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## Studies in Genesis - 32

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# Studies in Genesis

(Leaflet 32)

ISRAEL—THE MAN OF FAITH AND  
HIS SEVENTEEN YEARS WITH JOSEPH IN EGYPT

Genesis 46:1—47:31

At least nine times in chapters forty-six and forty-seven of Genesis, which we are to study today, the Holy Spirit calls Jacob by his new name—Israel. More than twice that many times He speaks of the patriarch as Jacob; but the new name is more and more in evidence. And the record of the last seventeen years of his life, spent with Joseph in Egypt, is the story of a sublime faith. The years of scheming and chastening were past. And now the father of the twelve tribes of Israel was not only honored by the king of Egypt; but he was, indeed, "a prince with God." Jacob, "the supplanter," had become a spiritual man in very truth.

During the first seventeen years of Joseph's life, the father had his beloved son with him; and now during the last seventeen years of the aged father's life the two, long separated, were reunited to share the joys and honors that had come to Joseph as the ruler in the greatest kingdom of the day. For Israel was one-hundred and thirty years old when he went down to Egypt; and he lived to be one-hundred and forty-seven. Although Joseph's wise rule in Egypt plays an important part in the record before us today, yet to Jacob is given the more important place.

Before Israel went to Egypt, he worshipped the God of his father Isaac. At the place of the altar God appeared to him, and spoke wonderful words of assurance and promised blessing. Upon his arrival in Egypt the aged patriarch blessed Pharaoh. Before his death, seventeen years later, he pronounced the prophetic blessing upon the two sons of Joseph and upon his own twelve sons—prophetic of the history of the twelve tribes of Israel. And before his death he gave commandment concerning his burial in the land of his fathers. In all of these circumstances and events his implicit faith in God shone forth.

In our next lesson we hope to consider in some detail the significant, prophetic blessing upon the sons of Joseph and Israel, as well as the record of the death of these last two of the patriarchs. Today we shall confine our study to the two chapters before us.

"ISRAEL . . . OFFERED SACRIFICES UNTO THE GOD  
OF HIS FATHER"

Joseph's brethren had told their father that Joseph was yet alive, that he was the ruler in Egypt, and that he had sent for all of Jacob's household; for five years of famine still remained. Israel had said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (45:28). But before he left the land of promise, he worshipped God at the place of the altar. Perhaps he was afraid to go into Egypt without the permission and blessing of God. Abraham had gotten into trouble in Egypt; and God had told His people to "dwell in the land." In his earlier years, under similar circumstances, Jacob would doubtless have gone at once into Egypt, not waiting for guidance from the Lord. But the years of bitter trials and testings had borne fruit, and Jacob was a changed man. He had learned the value of worship and faith and prayer.

"And Israel took his journey with all that he had,  
and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the  
God of his father Isaac" (46:1).

It was at Beer-sheba that Abraham had called "on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God" (21:33); and it was there that God had appeared unto Isaac (26:23-25). There Isaac had pitched his tent, built an altar, and prayed—a pilgrim indeed. The very name of Beer-sheba must have recalled memories of stories his father and grandfather had told him concerning God's meeting with them there.

All the Old Testament sacrifices, offered in faith, pointed on to the cross of Christ. And it was by faith that "Israel . . . offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac." Six times before this, God had appeared to Jacob; and now the aged patriarch was evidently seeking guidance concerning a very important step. The God who had given him a vision of the ladder which spoke of Christ, the Way to heaven;

the God who had wrestled with Jacob all night and changed his name to Israel, would not fail him now.

#### GOD'S SEVENTH APPEARANCE UNTO JACOB

"And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I" (46:2).

