

So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. ² Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." ³ 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. ⁴ 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." ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt. ⁸ Now these *were* the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben *was* Jacob's firstborn. ⁹ The sons of Reuben *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁰ The sons of Simeon *were* Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. ¹¹ The sons of Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹² 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. ¹³ The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. ¹⁴ The sons of Zebulun *were* Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ The sons of Gad *were* Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. ¹⁷ The sons of Asher *were* Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel. ¹⁸ These *were* the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons. ¹⁹ The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, *were* Joseph and Benjamin. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ The sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. ²² These *were* the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all. ²³ The son of Dan *was* Hushim. ²⁴ The sons of Naphtali *were* Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. ²⁵ These *were* the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you *are* still alive." ³¹ 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. ³² 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.'" ³³ So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴ 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."

Introduction

Last week we finished chapter 45 with the "Revival" of Joseph's father Jacob.

Jacob thought that his son was dead. He hadn't seen him for over 20 years and he was now an old man of 130 years.

Over the last 20 years God had been working through the life of Joseph, but He had also been working in the lives of Joseph's difficult brothers.

God was preparing to honour the promise that He made with Abraham in **Genesis Chapter 12: v.1-3** and also in **Genesis Chapter 15: v. 1-6.**

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father's house,

To a land that I will show you.

² I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis Chapter 15: v. 1-6.

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram.

I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward." ² But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me,

seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ Then Abram said, "Look, You have

given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" ⁴ And behold, the word of

the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body

shall be your heir." ⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars

if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And he believed in

the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

God had promised that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

This may not mean very much to you if you don't know how many stars there are in the sky.

Can anyone guess how many stars are in our Milky Way Galaxy?

(Pause for any suggestions)

Well the answer is **100 Billion Stars**. That is a lot of people for God to promise.

Putting it into perspective, there are only 323 Million people living in the U.S. and about 120 Million in Japan.

The amazing thing is that only 66 direct descendants of Jacob, who was the grandson of Abraham, left to go to Egypt. (Genesis 46: v.26)

God was going to have to do a wonderful thing to honour His promise to Abraham. As we will discover when we go through the book of Exodus, perhaps in the Autumn, God amazingly grew the Jewish Nation, even under severe trial. However, let us get back to the Bible text and work through Genesis Chapter 46.

1. God's promises to Jacob – Chapter 46: v. 1-4

In Chapter 46: v. 1, we are told that the first thing that Jacob did was to gather all of his family and all his worldly goods and travel to Beersheba.

The purpose of visiting Beersheba was to offer sacrifices to God.

At the time Jacob was living in Hebron which was about 25 miles away. (36 K.M.)

Beersheba was a special place in the life of Jacob's Grandfather Abraham.

It was in Beersheba that Abraham had made a "**Covenant**" with Abimelech; he planted a tree and called on the name of the Lord. (Gen. 21:23,24,31-34)

It was also the place where Abraham's faith had been tested and come forth as strong.

He was willing to sacrifice his son, but it was only a test from God. (Gen.22)

Beersheba was also a special place for Jacob because it had been his home in his early years. (Gen. 28: v. 10)

It was not surprising that Jacob chose this special place to worship God before going on the long journey to Egypt.

It was at this worship service that God spoke directly to Jacob.

I just want to pause for a moment and consider this fact.

God spoke at a worship service where Jacob attended, and God can speak to us at the worship service that we attend.

The important thing is to listen for his voice and to remove all the distractions from our heart and mind in order to hear His voice.

Worship services are a two-way process. We worship God, but He also speaks to us in various ways.

Of course it is important to read our Bibles every day but at a worship service our hearts need to be tuned to hear His voice.

Back to the text.

God knew Jacob's heart and that he was afraid in his old age to make this journey to another land.

This is what God said to Jacob –

v. 3-4 in the N.K.J.

³ 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. ⁴ 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."

Immediately Jacob realised that this vision was from God.

What God said to him was directly connected to the promise made to his Grandfather Abraham many years ago.

God encouraged Jacob not to fear going down to Egypt for "**four "divine reasons"**.

The first reason not to be afraid was that God had promised to make a "**Great Nation**" out of this small band of people.

It was the same promise given to Abraham. (Gen. 12: v.2)

God had also repeated this in Gen.17: v. 19 and through an Angel guest in Gen. 18: v. 18.

The thing that we need to notice is that the blessing of a big nation would not quite fit in with the mind-set of Jacob.

Why could God not just bless Jacob's family in Canaan?

The main reason is the famine in the land, and also, of course, God was working His purposes out according to His plan.

