

Jacob Moves to Egypt

Genesis 46 - 47

PPT Title

Jacob Moves to Egypt

Main Point: We can trust God's promises.

Key Verse: *Lord and King, You are God! Your words can be trusted. You have promised many good things to me.* - 2 Samuel 7:28

Props: Paper chain from last week; a coin; 5 apples

Optional prop (for a large group of students): 70 star stickers - before class, put one sticker each on 70 randomly selected students.

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: Finally, last week, the moment we had all been waiting for: Joseph told his brothers who he was! Joseph forgave completely because he saw with "Kingdom eyes." He saw his life as more than just *his* life. He saw his life as a link in the chain of God's amazing plan. **Teacher:** Refer to paper chain from last week. God kept Abraham's grandsons and great-grandsons alive during the famine. This was God's way of keeping His promise to Abraham that he would have thousands and thousands of descendants.

Joseph and his brothers hugged, cried, laughed, and talked. Their relationship was restored. Forgiveness is the first step to restored relationships. Pharaoh blessed Joseph's family with many gifts and offered to give them the best land in Egypt.

One thing I want to mention before we go on is that earlier in his life, God had given Jacob the name "Israel" (Genesis 32:28). This name means "God Prevails, or God wins." We are used to hearing the name Israel, referring to the nation of God's chosen people. Well, the name started when God renamed Jacob. All of Jacob's descendants became known as the Israelites. So, it is a little bit confusing, but sometimes the Bible calls Jacob "Jacob," and sometimes it calls him by his new name "Israel."

Jacob =
Israel

JACOB TURNS TO GOD (Genesis 46:1-27)

Say: When Jacob's eleven sons came home from Egypt, they told their father everything that had happened. Just imagine - part of their story had to be admitting that Joseph was not killed by a wild animal, but that they had sold him as a slave! When they told Jacob that Joseph was still alive, he couldn't believe it. They had to convince him that they were telling the truth by showing him all the carts filled with gifts that Pharaoh had sent home with them. Finally, Jacob accepted the truth, and he really wanted to go see his son! This would mean leaving the land of Canaan.



Years and years before, God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's family. That's why Jacob lived in Canaan and raised his family there. Refer to map. But now, there was no food in Canaan, Joseph was in Egypt, and Pharaoh offered Jacob everything he needed to take care of his family in Egypt. Jacob had to decide between God's Promised Land (Canaan) and the logical place to go (Egypt). **Ask:** How could Jacob be sure that God wanted him to pack up his large family and leave the land of Canaan now? Listen for answers. **Say:** Jacob could have flipped a coin. **Teacher:** Flip a coin.

Say: "Heads we move, tails we stay." Or, he could have taken a vote. Or, Jacob could have made a list in his head with the good points and bad points about moving to Egypt. Let's read in Genesis 46 to see what Jacob did.



So Israel started out with everything that belonged to him. When he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

God spoke to Israel in a vision at night. "Jacob! Jacob!" He said.

"Here I am," Jacob replied.

"I am God. I am the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt. There I will make you into a great nation. I will go down to Egypt with you. You can be sure that I will bring you back again. And when you die, Joseph will close your eyes with his own hand." - Genesis 46:1-4

Say: Jacob had packed up his family and set out, but as soon as he arrived at Beersheba, he stopped. This was a special place at the very edge of Canaan where God had spoken to Jacob before (Genesis 26:23-24). **Refer to map.** At Beersheba, Jacob offered sacrifices to the Lord. It is wonderful that Jacob turned back to the Lord before taking his family to a foreign land.



Note to Teacher: Twice before, in Jacob's ancestry, a famine struck the land of Canaan. The first time, Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, went to Egypt in order to find food, with nearly disastrous results (Genesis 12:10-20). During the second famine, God warned Jacob's father, Isaac, not to go to Egypt (Genesis 26:2). It is little wonder that Jacob felt the need to turn to God for direction before crossing the southern border of Canaan.

Application: Going to the Lord is the very best way to make any decision! We all make decisions every day. Most often, we try to use our own logic. We make a list in our mind to weigh the good points against the bad points. But the Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take." (Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT)

Say: God did not hesitate to speak to Jacob when Jacob came to Him. Even though Jacob's heart had been far from the Lord over the past years, the Lord was not far from him. God was eagerly waiting for Jacob to turn back to Him. The Lord knew that Jacob was fearful about leaving Canaan and going to Egypt (Psalm 139:23). God made the way very clear for Jacob. God told Jacob that going to Egypt was the right thing to do. God promised that He would go with Jacob to Egypt, that his family would grow and thrive there, and that one day, his family would return to Canaan. And when the time came for Jacob to die, his dearly loved Joseph would be at his side. We can just imagine the peace that Jacob felt when God gave him such clear direction and wonderful promises.