Five important statements of God are recorded in verses 3 and 4 of our chapter, each of which we want to think of separately for a few minutes:

1. "*Fear Not to Go Down into Egypt.*" If Jacob was, indeed, afraid to go down into Egypt without the approval of God, he must have rejoiced to hear Him say, "Fear not . . . I am God, the God of thy father . . ." Joseph's presence there and the famine in the land of Canaan were enough to make him want to go, humanly speaking. And now, with God's own guidance he could go gladly, without fear and doubt concerning the outcome. At times of uncertainty and crisis, how reassuring to hear the voice of the Lord, speaking to His own and saying, "Fear not"!

2. "*I Will There Make of Thee a Great Nation.*" It has been pointed out that God blessed the children of Israel during their four-hundred and thirty years in Egypt in a three-fold way: Numerically, intellectually, and spiritually.

Seventy souls went down to Egypt, including Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons; and "about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children" left that place of bondage under the leadership of Moses four-hundred and thirty years later. (See Exod. 12:37.) In Numbers 1:3, 49, 50 we learn that these men were "from twenty years old and upward . . . able to go forth to war," and that this did not include the Levites, who were appointed to minister over the tabernacle. The exact number of soldiers in Israel is given in verse 46 of this same chapter, "six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty." If every soldier had a wife, there were more than one million adults. And counting the children, the aged, and the servants, one may well suppose that two or three million would be a conservative estimate of the population of Israel when Moses led them out of Egyptian bondage. God had fulfilled His promise to Jacob to make of him "a great nation."

Intellectually Israel had access to the wisdom and learning of the greatest civilization of the day, one of the most advanced of all time. Archæology has unearthed irrefutable proof of an advanced culture in ancient Egypt. The arts; the science of engineering, as evidenced in the pyramids; the ruins of beautiful buildings; countless proofs of a high state of civilization—all speak to us of the opportunities offered to the people who lived in that land.

In his message before the unbelieving Jews in the days of the apostles, Stephen said that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22). Reared in the king's palace as the son of Pharaoh's own daughter, Moses spent the first forty years of his life getting the best education Egypt had to offer, at the same time learning from his own parents about the true and living God. The Lord was using all this training to make of Moses possibly the greatest man of Old Testament times—leader, law-giver, prophet, judge, and author of the first five books of the Bible as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is true that God taught him much concerning spiritual things during his next forty years as a shepherd in the land of Midian; but Moses and the children of Israel profited from their contact with Egyptian learning, under the providence of an all-wise God.

Spiritually the nation was blessed through the experiences of the Egyptian bondage and deliverance therefrom. Think of the lessons they must have learned from the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, only the first three of which touched God's people; the passover lamb that plainly foreshadowed Jesus, "the Lamb of God"; the Red Sea deliverance! Think of the lessons learned through these experiences alone concerning God's power and love and protection and deliverance, as well as His righteous punishment of sin. Israel grew spiritually from the trials and chastening of bondage and God's mighty deliverance. The Bible is filled with references to these historic events.

And when God appeared to Jacob at Beer-sheba and told him not to be afraid to go down to Egypt, saying that He would make of them there "a great nation," He had in mind all these things; for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

3. "*I Will Go Down with Thee,*" the Lord promised Jacob that night at Beer-sheba. And that was the best promise of all. It reminds us of what Moses said to the Lord centuries later: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Exod. 33:15). Israel had broken the law, and had worshipped the golden calf. Moses knew the awfulness of their sin; and he was pleading to God for his disobedient people. God heard his earnest prayer, and said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Exod. 33:14).

We need not dwell on this beautiful truth just here; but we can not pass over it without recalling a similar promise made to us by our risen Lord, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

4. "*And I Will Surely Bring Thee Up Again,*" God said to Israel before he took his family down into Egypt. Had God not made the covenant with Abraham to give him the land of Canaan? Had He not confirmed that covenant to Isaac and to Jacob? He is the God who keeps His Word. And Jacob believed Him. It was a very great responsibility, humanly speaking, that rested on Jacob's shoulders, leading and providing for a family of seventy souls, taking them out of the land of promise, at the same time seeking God's will for them. And it must have encouraged his heart to hear God's words of assurance, that He would "bring them up again" to their own land. How God kept His Word, under the leadership of Moses, is one of the miracle-stories of the Bible!

