

Jacob has left home and stopped at Beersheba....

Lots of stuff happened at Beersheba...

That's where the Angel appeared to Hagar and promised that Ishmael would be a great nation and showed her a well

that's where Abraham and Abimelech made a peace covenant

That's where Isaac was finally able to dig a well that nobody else claimed and where he made another peace treaty with another Abimelech.

and that's where Isaac was living when Jacob was sent away to find a wife and live with Laban.

God spoke to Jacob that night and gave him four promises after telling him not to be afraid to go to Egypt.

1. I will make you into a great nation there...
2. I will go down to Egypt with you....
3. I will surely bring you back again...and
4. Joseph's own hand will close your eyes.
"I will make you into a great nation there"

God has not forgotten His promise to Jacob, Isaac and Abraham that their descendants will be a great nation.

God calms Jacob's fears by reminding him that He is a God who keeps His promises and who does not forget, not a capricious and unreliable god like the Canaanites worship.

"I will go down to Egypt with you."

God had also promised Jacob the last time he'd left home that He'd go with him and would never leave him.

God calms Jacob's fears by reminding him that He has always been with him and will always be, even if Jacob has acted and felt like he's not really believed that in the past.

"I will surely bring you back again..."

God kept his promise to bring Jacob back home from Haran years ago, as he reminds him now.

God calms Jacob's fears by a two-fold promise: 1) God will bring Jacob as a nation out of Egypt and back to the land they've been promised; and

2) God will not leave Jacob even in death; when the funeral party brings Jacob back for burial God will be in their midst and with him even then.

"Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

Jacob has spent several chapters and twenty years mourning the loss of his favorite son and refusing to be comforted and insisting that his other sons will bring his head to the grave in sorrow.

God calms Jacob's fears by reminding him that instead of dying in sorrow he'll spend his last days with Joseph again and that Joseph will be at his side when he dies and will care for him and see that he gets a proper burial.

Notice when Jacob and Joseph reunite there's lots of tears and hugs and Joseph declares that he's ready to die in peace now that he's seen him.

Joseph on the other hand, isn't worried about death and dying and instead speaks to his brothers about living and how they're to approach Pharaoh with the formal request to settle in the land that he's already given them.

Joseph presents five of his brothers to Pharaoh and they are given permission to settle in the land of Goshen.

Joseph then presents Jacob to Pharaoh and being a proper patriarch once again Jacob blesses Pharaoh when he meets him and again as he leaves.

This too is part of the earliest patriarchal promise to Abraham, that he'll be a blessing to others.

For Egyptians, 110 years was considered to be a perfect lifespan, and the smooth-shaved and made-up Pharaoh probably hadn't seen many people like Jacob and he asks him how old he is.

Jacob tells him that he's 130 years old, that his years have been difficult and that he's nowhere near as old as his ancestors were.

Now that Joseph has his family settled in and fed, the rest of chapter 47 deals with his administration and business dealings during the final five years of the famine. Through him, Pharaoh winds up owning nearly all the land and the people as they sell and barter away everything they own to survive.

As the famine winds down they're given seed to plant and told to give 1/5th of it back to Pharaoh every year.

The people are grateful that they didn't starve to death and don't seem to mind their new lower status.

The Israelites (the first time, by the way, that the name Israel is used to refer to the people and not to Jacob himself) not only weren't slaves but they acquired property and were fruitful and multiplied.

Only they and the Egyptian priests owned their own land and didn't pay tribute to

Pharaoh.

This looks ahead to Exodus 19 where the people are told that they're to be God's possessions, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

We might also see a bit of irony:

while Joseph is alive and in Pharaoh's favor, the Egyptians are slaves and the Israelites are free;

when a native Pharaoh arises who knows not Joseph, the Israelites are made slaves and the Egyptians are free.

The chapter ends seventeen years after everyone gets to Egypt as Jacob feels he's about to die and makes Joseph promise, with the old hand under the thigh pledge that Mr. Duggar thinks would make a good practice for new church members, that he'll bury him back in the old country instead of Egypt.

He's not a exactly a goner yet and has another two chapters of blessings left in him.

Chapters 48-49 – The Final Words of Jacob

As stated in the last chapter, Jacob lives in Egypt for seventeen years and is now about to die at the age of 147.

He has called his sons together and Joseph has brought his two sons to see Jacob and to hear his words of blessing.

Jacob starts by reminding them of the promises God made him when he had the dream that we know as Jacob's ladder, which, you'll recall, actually wasn't a ladder.

He's actually talking to Joseph and his two sons, and he announces that he's officially adopting them as his own. They will in effect replace Reuben and Simeon as his two first-born sons and will be needed to keep the number of the sons inheriting the promised land an even twelve.