The second reason that Jacob was told not to fear going down to Egypt was that God said, "**I will go down to Egypt with you.**"

Remember that God spoke to Jacob back in Genesis chapter 28: v. 10-15.

¹⁰ Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. ¹¹ So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. ¹² Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³ And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

God had honoured Jacob and provided for him thus far so why would God let down Jacob now?

The blessing of God is not confined to the country that you call home; God can bless you wherever you are in His purposes.

50% of OIC members are not living in their home countries. This is not always easy, but God can bless you in Japan as much as He can bless you in your home country.

Being in the centre of the circle of the will of God, wherever that might be in the world for you, is the greatest blessing.

The third reason to encourage Jacob was the promise that God made to bring Jacob up again back to the land of Canaan. This promise was made in connection with the "Great Nation" rather than an individual promise that Jacob would return in his human flesh. However Jacob's bones did return to the land after his death.

Jacob may not have made the connection to what God had said to his Grandfather Abraham, but I think it is important that we note the connection in Genesis Chapter 15: v. 13-15.

¹³ Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.

The fourth reason to encourage Jacob was concerning his own death. He would have a peaceful home coming to HEAVEN with Joseph at his side.

All of these four promises made by God would have been a great encouragement to Jacob at this time.

Application

We need to consider promises made to us from the Bible and how to apply them to our lives.

Not many things are more comforting than a promise which is made by someone and kept.

However not many things are more hurtful than a promise which is broken.

We know that we worship a God who keeps His promises.

This is a great encouragement and joy to us.

It is very important for us to know the promises that apply to us today and not to overstep their application. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

First of all, do not confuse a promise with a principle.

Promises in the Bible are always fulfilled 100%, but principles state general truths.

The book of "Proverbs" is often mistaken for a book of promises, when in fact they are a book of **guiding principles.**

Let us look at Proverbs 22: v. 6

⁶ Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it.

Although this proverb is generally true and a wise thing to do, it does not guarantee that every child raised with godly instruction will become a believer in Jesus.

Secondly, make sure you fully understand the context of the promise that is made in the Bible.

Always be clear to understand the original people to whom the promise was made.

Sometimes a promise is made to a person in the Bible and there is no further application to us.

Thirdly do not overlook the "IF" in the promises that are made.

Promises that contain an "IF" will require some form of obedience before we can expect them to come to pass in our lives.

These promises are conditional if we want to claim them.

2 Chronicles Chapter 7: v. 14. In the N.K.J.

¹⁴ if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

The "IF" in the promise requires God's people to act in great humility, and to pray, but not just to pray, to seek God's face, this always requires earnest prayer and sometimes fasting, then God's people must turn from their wicked ways.

God's people in the Old Testament had to meet the requirements before God would even hear from Heaven, and forgive their sin, and eventually heal their land.

There is a promise that I have had to claim from God many times.

Turn with me to Philippians 4: v. 19

¹⁹ And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

This verse is in the context of the Church supporting Paul in his ministry financially.

In other words, Paul was promising the Church that God would meet ALL of their needs because they were faithful in ALL of their giving; often it was sacrificial.

So if we are going to trust God for our individual needs, and also for the needs of OIC, then we must make sure that we are giving ALL of our tithes into the offering each week.

On top of that sometimes God calls us to give over and above in other situations.

It was over 30 years ago that Wendy and I learnt this valuable lesson.

God has certainly honoured that promise to Wendy and myself but we have always understood it in connection with our own giving to God's work.

Fourthly we need to be cautious that we do not use a promise for the wrong motive, or to select a promise that suits us.

Let me give you an example.

Exodus 14: v.13-14.

¹³ And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

In this instance God's people were told to stand still and not to fight. God was going to do the work.

However, 3 chapters later in Exodus 17: v. 8-16, the children of Israel had to do the fighting, although the battle was really overcome through Moses in prayer.

⁸ Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under

him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." ¹⁵ And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; ¹⁶ for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

In life we need God's discernment to pick our battles, the ones that we fight in and the ones that we trust God to act and do nothing.

This is where the Holy Spirit will guide you.

Finally, don't impose your own time-scale on where and when God will honour His promise for you.

Sometimes we are having a devotional time, reading the Bible and God speaks to us about something. Often we look for the promise to be fulfilled immediately. However, God may just be encouraging us right now for a future fulfilment.

So in conclusion, we need to do our homework and research the Bible context and check our motives fully before we claim a promise from God.

2. Jacob and his whole family move to Egypt – v. 5-27

Jacob believed the promises that God had made to him and allowed himself and his family to be transported to Egypt.