5. "*And Joseph Shall Put His Hand upon Thine Eyes.*" Joseph! The beloved son! Israel was to see him and be with him, to behold and share his glory in Egypt! How good God was to the aged father!

This was the last recorded appearance of God to Jacob, but it was enough! It covered all the needs of His child.

#### THE JOURNEY TO EGYPT

"And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came

into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt" (46:5-7).

These children of Israel, together with all their servants and flocks and herds, must have formed a very long caravan, as they travelled from Canaan down into Egypt. Little did they realize that it would be more than four centuries before their descendants should return to the land of their fathers.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF THE SEVENTY SOULS THAT WENT DOWN TO EGYPT

Genealogies were vital records to the nation of Israel. This was made very plain to us in our study of the early chapters of Genesis. God has carefully preserved the records, according to the tribes and families of His people. This was especially necessary to the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ from the tribe of Judah, through the house of David. We have already seen that, if the Jews in Christ's day had not known that He had every legal and natural right to the throne of David, they would have ignored His claims, realizing that they would come to naught. But because they could not refute His rightful claim to David's throne, they crucified Him.

And here, just before Israel took his household to Egypt, God preserved the record of the genealogy of Jacob's children. It is interesting to note that they are named according to their mothers: first "the sons of Leah"; then "the sons of Zilpah," Leah's maidservant; next "the sons of Rachel"; and finally "the sons of Bilhah," Rachel's maidservant. (See 46:8-25.)

"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six: and the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten" (46:26, 27).

In Stephen's address before the Jewish Sanhedrin he said that "Joseph . . . called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls" (Acts 7:14). It has

been suggested that the additional five included here may have referred to sons of Ephraim and Manasseh (I Chron. 7:14-20), or to some of the wives of Jacob's sons, though that number would not include all these wives. "Kindred" is a broad term, and gives no reason for question as to the accuracy of the statement.

#### JOSEPH'S MEETING WITH HIS FATHER

Jacob sent "Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen. . . . And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father" (46:28, 29). As the ruler of Egypt, Joseph rode in state, not for vainglory surely, but as fitted one in his high position. It must have been a dramatic scene, eagerly anticipated by all concerned, this meeting of Israel, the aged father, with his long-lost son, who was doubtless loved and honored by all the people of Egypt.

"And Joseph . . . presented himself unto" his father; "and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (46:29, 30).

But Jacob did not die until after he had been in Egypt for seventeen years (47:28). He spent the closing years of his earthly pilgrimage sojourning in a strange land, yet with his family all about him, separated from the pagans of Egypt.

#### ISRAEL IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN

How God kept His chosen people separate from the people in whose country they dwelt for four-hundred and thirty years was another miracle. He did not want them to give their sons and daughters in marriage to the Egyptians. He did not want them to worship the heathen gods of the country in which they were to dwell. Therefore, He gave them the land of Goshen—in Egypt, yet apart from the Egyptians. And He caused the Egyptians not to want to have any dealings with the Israelites because of the fact that Jacob's children were shepherds.

Earlier in this lesson we saw that shepherds were "an abomination unto the Egyptians" (46:34). For religious



reasons the people of Egypt ate no meat; whereas Israel ate and offered up as sacrifices to Jehovah the animals the Egyptians worshipped. Another reason why the Egyptians hated shepherds may have been because a dynasty of shepherd kings had conquered them. God used these circumstances to keep the two peoples apart. Had He not promised Jacob that, while his family was in Egypt, He would make of him "a great nation"? He always keeps His Word!

In placing His people in the best of the land of Egypt God also gave them the benefit of good pasturage for their flocks and herds, for "Goshen" means "the land of verdure." And He put them where their departure from that land would be most easily accomplished, near the Red Sea, and in the direction toward Canaan. Thus Israel's Lord was guiding and planning for His people in ways of which they must have been unconscious at the time. It is always so; He who gave Himself for sinners makes no mistakes in guiding His own!