Things to Note in this Chapter:

1) vs. 7 "to my sorrow" – all the joy at his finding Joseph alive and seeing his grandsons cannot erase his lingering grief over the death of Rachel.

2) vs. 15 "And he blessed Joseph" – this blessing is done through his sons. Joseph himself will not become one of the twelve tribes

2) vs. 15 "And he blessed Joseph" – this blessing is done through his sons. Joseph himself will not become one of the twelve tribes, remember, he's been pretty well assimilated into Egyptian society, but he will be blessed and will inherit a double portion of land through his two sons and he's honored as being a leader of his brothers and set apart from them.

3) vs. 22 – "I have given to you rather than to your brothers"

Joseph is given a mountain slope or a field that Jacob took from the Amorites in an unrecorded battle. We'll also later learn that he dug a deep well there.

This well and the location, as well as the idea of being set apart from rest of the twelve tribes and of family restoration will come back to us when we get to the fourth chapter of John.....

4) vss. 17-20 "Not this way, my father."

Joseph sees that nearly blind Jacob is about to mess up and bless the younger son over the elder. Jacob refuses his correction and says that this is the way that it will be. Once again, we have the theme of the younger son being favored over the firstborn.

As the new firstborn son, the tribe of Ephraim will lead as one of their members, Joshua, leads the conquest of the land, but later they will be rejected in favor of Judah.

Chapter 49 – Jacob now calls the other sons to surround him as he blesses them. Some of these don't sound too much like what we'd consider blessings, but they are blessing in the sense that they are prophecies that he's been given by God about the sons and their future tribes.

As we'll see, Jacob isn't a man to forget and he may not have done much about things when they happened, but he's kept them in mind.

You might say that we're going to hear all about the good, the bad and the ugly.

Reuben

Simeon and Levi

Judah fares better than his other brothers, making him in effect another firstborn son like Ephraim

He's promised:

1) leadership

"Judah, your brothers shall praise you;
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons shall bow down before you."

2) strength

"Judah is a lion's cub;
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He stooped down; he crouched as a lion
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?"

3) Messiah?

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until tribute comes to him;
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

4) agricultural prosperity, both in the land and in the time of future prosperity

“Binding his foal to the vine
and his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
he has washed his garments in wine
and his vesture in the blood of grapes.
His eyes are darker than wine,
and his teeth whiter than milk.”

“Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea;
he shall become a haven for ships,
and his border shall be at Sidon.”

“Issachar is a strong donkey,
crouching between the sheepfolds.
He saw that a resting place was good,
and that the land was pleasant,
so he bowed his shoulder to bear,
and became a servant at forced labor.”

“Dan shall judge his people
as one of the tribes of Israel.
Dan shall be a serpent in the way,
a viper by the path,
that bites the horse's heels
so that his rider falls backward.

“Raiders shall raid Gad,
but he shall raid at their heels.

“Asher's food shall be rich,
and he shall yield royal delicacies.

“Naphtali is a doe let loose
that bears beautiful fawns”

In addition to a blessing, Joseph has both a history lesson:

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, (or bull)
a fruitful bough by a spring;
his branches run over the wall. [5]
The archers bitterly attacked him,
shot at him, and harassed him severely,

and a lesson in the source of blessing and the names of God:

“yet his bow remained unmoved;

his arms were made agile
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob
(from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
by the God of your father who will help you,
by the Almighty who will bless you
and how will God bless him?

“with blessings of heaven above,
blessings of the deep that crouches beneath,
blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
The blessings of your father
are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents,
up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. [9]
May they be on the head of Joseph,
and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.”
“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf,
in the morning devouring the prey
and at evening dividing the spoil.”

Loose Ends

We never saw two things in our study of Genesis:
1) We never learned about what happened to Rebekah;
2) We never saw Leah treated as a proper wife by Jacob.

Jacob is giving his final instructions on his burial to the brothers and he takes great care to describe the family burial cave.
verse 31 ties up our two loose ends:

“There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah.”
Chapter 50 – a proper burying

The highlight of this chapter is the funeral of Jacob. It is a grand affair fit for the founder of a future great nation and a sign of the honor that Pharaoh held him and Joseph in.

After this we have the brothers in need of one more reassurance from Joseph. Joseph is now 56 years old and has been in Egypt for 39 years. The next 54 years pass by in silence and then Joseph dies at the perfect Egyptian age of 110 after promising his surviving brothers and relatives that God will rescue them from Egypt and exacting an oath from them that they'll carry his bones (actually his mummy) back to the promised land when they return. He dies, is embalmed and put in a coffin and probably a small pyramid to wait for the Exodus.