



Preservation & Prosperity

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 5th, 2006 • Pastor Chris Lankford

HE SAID, "I AM GOD, THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER; DO NOT BE AFRAID TO GO DOWN TO EGYPT, FOR I WILL MAKE 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 CLOSE YOUR EYES."
~GENESIS 46:3-4 (NASB)

1) Hey Dad, You're Never Gonna Believe This...

- A) After Joseph reveals himself to his brothers (Genesis 45:1-15), Pharaoh supplies the family with goods and transportation for returning to Egypt (45:16-20).
- B) Because of Joseph's relationship to Egypt, Pharaoh offers "the best of the land of Egypt" to Joseph's family as a new home (45:18-20).
- C) Joseph sends his brothers to Canaan to explain the situation to Jacob (without arguing about it), and to bring back the entire family for a reunion in Egypt (45:21-24).

- D) Imagine Jacob's shock ("stunned" in NASB, NIV; better "became numb" in ESV or "fainted" in KJV) upon hearing that "Joseph is still alive" (45:26)! Jacob is numb, but agrees to travel to Egypt to see Joseph (45:27-28).

2) Departing Canaan With A Promise

- A) As Israel (Jacob) departs Canaan (through Beersheba, the edge of the "promised" land), Jacob fears that leaving Canaan could be inadvertently rejecting (sinning against) God (46:1-4).
- B) God speaks to Jacob in a dream and assures him it is OK to travel to Egypt, that this is all part of God's plan (46:3).
- C) God tells Jacob that He will be with him, and will make Israel a great nation in Egypt, and that he would see Joseph -- who would be with him at his time of death (46:3-4).
- D) Jacob travels down to Egypt with his entire family (46:5-27), which, when combined with Joseph's family already in Egypt, amounted to 70* people (46:26-27).

* Because this is a momentous "exodus" from Canaan, the author provides us with a detailed list of who went down to Egypt. The list has several interesting symmetries. Both Leah & Rachel bear twice as many descendents as their maids. Leah has thirty-three, and her maid Zilpah has sixteen. Rachel has fourteen, and Bilhah has seven. These numbers (33+16+14+7) equal seventy, however the writer notes that only sixty-six make the trip because Er & Onan are dead (46:12), and Joseph's family is already in Egypt (46:27). This equals sixty-five, so evidently Dinah (46:15) must be added to get to sixty-six. Confusing? Even more so when we see that Exodus 1:5 has a slightly different list, and Deuteronomy 10:22 has yet another listing. Nahum Sarna summarizes the general opinion of this passage, "There is no way of satisfactorily solving the problem and reconciling the differences unless 70 is understood here to be a typological, rather than a literal, number. It is here used, as elsewhere in biblical literature, to express the idea of totality. Thus it reiterates, in another way, the point made in verses 1 and 6-7, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of the descent to Egypt because the event is seen as the fulfillment of Genesis 15:13." Israel, then, was God's covenant people in round numbers -- the hope of the world in microcosm to be delivered down to the "incubator" of Egypt to become a "great nation." (Various sources cited, especially *Genesis*, by R. Kent Hughes, pg. 528 & *Genesis*, JPS Torah Commentary by Nahum M. Sarna, pg. 317).

3) The Long Awaited Reunion Of A Father & Son

- A) After 20+ years of being separated, Jacob and Joseph are finally reunited (46:28-34). Jacob essentially comments, "Now that I have seen Joseph, I can die happy."

4) Preservation & Prosperity In Goshen

- A) Joseph & Jacob appear before Pharaoh to officially request a portion of land to tend their flocks and raise their families in the Goshen/Rameses† area of Lower Egypt, near the Nile Delta region (47:1-12).
- B) Pharaoh's provision for Joseph's family of land and rich grazing areas proves to be an enormous blessing as the famine devastates both Canaan & Egypt (47:13-14).
- C) Through Joseph's leadership, all the money, livestock and land in Egypt are purchased in Pharaoh's name for food during the famine years (47:14-22).
- D) Joseph establishes a system of taxation in Egypt where the people can provide for themselves and support their government through a 20% tax of the harvest (47:23-26).
- E) The prosperity of Egypt has significance (many commentators view this section as an intrusion from an outside source -- I disagree) because it leads to and gives explanation for the prosperity of Israel's family (47:27), and how they grew from seventy to a numerous nation (Exodus 1:5-7).

† "The land of Rameses" in Genesis 47:11, and the use of the city-name "Raamses" in Exodus 1:11, have been traditionally used as indicators that the Pentateuch was written after Moses (since these names were not used until later, in the mid-13th Century/19th Dynasty). I believe it makes more sense to view these references as editorial anachronisms, provided for later readers (see *Joseph*, K.A. Kitchen, ISBE).