All of this accounts for Joseph's advice to his brethren to tell Pharaoh, when asked, that they were shepherds by occupation (46:31-34); and it accounts for the brothers' obedience to Joseph's advice when they stood before Pharaoh (47:1-4). Pharaoh readily granted their request. Moreover, he said unto them,

"If thou knowest any men of activity among them,  
then make them rulers over my cattle" (47:6).

It seems evident, therefore, that some of Jacob's family must have been in the employ of Pharaoh himself.

#### JACOB'S BLESSING UPON PHARAOH

"And Joseph brought in Jacob his father . . . and  
Jacob blessed Pharaoh" (47:7; cf. 47:10).

We might have expected Pharaoh to bless Jacob; for he was a great king, and the wealth of the world was flowing into his country because of the corn stored there for the years of famine. His power was very great. But while Pharaoh had power, yet Jacob had the Lord. According to God's Word, "without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7). And Jacob, who had thought that everything was against him, was now in a position to bless the Gentile ruler of Egypt.

This is a wonderful picture of what God will one day do among His earthly people, Israel. Now they are scattered, hated, persecuted; but in their future time of glory they will be a blessing to all the earth. The godless world can not bless the Jew, can not save him from "the great tribulation" that is to come upon him, even as Pharaoh could not bless Jacob. The Jew has more blessing to offer than the world can ever bestow. He has already given to mankind Christ and the Bible; and when Israel's King comes back to rule, that nation will be a source of blessing, even unto the ends of the earth.

Let us pause to look at just a few of the hundreds of Old Testament prophecies concerning the honor that Israel will receive from the nations of the earth, as well as the blessing God's people will be to the Gentiles, when Jesus comes back to reign:

1. *A Message That Fills the Messenger with Zeal.* The Prophet Habakkuk tells us that, when one receives into his heart the truth of Christ's second coming, he literally runs with the message, to tell others the good news, so eager is he to pass it on to others. This is what the prophet said, in part:

"And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:2, 3).

In quoting this prophecy, in Heb. 10:37, the Holy Spirit plainly applies the message to Christ's coming again in glory, saying,

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

And this is the truth that fills the messenger with zeal—"that he may run that readeth it." Everyone who knows the teaching concerning the Lord's second coming should be eager to tell it to others, literally running with the glad tidings; for when Jesus comes in glory, this troubled world will have "peace on earth"—not till then. Today the nations are at one another's throats as never before in the world's history. Men are straining every nerve, spending vast billions of dol-

lars, to make weapons of destruction. There is no peace today; there is no peace in sight. God has told us plainly, over and over again, that there will be no lasting peace until the "Prince of Peace" comes again to establish His millennial kingdom. Are we running to tell the good news? How can we help it, if the message is fixed in our hearts?

2. *Jerusalem Will Be Delivered.* The nations will be judged when Christ comes in glory to deliver Jerusalem, the city of the King!

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken . . ." (Zech. 14:1, 2).

At the moment when the Antichrist with all his armies, the king of the north, and the kings of the East shall mass their forces in Palestine to wipe out the Jew, then God will come to deliver His people. Just when the city of Jerusalem is about to fall, at the last great battle, called Armageddon,

"Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:3).

When His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, His people shall know Him; the nations will be judged;

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9).

3. *Israel Will Be "a Praise and Fame in Every Land."* The time will come when Germany will be proud to own a Jew. God has said it!

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. . . . Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord" (Zeph. 3:14, 19, 20).

Woe unto all the persecutors of Israel in that day! God's promise to Abraham will be fulfilled,

"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Gen. 12:3).

The time will come when it shall be an honor to a town, city, village, or hamlet to be visited by a Jew.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23).