Jacob trusted the Lord's promises. He and his large family took all of their belongings and their livestock and headed for Egypt. All together, counting Jacob's eleven sons, their wives, sons, and daughters, there were over 70 people traveling to Egypt.

Optional: If you put stickers on 70 students, ask every student wearing a star sticker to stand up. **Say:** This was about the number traveling the long route to Egypt. No wonder Jacob wanted to be sure that this was God's plan. He was changing the lives of many people by moving to Egypt. It was a long trip by wagon. Of course there were no cars or airplanes back then. There were only crying babies, antsy children, and a very old Jacob. The Bible tells us he was about 130 years old by then!



JOSEPH AND JACOB ARE REUNITED (Genesis 46:28-34)

Say: Jacob's family arrived in Egypt in the area called Goshen. This was a wonderful piece of land. These men were shepherds. They took care of sheep, goats, and cattle.

Ask: Can anyone tell me the main thing that makes land good for shepherding? **Water Say:** There has to be a good source of water for the animals to drink, and to grow grass for the animals to eat. The Nile River is the longest river in the world, and it flows right through Egypt. The Nile was so important to the Egyptians' survival that the Egyptians even worshipped the Nile. It flows northward before it ends at the Mediterranean Sea. Toward the end of the Nile, it branches out into many smaller rivers. This happens right at the land of Goshen. We have two maps to look at. One is a drawing where you can see the Nile and its branches. The other is a modern day satellite photo. You can see green where the Nile's water makes plants grow. **Ask:** Did God keep His promise to bless Abraham's family? Yes! **Say:** God gave them the **best** land in the **only** country that had any food!



As soon as Joseph heard that his family had arrived, he got in his chariot and raced to meet his father. He had waited over twenty years for this moment!



As soon as he came to his father, Joseph threw his arms around him. Then Joseph sobbed for a long time. Israel (Jacob) said to Joseph, "I have seen for myself that you are still alive. Now I'm ready to die." - Genesis 46:29b-30

Jacob meant that he could die a happy man, since he had seen that his son was alive and well.

Note to Teacher: Twice, Jacob proclaimed he would go to his grave mourning for his sons (Genesis 37:35, 42:38). He now exclaims that he is ready to die - so that he may end his life on a good note.

PHARAOH MEETS THE FAMILY (Genesis 47:1-12)



Joseph went to tell Pharaoh that his family had come to Egypt. Joseph chose five of his brothers and brought them before Pharaoh. They told him that they were shepherds, and Pharaoh told them they were welcome to live in Goshen. He even asked for some of Joseph's brothers to take care of his own livestock. **Note:** This point will appear later in the lesson.

Then Joseph brought his father in to meet Pharaoh. Jacob pronounced a blessing on Pharaoh. Obviously, Jacob didn't own anything that he could give to the richest man in the world. Jacob's blessing was a spiritual blessing that he spoke over Pharaoh.

Joseph helped his family settle in Goshen. Joseph made sure that his father, brothers, sister, nieces, and nephews had plenty of food to eat.

WILL WORK FOR FOOD (Genesis 47:13-26)

Ask: How many years of famine were there going to be? **Seven.** **Say:** Two of the seven years had passed. There were five years left, and everyone except Jacob's family (now called the Israelites) and the priests were completely out of food. The Egyptians had spent all of their money buying food from Joseph. The Bible says that both Canaan and Egypt wasted away during these years.



When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all of the Egyptians came to Joseph. They said, "Give us food. Why should we die right in front of your eyes? Our money is all gone."

"Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "You say your money is gone. So I'll trade you food for your livestock."



They brought their livestock to Joseph. He traded them food for their animals. They gave him their horses, sheep, goats, cattle and donkeys. He brought the people through that year by trading them food for all of their livestock. - Genesis 47:15-17

It may seem harsh that Joseph was selling the grain to the people instead of just giving it away. But remember, the grain did not belong to Joseph. It belonged to Pharaoh. Joseph worked for Pharaoh. Any of the Egyptians could have stored up their own grain supply during the seven years when there was plenty of food, but they didn't. Joseph's plan to sell them grain kept them alive and they were very grateful (Genesis 47:25).

