

Sept. 9, 2007 (LS)

**FULFILLING GOD'S PROMISE IN A FOREIGN LAND  
GENESIS 46.1-47.12**

**Summary:** *In fulfilling the promise given to Abraham, God takes Israel—man and seed nation—down into Egypt to be protected, provided for, and preserved so that they might fulfill their mission to be a blessing to the nations.*

**A THE PROMISE OF GOD'S AND JOSEPH'S PRESENCE IN EGYPT (46.1-7)**

**Covenant renewal at Beersheba (1):** "Israel" = the reborn Jacob. Israel will look even more different now. Israel is becoming more of a nation.

Beersheba = southernmost border of the land of Canaan. Israel is about to leave the land of Canaan as he did so many years ago when he had to flee from his brother Esau.

Significance of Beersheba found in what happened with Abraham and Isaac and making covenants with the Abimelechs (chs. 21, 26).

Two reasons: (1) This is the place where Abraham and his seed made a covenant with the Philistines who are Egyptians. cf. 10.13 (2) Beersheba is established by Abraham as a place of worship. He was establishing worship in that land dominated by the Gentiles.

**Renewal of the Abrahamic promise (2-3):** "visions in the night" - similar to the scene in Gen 15 where God further established his covenant with Abraham promising him a seed that would rule heaven and earth.

Here he was also promised that his seed would be subjugated by another nation and would serve them 400 years, eventually coming out with great possessions. This 400 years started in Abraham's lifetime (see Gal 3.17) and was not yet fulfilled. Israel now is playing his part in that Abrahamic promise. I.e., he must go down into Egypt in order for the promise to Abraham to be fulfilled.

"Do not be afraid" - Not many good things had happened in Egypt in the past. But he need not fear. God has provided for him already. The God of his father—i.e., the God who made promises and was faithful to his father—the God of his father will make of him a great nation *there*.

Israel, Abraham's seed cannot be made a great nation *without first going through Egypt*.

**Immanuel and Joseph (4):** Immanuel promise = "God with us". God does not simply *send* his people down to death. He precedes them and goes with them.

He will "bring him up again." Possibilities (not necessarily mutually exclusive): (1) Jacob's body will be taken back to the land of Canaan. God, indeed, refers to Jacob's death in v. 4. (2) Israel will one day leave Egypt (as a people; cf. 50.25). (3) Resurrection.

Joseph's presence is also promised. Joseph has—from Jacob's perspective—died and risen again. He is an immediate assurance that God's promises are being fulfilled. Joseph will close Jacob's eyes in death.

**Leaving with assurance (5-7):** from the perspective of the sons (v. 5) and from the perspective of the father (vv. 6-7).

"Seed" in vv. 6-7: This tells us who is going down to Egypt; not just names, but the importance of who these people are to the story. The sons of Israel—all of the sons of Israel—are now the seed of the woman.

Whereas in history previously seed status has devolved upon a singular person—e.g., Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—now the seed is the whole house of Israel. The plan has taken new shape. Whole house of Israel = heir of Abrahamic covenant.

That is, they have the privileges of drawing near to God. But they also have the privilege and responsibility of giving their lives for the life of the world. They are the priest to the nations. They are the shepherds who have the responsibility of leading the nations into God's presence.

**B THE DESCENT OF THE SEED NATION INTO EGYPT (46.8-27)**

**The new man (8-26):** Arranged according to mothers: Leah, vv. 9-15; Zilpah, vv. 16-18; Rachel, vv. 19-22; Bilhah, vv. 23-24.

Rachel only one explicitly stated as “wife.” She is “*the* woman;” the one who would bear the seed to redeem the brothers.

66 = the new man; man is created on 6<sup>th</sup> day. They are the new humanity.

***The new world (27):*** 70 total: cf. Gen 10. 70 nations. Israel is the representative new world; i.e., all the nations of the earth.

### **C THE PRESENTATION OF JOSEPH TO JACOB (46.28-34)**

***Judah: the forerunner (28):*** Joseph, the son, has gone and secured the kingdom. Now he is about to present himself and the kingdom to his father. Cp. 1 Cor 15.20-28.

But before that can happen, a forerunner is sent: Judah. Judah goes before Jacob to Joseph to prepare the way. Judah is the leader of the redeemed firstborn sons now. So he is the one appointed to make all the proper preparations.

***Faith made sight (29-30):*** Now that Jacob has seen Joseph alive, he has seen God’s promises fulfilled, he may die in peace.

Again, remember that Jacob’s grief was not only the grief of a father who lost a son (as terrible as that is). His grief had to do with Joseph being the one who would carry the covenant promises.

***Preparations for dwelling in a foreign land (31-34):*** Different angles to be viewed: (1) the nations are in a time of famine. Egypt is the only place that has grain/bread. What is it going to look like when an entourage of many people migrate to the land? Could this be an army trying to take over? (Remember the “spying” charge earlier.)

(2) Israel had to remain a distinct people. They have a mission. That mission cannot be accomplished at this point in history with them completely integrating into Egyptian culture.

Shepherds: Literally true. But shepherds are kings in Scripture; whether kings in training or kings over God’s flock. Psa 80 says that God is Israel’s shepherd and leads Joseph like a flock. David is the shepherd-king. Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd. They will shepherd the nations.

### **B’ THE PRESENTATION OF THE SEED NATION BEFORE PHARAOH (47.1-10)**

***Joseph presents himself (1):*** the individual son/seed precedes the other sons. In order for the brothers to enter into Pharaoh’s presence, Joseph must intercede for them.

***Joseph presents his brothers (2-6):*** “5 brothers,” no names mentioned. My best effort is to associate this with the 5<sup>th</sup> day of creation and the swarms created in sea and sky. 5 is associated with power (e.g., like the five fingers on your hand that grasp). This is the representative power of Israel (probably not visibly impressive).

“both we and also our fathers” - Shepherds back all the way to Abel.

Now they have come to submit themselves to Pharaoh’s rule and receive his protection and provision because of the famine that is in their land. Pharaoh accepts them. And more than that he makes them “chiefs” over his livestock.

***Joseph presents his father (7-10):*** Jacob *blesses* Pharaoh and Pharaoh submits to Jacob.

days have been “few and evil.” Sin has (1) shortened life spans and (2) caused great struggle/wrestling.

### **A’ THE PROVISION OF GOD THROUGH JOSEPH IN EGYPT (47.11-12)**

***Settling in Egypt according to God’s word (11)***

***Provision in Egypt according to God’s word (12)***

(1) God accomplishes his purposes in ways that are quite surprising to us.

(2) Being faithful involves a life of wrestling.