4. *Great Plenty Will Cover the Earth.* During the millennial reign of Christ, when men shall "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks" (Isaiah 2:4), the harvest will be so great that, before one can gather it, another will be plowing his field again. This is what Amos meant when he wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saying,

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen. . . . Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:11, 13-15).

5. "*The Lord*" Shall Be "*in His Holy Temple*" in that coming day; and all the earth will "keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). He must be in the world, visibly, bodily, when that prophecy is literally fulfilled, as it will surely be! From all parts of the world, from all the nations, people will make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to see the King in His beauty!

"All the nations which came up against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14:16).

My Christian friend, do you "love his appearing"? May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob help us to run with the message that Jesus is coming again.

His coming for the church may be very near at hand; our time may be very short. The world is in spiritual darkness, while we have the only light that can lift the burden of sin, the burden of war and strife and hunger and pestilence, from otherwise hopeless hearts. But even as Jacob blessed Pharaoh, so also will the Jew be a blessing to the world when Jesus comes again.

While Joseph lived, and while the Pharaoh lived who loved Joseph, Jacob and his family were honored in Egypt, even as Israel will be honored in the world when Christ rules over a purified earth. But Jacob was very humble as he stood before Egypt's mighty king. He had lived and struggled and striven long enough to realize that only as he submitted wholly to God's will could he realize God's best blessing and peace of heart. He saw himself as an unworthy sinner saved by grace. And this is what he said when Pharaoh asked him how old he was:

**"FEW AND EVIL HAVE THE DAYS . . . OF MY LIFE BEEN"**

To us today one-hundred and thirty years would seem a very long time to live; and that was Jacob's age when he first went down to Egypt. But he was comparing his years with those of his grandfather, Abraham, who lived to be one-hundred and seventy-five; and with those of his father, Isaac, who was one-hundred and eighty when he died. Accordingly, Jacob said to Pharaoh,

**"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (47:9).**

At last Jacob recognized that he was a pilgrim, that his home was in heaven, and that all the blessings God had sent were given by grace alone. As he looked back over his life, he saw many wasted years, misspent years. He saw the birthright taken from his brother by craft, the blessing stolen by hypocrisy and lies, the years at Haran given largely to mercenary ends, even some of the years spent in Canaan upon his return to that land of promise spent in half-hearted obedience to God's perfect will. "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been"—that was Jacob's own

estimate of his life. But it was then, my friend, that God could honor Jacob most, when he saw himself a pilgrim, wholly indebted to God for "every good and perfect gift." And God did honor Jacob, not only in Egypt, but throughout His Holy Word. He calls Himself "the God of Jacob" more than of any other. And the name He gave to Jacob He designated as the name of the nation of Israel, the fathers of whose tribes were the sons of Jacob. We repeat these things here for emphasis; for they are important in God's sight, as well as in the past, present, and future history of the world.

There is a comforting lesson for us in all of this. Like Jacob, we see the years that have gone, and are ashamed of our failures, our sins, our little faith, our little service for our Lord. Like Jacob, we say, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life." But thank God! He sees us "accepted in the beloved" Son, our Saviour. And He loves us because we love His "only begotten Son," the Lord Jesus Christ. It is all of grace; and that is our comfort, our encouragement. Perhaps some testimony we have unconsciously given for Christ has been used for His glory. He knows. And if we love Him with all our hearts, His grace will use even our feeble, faltering efforts to the salvation of souls, and to His own eternal glory. It is the attitude of our hearts that matters.

#### JOSEPH'S WISE RULE

Let us read on in our story to see from Gen. 47:11-26 three important details: Joseph placed his people "in the best of the land" of Egypt; he "nourished" them "with bread, according to their families"; and he redeemed the land of Egypt. We need not dwell longer here upon the first two of these facts; but let us note the significance of the third.

