

# Midweek Study

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# TRUSTING GOD IN THE DARKNESS

Genesis 37-50

## Entering a New Season

(Genesis 45:16-47:26)

### 1. The Family's **Invitation** (Genesis 45:16-24)

- v.24 – “See that you do not become troubled along the way.” (Heb means “to shake or tremble”)  
- “Don’t quarrel on the way!” (NIV)  
- “Don’t argue on the way home!” (CEV)

Psalm 133:1 - Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!

This personal agitation could lead to quarreling. Why might they be disturbed? “(1) Their aged father’s response to the news that Joseph was alive. It might shock him so much that he’d die. (2) Their obligation to tell Jacob the truth about what they had done to Joseph. (3) And how this confession would affect Jacob and their relationship with him. (4) Concern whether Joseph might change his mind and decide not to forgive them (see 50:15–21).”<sup>1</sup>

**Application:** Joseph commissioned his brothers to tell his father three things: 1) He was alive; 2) He was in an exalted position; and 3) He wanted all of them to be with him. In the same way, Jesus commissioned us with much the same message: He is alive, He is Lord and He wants all of us with Him!<sup>2</sup>

### 2. The Final **Immigration** (Genesis 45:25-46:27)

“Jacob’s heart fainted” (45:26, KJV) literally means his heart “grew cold” or “grew numb.” He almost had a heart attack! The news was too good to believe, but he couldn’t deny the presence of the carts that Joseph had sent and the extra animals to carry the burdens and draw the carts. His spirit revived as he contemplated seeing Joseph and having his united family around him until he died. He was 130 years old when he went to Egypt (47:9) and died at 147, which means **he had seventeen years** in which to enjoy the family, especially Joseph and the two grandchildren he had never seen before (v. 28).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Authentic*, “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1997).

<sup>2</sup> W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 434.

<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, 130–131.

Why would God need to reassure Jacob in **46:3-4**? Four possibilities:<sup>4</sup>

- A change of this magnitude in his old age would be difficult.
- Egypt was very pagan with multiple gods.
- Jacob may have remembered his grandfather's experience with Egypt (see **Gen. 12:10-20**).
- Jacob may have been aware of a prophecy concerning 400 years of affliction (see **Gen. 15:13**).

I remember hearing someone once say, **"I'd rather be two steps behind God than one step ahead of Him."** Jacob offered sacrifices, possibly for three reasons: a) To purge sin from his family; b) To thank God for His faithfulness; and/or c) **To make sure of God's guidance in this move.** Be cautious about going where you are uncertain if it is God's will or not. Wait on the Lord and be confident when He tells you to move ahead (See **Psalm 27:14** and **Proverbs 3:5-6**).

**46:27** - Seventy persons traveling to Egypt with Jacob:

- 46:8-15** – The family of Leah
- 46:16-18** – The family of Zilpah
- 46:19-22** – The family of Rachel
- 46:23-25** – The family of Bilhah

These lists total 66, then add Jacob, Joseph and Joseph's two sons = 70.

**46:30** – Jacob said, "Let me die now." This means he was fully content.

### 3. The Favorable **Introduction** (**Genesis 46:28-47:12**)

**47:9 - pilgrimage** – This describes the Christian life – a pilgrimage. We are sojourners and strangers in this land. We should enjoy the time here but never get too comfortable. Heaven is our home. See **Philippians 3:20** and **1 Peter 2:11**.

**47:11-12** – The best of the land – God is taking care of His people. **Psalm 37:25** - *I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread.* **Psalm 23:5** - *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.*

### 4. The Famine **Instruction** (**Genesis 47:13-26**)

This section shows the administrative skill of Joseph. This text "is obviously a panegyric upon Joseph. Here is recounted his foresight, his acumen, his clearly calculated and unswerving purpose."<sup>5</sup>

This was not tyrannical, but merciful and responsible. "The true interpretation of **verse 21** seems to be that Joseph "removed" them from place to place for the purpose of guaranteeing to them an efficient supply of food as needed."<sup>6</sup>

**Romans 12:11** says to be "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." (See also **Colossians 3:23; 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31**).

<sup>4</sup> These ideas are based on Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "The Unchanging God Cheering Jacob in His Change of Dwelling Place," in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 35 (London: Banner of Truth, 1970), 641.

<sup>5</sup> *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, et al. (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1952), vol. 1, 809.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, 451.