They took everything they had including all their livestock.

In v. 8-25 Moses lists down all the names of the people who travelled with Jacob to Egypt.

However, included in these names are Joseph and his two sons, plus his wife.

The writer in v. 26 tells us that the number of people who travelled from Canaan to Egypt were 66. It appears that the writer goes on in v. 27 to include Joseph and his family, making the whole number 70. The question we might ask is why does the writer bother to list all the names of the people who entered Egypt and why does he include Joseph and his family?

Well there are many possible answers to this question.

However, the most likely reason is that when God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would be a great nation, and that all the families of the earth would be blessed through them, it was only promised to his descendants.

Therefore, these descendants had to be clearly identified as they went to live in a strange land called Egypt. Identification that you were one of God's chosen people, would become very important as the story of the Bible continued through into the New Testament.

The reason being is that the promised Jewish Messiah would come forth from this nation.

Therefore, everybody in this nation had to be clearly identified.

This is the reason that Matthew records a list of names from King David through to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. (Matthew 1: v. 1-17)

Luke also includes a list of names from Jesus Christ all the way back to Adam, which includes Abraham. (Luke 3: v. 23-36)

The names of the Jewish nation were important to God and for His people to be identified.

However, what is important today is "Our Names".

Our names are important too.

The most important thing for us today is that our "NAMES" are written in the "Lamb's Book of Life".

God has a very accurate record of all those people who have put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Turn with me to Revelation Chapter 21: v. 22-27

²² But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. ²⁴ And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵ Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶ And they shall bring the

glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

It is very clear that God has a record of the names of everybody who will one day be with Him in Heaven. The Challenge for everybody here today is to make sure that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life.

The only way to make sure about that is to say sorry to God for your many sins and put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for your sins.

He took your place. He is your substitute sacrifice.

2 Corinthians 5 v. 21

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

3. Jacob and his family arrive in Egypt & Joseph is reunited with his father. – v. 28-34.

In v. 28 we are told that Jacob and his family arrived in Egypt and that Judah was sent to connect with Joseph to get instructions on how to find their new living area.

We are told that they eventually arrived safely in Goshen.

In v. 29-30 we are informed of the reunion between Joseph and his father. It was a very emotional time with lots of tears. Jacob was quite prepared to die at that point, because he had at last seen his son alive. However, God had other plans for Jacob.

He would continue to live in the land for another 17 years.

This was very gracious of God to allow him to have time with his son and his two grandchildren.

Joseph didn't have too much time to spend with his father; he needed to secure favour with the King of Egypt to allow Jacob and his family full rights to live and work the land of "Goshen".

Joseph informed his father and his brothers that they would be brought to the King of Egypt for a personal interview before their position in Goshen could be secured.

They were told to inform Pharaoh, the King of Egypt that they were all Shepherds.

The chapter closes by informing us that every Shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians.

We don't need to spend too long on this section because the story continues next week starting with the interview with Jacob and his sons as they enter the presence of the King.

One question arises and that is why every Shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians, and why Joseph insisted that Jacob and his family declared themselves as Shepherds.

Although the precise reason for Shepherds being an abomination to the Egyptians is not known, it may have been because of religious differences relating to the offering of sheep as sacrifices.

This is also linked to the fact that Egyptians refused to eat with Hebrews.

(Gen. 43:32)

What we do know is that it was the purpose of God for his chosen people to grow and populate amongst their own people.

God wanted them to be separate from the Egyptians and not to inter-marry.

It has always been the purpose of God for His chosen people to be saved and sanctified, and serving Him.

Application

The New Testament is also clear in teaching that God requires His people to be separate from the people of the world.

2 Corinthians 6: v. 11- Chapter 7: v.1. in N.L.T.

¹¹ Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you. ¹² There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us. ¹³ I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us! ¹⁴ Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? ¹⁵ What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said:

“I will live in them
and walk among them.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

¹⁷ Therefore, come out from among unbelievers,
and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD.

Don't touch their filthy things,
and I will welcome you.

¹⁸ And I will be your Father,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the LORD Almighty.”

Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

It is interesting to note that Paul quotes from the Old Testament scriptures in order to back up his argument for separation from non-believers and worldly practices.

We need to get the balance right between being in the world and functioning and being separate in our close relationships with non-believers.

The closer and the friendlier you are with a non-believer, the more likely you are to compromise your faith, and many actually drift away from their love of Jesus.

God instructs us for a reason. It is always for our spiritual protection and edification.

May God help us to apply the principles of Biblical separation correctly and lovingly.