

Joseph Visited His Father When He Arrived

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand how the Lord is able to totally change the attitude of others when they hear good news that will change their lives. Jacob was eager to travel to Egypt after he heard the good news that Joseph was alive. In this topic, we will learn what happened when Jacob arrived in Egypt and saw his son.

Genesis 46:1-7 says, “So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, ‘Jacob, Jacob!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ So He said, ‘I *am* God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up *again*; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.’ Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. His sons and his sons’ sons, his daughters and his sons’ daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.” In these verses, we see what happened to Jacob as he traveled to Egypt.

One of the things we notice, as we get closer to the end of the life of Jacob, is the fact that we now see that he is frequently called Israel. “Israel” means *God rules or prevails*. The Lord had changed his name many years earlier. However, as he grew in his understanding of who God is, his life was changing, and more and more he allowed God to rule his life. On the way to Egypt, Jacob and his family stopped at Beersheba to offer sacrifices to the Lord. There, God spoke to Jacob in a vision. In that vision, God told Jacob, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.” Here, we see that God explained to Israel why he did not need to be afraid to go to the land of Egypt with his family. The Lord said that his family would become a great nation while they were in the land of Egypt. The Lord also promised that He would bring that nation out of Egypt and back to the land they were just leaving. Then, God promised Israel that Joseph would put his hand on the eyes of Israel (Jacob).

After Israel had seen that vision from the Lord, he was able to experience the peace of God as he traveled to Egypt. His sons had placed their father, their children, and their wives in the carts Joseph had sent with them to carry their family down to the land of Egypt. They also took all of their cattle and flocks, along with all of the other goods they had gained while they were in the land of Canaan. This meant that Joseph had sent

enough carts for their possessions, as well as for their families. Israel took all of his sons and daughters as they traveled to Egypt. His sons and daughters also took all of their children. The entire family of Israel traveled to Egypt so they could be reunited with Joseph and his family. All of the descendants of Israel would be located in Egypt for the next four hundred years and they would become a great nation.

Genesis 46:8-18 gives us the names of all of the sons and grandsons that traveled with Israel to Egypt. Those verses tell us, “Now these *were* the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben was Jacob’s firstborn. The sons of Reuben *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. The sons of Simeon *were* Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The sons of Judah *were* Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. The sons of Zebulun *were* Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. These *were* the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, *were* thirty-three. The sons of Gad *were* Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. The sons of Asher *were* Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel. These *were* the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons.” These were the descendants of Israel through Leah and Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah.

Then, Genesis 46:19-27 gives us the descendants of Rachel and her handmaid Bilhah. Those verses say, “The sons of Rachel, Jacob’s wife, *were* Joseph and Benjamin. And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. The sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. These *were* the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all. The son of Dan *was* Hushim. The sons of Naphtali *were* Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. These *were* the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all. All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob’s sons’ wives, *were* sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt *were* two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.” A key phrase to note in verse 26 is the fact that the wives of the sons of Israel were in addition to the ones who were the actual descendants of Israel. The wives who were still alive increased that total as Acts 7:14 says, “Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five people.” We see that the wives were included as relatives since they did not descend from Israel.

When Israel and his family arrived in the land of Egypt, Genesis 46:28-34 says, “Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him *the way* to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said to Joseph, ‘Now let me die, since I have seen your

face, because you *are* still alive.’ Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s household, ‘I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, “My brothers and those of my father’s house, who *were* in the land of Canaan, have come to me. And the men *are* shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.” So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, “What is your occupation?” that you shall say, “Your servants’ occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we *and* also our fathers,” that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* an abomination to the Egyptians.” When Israel and his family arrived in Egypt, they stopped in the area called Goshen. Then, Israel sent Judah to let Joseph know that the family had arrived in Egypt.

Joseph had been eagerly waiting for the arrival of his father in Egypt. When Judah came with the message that they had arrived and were in Goshen, Joseph had an animal harnessed to his chariot so he could go see his father. Then, Joseph rode in his chariot to Goshen to meet his father. When he arrived, Joseph presented himself to his father so his father could see him. This was a meeting Israel never thought he would have on this earth. It was a meeting for which Joseph had longed for the entire twenty-two years he had been in Egypt. As a result, Joseph hugged his father and wept on his neck for an extended period of time. This was a very emotional meeting for both of them. Finally, Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive.” Israel had been in sorrow for many years because he thought Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. The Lord had replaced that sorrow with peace in the heart of Israel. He had seen Joseph and knew that he was still alive.

Joseph then explained to his brothers what he would do. He said he would go explain to Pharaoh that his father, brothers and their families had all arrived. They had left Canaan and had come to Egypt, as Pharaoh had suggested. Joseph said he would tell Pharaoh his brothers were shepherds. Throughout their lives, they had taken care of livestock. They had brought their flocks and herds with them to Egypt, along with their other possessions. Joseph knew that one of the questions Pharaoh would ask them was, “What is your occupation?” Joseph knew Pharaoh and the Egyptians very well and he knew how they viewed shepherds. That was why Joseph realized it was very important for him to explain to his brothers exactly what to say when they met Pharaoh because what they said would determine where he would tell them to live.

Joseph told his brothers to say, “Your servants’ occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers.” The brothers had grown up caring for the sheep and cattle. In fact, that had also been the occupation of Abraham and Isaac. Joseph had a very important reason for explaining this information to his brothers in advance. Joseph knew the Egyptians and Pharaoh considered shepherds an abomination. The word translated “abomination” means *a thing of horror and can be something that is physical, ritual, or moral*. Joseph knew Pharaoh would probably have his family stay in the area of Goshen so they would be separate from the Egyptians, since Genesis 43:32 said that to sit at a table with Hebrews was an abomination to the Egyptians (ritual

abomination). That would keep Israel and his family separate from the Egyptians and preserve them as a separate people. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain how God used this fact to keep the people of Israel separate, so they could grow into a great nation of people instead of being absorbed into the Egyptians, during the more than four hundred years they were in the land of Egypt. The Lord used what was an abomination to Egypt to cause the Egyptians to keep them separate so they could grow into a great nation. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.