

**Biblical Material:** Genesis 46; Rom.10:12, 13; Genesis 47; Genesis 48; Acts 3:25, 26; Genesis 49; Phil. 2:10; Gen. 49:29–50:21.

### Quotes

- Don't abandon your God given values in pursuit of your God given dreams. *Pete Wilson*
- I find it inspiring that through all the trials and temptations that Joseph was faced with; he showed integrity, honesty, solid work ethics, his actions showed a confidence in God and he was faithful to God even when it didn't feel like God was being faithful to him. Wow!  
*Tim Young*
- The real moment of truth came, however, when Jacob finally died. Generous and forgiving as Joseph had been, his brothers couldn't avoid the nasty suspicion that once the old man wasn't around anymore to put in a good word for them... So they went to see him, fell down on their knees, and begged his pardon. Joseph's answer rings out like a bell. "Don't be scared. Of course you're pardoned," he said. "Do you think I'm God to grovel before me like that?" In the old days, of course, God was just who he'd rather suspected he was and the dreams in which they groveled were his all-time favorites. Almost as much as it is the story of how Israel was saved from famine and extinction, it is the story of how Joseph was saved as a human being. It would be interesting to know which of the two achievements cost God the greater effort and which was the one he was prouder of. *Frederick Buechner*

### Questions

Why did God allow the famine to drive Jacob and his family to Egypt? Couldn't he have provided them with food in Canaan? Do we see a bigger purpose in what God does, beyond blessing Israel? What was Israel's role in Egypt, apart from being safe from the effects of the famine? What can we learn from all these experiences? How does God look?

### Bible summary

Genesis 46 details Jacob's arrival in Egypt and Joseph's advice to his father before meeting Pharaoh. Genesis 47 records that meeting, and how Joseph provided food for the Egyptians during the famine. Genesis 48 is the story of Jacob blessing Joseph's two sons, and particularly how he gives the more significant blessing to the younger one, In Genesis 49 Jacob gives individual blessings to his sons, describing their natures and futures. He also makes it clear he wishes to be buried in Abraham's tomb. Genesis 50 concludes the story, with the funeral procession from Egypt to Canaan. The brothers' lingering guilt is an interesting insight after Jacob dies. Finally Joseph dies too, a sad ending to the book that began in Eden's perfection. We too are heirs of all the promises of God: Rom.10:12, 13; Acts 3:25, 26.

### Comment

After all the ups and downs of his life, Jacob (Israel) arrives in Egypt. While the immediate cause is to escape famine, God's plan continues, though of course Israel's stay in Egypt ends in their enslavement before the Exodus. In terms of the family issues, this is a great example of resolution and the restoration of harmony. But notice how deep-seated the brothers' guilt really was. Even after all the reconciliation, all the restoration, the clear proof of Joseph's forgiveness to them, they worry what will happen after Jacob dies. What if Joseph still holds a

grudge, they wonder, and will pay them back! So they are still asking forgiveness, and still offering themselves as slaves. But just like God when we come to him, just like the Father welcoming the prodigal home, there is no discussion of slavery or the need for punishment or appeasement, but simply the loving acceptance back into the family.

There are also some very touching moments in this concluding account in Genesis, including Jacob's blessings of his sons and Joseph's sons. (Note, by the way, that though Jacob is credited with twelve sons who become the twelve tribes of Israel, in fact Ephraim and Manasseh are actually his grandsons. Jacob tells Joseph explicitly "I am counting as mine your two sons Ephraim and Manasseh who were born here in Egypt before I arrived." Gen. 48:5 FBV.)

Also the meeting of Jacob with Pharaoh shows respect and kindness on both sides, and Joseph's role in bringing them together speaks to his role as wise leader and peacemaker. He clearly saw how God's hand was in his life, and despite his hard experiences valued the fact that God had placed him in such a position of influence so that he was able to help so many people, including his own family. The people of Egypt recognize how much Joseph has done for them, telling him "You have saved our lives" (Gen. 47:25) by providing food during the famine. Of course this was only possible because God had revealed to him what was coming and helped him to store food during the time of plenty. No doubt Joseph took the opportunity to give credit to God as the one who was their true Savior.

After the cruel deception of his sons that led Jacob to believe Joseph was dead, it is very moving to hear Jacob tell Joseph, "'I never thought I'd see your face again, and now God has even let me see your children!" Gen. 48:11 FBV. What a powerful reminder of how God can bring good out of evil!

The final scenario is the funeral procession all the way from Egypt to Canaan, where Jacob is buried in the family tomb that Abraham bought from the Hittites many years before. Even that event must have made a big impact on the local people, the Canaanites. Later, it's Joseph's turn to die. Even as he dies, he points to God's promise that he will lead them back to the Promised Land.

After the blessings, and descriptions of his sons by Jacob, the family reunions and ceremonies, the story comes to an end. *Genesis begins with the beautiful garden of life in Eden, and ends with a coffin in Egypt.* The great controversy continues...

### **Ellen White comments**

Jacob's sons then made their humiliating confessions to their father, of their wicked treatment of Joseph, and entreated his forgiveness. Jacob did not suspect his sons were guilty of such cruelty. But he saw that God had overruled it all for good, and he forgave and blessed his erring sons. He commenced his journey with gladness of heart, and when he came to Beersheba he offered grateful sacrifices, and entreated God to bless him, and make known to him if he was pleased with their moving into Egypt. Jacob wanted an evidence from God that he would go with them.

The meeting of Joseph and his father was very affecting. Joseph left his chariot, and ran to meet his father on foot, and embraced him, and and they wept over each other. Jacob then expressed his willingness to die, since he had again seen his son Joseph, for whom he had so long mourned as dead. {1SP 151-3}

They [Joseph's brothers] sold Joseph as a slave, and they were fearful that God designed to punish them by suffering them to become slaves. {1BC 1098}