

024 Jacob's Family Moves to Egypt

MEMORY VERSE: "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" Genesis 50:20

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 46-50

AIM: The end game of the gospel is God's glory through reconciliation

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers were in Egypt he sent for Joseph. "I'm glad your brothers have come," he said. "Let them go back to Canaan with plenty of grain. But also send enough carts to bring the whole family here where they can live in plenty. The best of all the land of Egypt will be theirs."

The brothers hurried home to tell their father the good news. But first they had to tell him something else. They had to tell Jacob that his son Joseph was still alive. He had not been killed by an animal as they had told him. The brothers needed to confess that they had been unkind and jealous and had sold Joseph as a slave to some traders going to Egypt.

When they reached their father's house they called to him, "Joseph is alive! He is ruler over all the land of Egypt."

"Impossible!" Jacob said.

The brothers told him the whole story. When they took him outside and showed him the carts with all the presents Joseph had sent, Jacob finally realized it was true.

"It is enough," he cried joyfully. "My son Joseph must be alive. I will go to Egypt to see him."

So everyone prepared for the journey, and they eventually set out for Egypt. On the way they stopped at Beersheba, on the border of Canaan, to offer sacrifices to God. That night God spoke to Jacob in a dream. "Do not be afraid to go to Egypt, for I promise that your family will be the beginning of a great nation and I will bring your descendants back to their homeland."

Meanwhile Joseph was waiting impatiently in Egypt. Finally he heard his family was coming, so he jumped into his chariot and hurried out to meet them.

When at last they stood face to face after so many years, Joseph threw his arms around his father and wept. Jacob wept too and held Joseph close to him. Then Jacob said to Joseph, "Now let me die because I have seen you again and know you are alive." But he didn't die. He lived another seventeen years.

Joseph took his father and five of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh asked them, "What is your occupation?"

They replied, "We are shepherds like our ancestors. We have accepted your invitation to come to live here in Egypt, for there is no pasture for our flocks in Canaan. The famine is very bad there. We request permission to live in the land of Goshen."

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "You can choose anywhere you like for them to live. And if any of them are especially skilled, put them in charge of my flocks, too." Jacob then blessed Pharaoh in gratitude.

Jacob lived happily in Egypt. But the time came when everyone knew he would soon die. Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to be blessed by Jacob. Manasseh was the elder but Jacob gave Ephraim a special blessing.

"Both of them will be great," Jacob said, "but Ephraim will be the greater."

Jacob asked for his other sons to come to him. Jacob blessed them all. Then he said, "You must bury me with my fathers in the land of Canaan, in the field Abraham bought as a burial place." Then Jacob died.

After some days of grieving, Joseph went to Pharaoh's court and asked that he might be allowed to go to Canaan to bury his father.

Pharaoh gave his permission. So Joseph and his servants packed the carts and began the long, sad journey. When they reached the cave of Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac were buried, Joseph and his brothers buried Jacob as he had asked.

But now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers were frightened. "Now Joseph will pay us back for all the wrong things we did to him," they said.

They sent him this message: "Before he died, your father instructed us to tell you to forgive us for the great evil we did to you. We beg you to forgive us."

When Joseph read the message, he broke down and wept.

Then the brothers came to Joseph and knelt in front of him. "We are your slaves," they said.

"Don't be afraid," Joseph said, "It's all right. You plotted evil against me. But God used your evil for good. Because of your action, many lives have been saved during this famine. Don't worry. I will still take care of you and your children. I have forgiven you."

Joseph and his brothers stayed in the land of Egypt for many years. But Joseph remembered that someday God would take them back to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Even though many bad things had happened to Joseph, God blessed him and his family. Joseph learned that no matter what evil happens, God is all powerful and His plan will prevail.

Joseph and his brothers learned that if we trust God to take care of our lives then He can heal even the deepest hurts.