans at the last minute. He said, "See that ye fall not out by the way." He may have meant that they should not quarrel among themselves and thus get into trouble again; or he may have been warning them to drive carefully that no accident would happen to them and someone be injured or killed. Joseph had seen so much trouble that he hoped all would go well from now on.

Jacob Made Happy

When the brothers told Jacob that Joseph was still alive it was such a shock to him that his "heart fainted." For more than twenty years he had mourned his son as dead. Had he not seen the coat of many colours stained with blood, which proved to him that a wild beast had slain Joseph? Could it be that he was still alive? But when they convinced him that it was really a fact, Jacob took a new interest in life and began making preparations to go to Egypt. Jacob was 130 years old, an old man to be travelling three hundred miles in an open wagon; but the fact that he would see Joseph again gave him strength and a new will to live.

Before Jacob started on the long journey he went to Beersheba to offer sacrifices unto God and ask His guidance into the strange land. Jacob was not the impetuous man he had been in his early days when he had not waited for the Spirit of God to direct him. Through many years of hardships he had learned to wait upon God and listen for His counsel. Now, though he was very eager to see Joseph, he took time to ask God's advice. Should he go down to idolatrous Egypt, or not! God had once told Isaac not to go to Egypt to live; and other than Joseph, we have no record of any of God's children having dwelt there since the days of Abraham.

When Jacob offered his sacrifices to God, they were acceptable; for God spoke favourably to him, assuring him that it would be all right to go to Egypt. The Lord promised to go with Jacob and make of him a great nation while there. It is important that all God's children ask His guidance, even in things that may seem small and unimportant. There is nothing beneath God's care; even the hairs of our head are

25 ¶ And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,
26 And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived:

28 And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

Genesis 46:1-7;

1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:

7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

numbered (**Matthew 10:30**; ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered). And if we know that what we are doing is in accordance with the will of God, we can enjoy it so much more than if we are wondering if it meets His approval.

God also promised Jacob that He would bring him again to the land of Canaan. Jacob died before that time, but his body was taken back to be buried beside Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, and Rebekah, and Leah (**Genesis 49:29-32**; ²⁹ And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. ³² The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. ³³ And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people). His descendants remained in Egypt 400 years; and by that time they were a great nation that could go in and possess Canaan. God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham as an inheritance, but the family was not large enough to conquer it until several hundred years after Jacob and his sons went to Egypt to live. When they went into Egypt they numbered 70; but by the time they returned to Canaan they had increased to 600,000 men above the age of 20, besides all the women and children.

The Reunion

Judah went ahead of the caravan to Joseph to ask the direction to Goshen, the district Joseph had planned for his family. When Joseph heard that his father had come, he rode in his chariot to meet him. Imagine what a meeting that was! Jacob remembered Joseph as a seventeen-year-old shepherd boy, whom he had given up as dead. Here before him stood the great ruler of Egypt, a brilliant businessman who received homage and respect from all the inhabitants of the land. Could this be his own little Joseph whom Jacob had lost twenty years before? They embraced each other and wept for joy that they could once more be together. Jacob felt that his cup of joy was full, and there was nothing more he desired in this world. He was ready now to die and go to be with the Lord. However, he did live 17 years longer.

It reminds us of the prophet Simeon in the Temple when he took the baby Jesus in his arms, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2:29, 30). All his life he had waited for the time when Jesus would come to deliver His people; and when he recognised the Saviour, he was willing to leave this world.

The Shepherds and the Sheep

The Egyptians did not like shepherds, so Joseph's brothers, who were herdsman, had no trouble finding work to do. And because they were shepherds and an abomination to the Egyptians, they would be left alone and remain a separate people of God. During the next few years of famine the Egyptians brought all their sheep and cattle to Joseph to exchange for food, so Joseph needed the help of his brothers to superintend the care of the flocks and herds.

It seems from early times until the present, the shepherds and their sheep have been despised. Jesus knew that, but still He called Himself a Shepherd, and we are the sheep of His fold. The world hates the Christian today. We "are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (I Corinthians 4:13). But we are the aristocracy of Heaven, and there is a day coming soon when we shall rule with Christ in a reign of one thousand years of peace.

A sheep has no instinct for finding its way home. It will wander a short distance from the flock and starve to death, perhaps within sight of the other sheep; but it is too stupid to find its way back. A

Genesis 46:28-34;

28 ¶ And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;

32 And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?

34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

Genesis 47:1-12.

1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your

sheep has no interest in keeping itself clean. You have seen even tiny kittens wash their own faces; birds love to flutter in their birdbaths; take a dog for a walk in the country, and he will go swimming in the creek, but a sheep keeps the mud and dirt caked on its wool until it dies.

"All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus, the true Shepherd, had to come and lead us back to the fold; we could not find our own way. Man cannot wash away his own sins; the Blood of Jesus had to be shed to make us clean. We are as helpless as a sheep; but when we let our Shepherd guide us, He leads us beside still waters, and makes us to lie down in green pastures (**Psalm 23**; ¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. ³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.).

Jacob's Last Days

Joseph took his father and five of his brothers to visit Pharaoh. He repeated the offer he had made to Joseph that they should occupy the best place in the land, and he agreed that they should take care of his herds for him.

When Jacob stood before the king, Pharaoh asked him how old he was. Jacob answered that his days had been few and full of trouble. We think 130 years was very old, but we must remember that some of the early patriarchs had lived many hundreds of years. Although Jacob had had much trouble, God had been with him through it all and had blessed him at the end of every trial. His long trial because of his separation from Joseph was now ended, and he lived the rest of his life in peace and plenty, near his beloved son who was now an honoured ruler. God blessed Jacob so greatly that many years later the prophet Balaam cried: "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Numbers 23:10).

QUESTIONS

1. How did Joseph make provision for his father's whole family to move to Egypt?
2. What was Jacob's reaction to the message that Joseph was still alive?
3. How do we know that God was still with Jacob at this time?
4. Did Pharaoh treat Joseph's father and brothers kindly?
5. What did God promise He would do for Jacob in Egypt?

occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.

4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?

9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11 ¶ And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