Joseph not only blessed the land and was used of God to store up plenty for all the people; but he also redeemed the land. He bought it for Pharaoh. He brought his people unto a purchased possession. This is typical of what we were studying about in our last lesson when we read our Lord's parable about the hidden treasure, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. Israel will one day realize that the

Lord Jesus is not only her Deliverer, but that He is also her Redeemer, that He purchased her with a price most costly, even His own precious blood. The merchantman bought the field, in order to redeem the hidden treasure; and Christ died for the whole world, purchasing His redeemed with His death on Calvary's Cross.

Joseph's God-given wisdom and kindness are seen in every detail of the passage before us. First he "gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house" (verse 14). "And when money failed . . . Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year" (verses 15-17). When the people of the land had no more cattle to sell, then "Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh . . . because the famine prevailed" (verses 18-20).

In this way all the cattle was saved by the government, doubtless to be returned to the people after the famine was over. In order to feed the people, Joseph "removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof" (verse 21). "Only the land of the priests bought he not" (verse 22).

The kindness, as well as the wisdom of Joseph, we see also in his further words to the people:

**"Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones" (verses 23, 24).**

The people realized that Joseph had been their deliverer from starvation; for they said, "Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants" (verse 25).

**"And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's" (verse 26).**

## JACOB'S SEVENTEEN YEARS OF BLESSING IN EGYPT

"And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years" (verses 27, 28).

God was keeping His promise made to Israel before he had left the land of Canaan.

### JOSEPH'S PROMISE TO BURY JACOB IN CANAAN

The faith of the man, Israel, shines out as clearly in his instructions to Joseph concerning his own burial in Canaan as in any part of his life. It manifested complete trust in God to keep His Word, to lead His people back to the land given to Abraham. This expression of faith appears all the more striking as we remember that Jacob told Joseph to bury him in the land of his fathers at a time when his own son was being honored as few men are ever honored, and in the greatest kingdom of the day. A man lacking in great faith would have been so flattered by the prestige and glory bestowed upon his family in the godless world that he would have given up all thought of returning to a land wherein he was a stranger and a sojourner, a pilgrim for God.

According to the custom practiced by Abraham, Jacob caused Joseph to take an oath, that he would take his body back to the land of Canaan; for he said,

"I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Sware unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head" (verses 30, 31).

The last sentence quoted above is taken from the King James Version, and needs to be understood in the light of the Holy Spirit's quotation of it in Heb. 11:21. There we read the record concerning this verse, as well as that of the chapter that follows, which tells of Jacob's blessing upon Joseph's two sons:

"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."



The "oriental beds are mere mats, having no head, and the translation" of Gen. 47:31 "should be 'Israel bowed himself upon the top of his staff,' as the apostle renders it" in the New Testament passage which we have just quoted.

It was "by faith" that Jacob gave commandment concerning his burial in the land of his fathers, the land to which he believed God would lead Israel back in His own time. It was "by faith" that he blessed the sons of Joseph and his own sons, as we shall see in our next lesson. Jacob's faith had triumphed, by the grace of God. He was not afraid to die, not afraid to leave his family and great possessions in a strange land. By faith he had worshipped God before he went down into Egypt. God had honored that faith, had appeared to him, and had promised to go with him, making of him "a great nation" during Israel's sojourn in Egypt. And now he was ready to "be gathered unto his fathers" in peace and sublime trust in his fathers' God.

But before he died, Israel uttered some of the most remarkable words of prophecy to be found in all the Scriptures; and that he did by faith, as the Holy Spirit spoke through His servant. In our next lesson we shall study in some detail that remarkable prophecy found in chapters forty-eight and forty-nine, the blessing upon the twelve tribes, of which the sons of Joseph were two of the fathers.

And now, before we bring to a close this study for today, shall we not thank God once more for the lessons He teaches us from the life of Jacob? He is the God of all grace—and how very faithful! May we let Him have His own perfect will in us and through us, for His own glory and for the salvation of never-dying souls whom He would have us tell of His mercy and loving-kindness. As He took Jacob and made him to become Israel, a man of faith, even so He can and will take the weakest, the frailest of us and transform us to the praise of His glory.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:20, 21).