When that year was over, (the Egyptians) came to him the next year. They said, "We can't hide the truth from you. Our money is gone. Our livestock belongs to you. We don't have anything left to give you except our bodies and our land.

"Why should we die right in front of your eyes? Why should our land be destroyed as well? Trade us food for ourselves and our land. Then we and our land will belong to Pharaoh. Give us some seeds so we can live and not die. We don't want the land to become a desert." - Genesis 47:18-19

Say: I don't know if any of us in this room can understand this kind of hunger. The people were starving, and they were desperate. They had already sold everything they owned. The only thing they had left was their land and themselves. So the Egyptians entered into an agreement with Joseph. They were willing to give their land to Pharaoh in exchange for food. Since there were four more years of famine coming, they also offered to become servants to Pharaoh in exchange for enough grain to make it through the rest of the famine. They agreed to become "indentured servants." This type of servant was different than a slave because the people were **offering** to do this, and they were **receiving** something in return - they were receiving enough food to eat for the next four years, and seeds to plant for future crops. Joseph would give them what they needed, and they would "owe" him the work to pay off their debt. This has been a common practice throughout history.



Additional Application for older students: Here is a credit card. You probably know how this works. If I want to buy something, like a new television, but I don't have enough money, I can use a credit card. I go to the store, hand them my card, and they hand me a new TV. That may sound pretty good, but it isn't! What really happens is then I **owe** money to the credit card company - a lot more than the TV cost in the first place! A \$200 television might end up costing me \$250. In a way, I become a servant to the credit card company (Luke 16:13). I have to spend the next months, maybe even years, working to earn money so I can send payments to the credit card company. Using credit makes you a servant to the person or company that you owe money to. It is ALWAYS better to save up for what you want first.



The Bible says to learn from the ants! They store up the food they need during the summer when there is plenty. Then they always have food during the winter (Proverbs 6:6-8). The Egyptians should have done this. Now they were getting food from Joseph "on credit." They and their children would work for years and years to pay off their debt to Pharaoh.

Say: Joseph gave seed to the people, and then he explained that one-fifth of everything they grew would belong to Pharaoh. For example, if I planted apple seeds, and in time my apple tree produced apples, I would have to give one out of every five apples to Pharaoh. **Show your five apples, and give one away.** This became the law in Egypt, and it stayed in effect for hundreds of years (Genesis 47:26). **Ask:** How do you think the people felt about this deal? **If using Power Point have everyone read Genesis 47:25 together, or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 47:25 aloud.**

"You have saved our lives!" they exclaimed. "May it please you, my lord, to let us be Pharaoh's servants." - Genesis 47:25 NLT

The Egyptians were sure to die without Joseph's provision of food. Even though being servants would be difficult, it was far better than dying! The people were very grateful.

BLESSED IN GOSHEN (Genesis 47:27)



Meanwhile, things were going very well in the land of Goshen. The Bible tells us that Jacob's family, the Israelites, gained more property and their numbers grew quickly. How can this be? First of all, Joseph provided food for his large family. Also, do you remember when Pharaoh asked for some of the brothers to take care of his animals (Genesis 47:6)? One year later, Pharaoh owned all the animals in Egypt! The brothers would have their hands full as the official shepherds for Pharaoh, and we can imagine that Pharaoh paid them well to care for his livestock. The Israelites were thriving. They were having more and more children and grandchildren. Think back to Jacob's vision in Beersheba. God promised Jacob that He would make his family into a great nation in Egypt. **Ask:** Did God keep His promise? *Yes!*



The people of Egypt had not lived according to God's wisdom. They lived their own way, and now they were servants to Pharaoh. On the other hand, Joseph had listened to God in every step of his life. He trusted God's promises and he was greatly blessed by the Lord. When Pharaoh trusted God by listening to the plan God gave to Joseph, he was greatly blessed. And finally, Jacob had turned back to the Lord. Jacob trusted God's promises that He spoke at Beersheba, and he and his family were blessed beyond their wildest dreams.

Application: We each have the same opportunities as the people we have talked about today. By God's loving grace, He gives us many wonderful promises that we do not deserve. God ALWAYS keeps His promises! If you trust His promises, you will live according to His word. If you don't trust His promises, you will live your life according to your own wisdom. We have seen God keep His promises time and time again in the Bible. Are you willing to trust His promises in your own life? It is up to you. Will you be like the Egyptians - enslaved by worldly things, or like Joseph - blessed and used in God's plan?

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Lord and King, You are God! Your words can be trusted. You have promised many good things to me.* - 2 Samuel 7:28

PPT Main Point

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