

**Genesis 46; 1-7; "I will go down with you to Egypt", Sermon # 110
in the series - "Beginnings", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on September 9th, 2007, in the Morning Worship Service.**

Israel is taking his journey with all that he had. He is going to Egypt. He's going down to see Joseph his son, whom he thought that he had lost. Now it has been reported to him that Joseph is alive and he will go and see him before he dies. He is not only going down to see Joseph but he is also going to go and live there in Egypt; he and all his household of seventy persons. He has his fears about this, because he remembered that his grandfather Abraham had been given a prophecy concerning Egypt. That prophecy is found in Genesis 13. God had said to Abraham, "Know certainly that your descendents will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years." It was hard for him to believe that he was right in the center of God's will for his life, when he thought about this prophecy. Was he making a tremendous mistake? Was he going to be personally responsible for the fulfillment of affliction coming to his family and his descendents? He didn't want to make that kind of mistake. And it is good that he thought that way. He was more interested in doing God's will than in following the chain of providential circumstances that came to him; even if it meant disappointing Joseph. He needed very much to know, at this precise point in his life, what God thought about his going down to Egypt. This is the subject that we need to consider this morning; taking counsel with God. God speaks to us in and through His Word, the Bible. He reveals his declarative will for our lives in the sacred text. But God also reveals Himself personally and declares his will in the providential circumstances that He leads us into. This does not mean that we must submit to everything that comes to us as being God's will. It means that we need to pray and to seek His counsel to know and to understand truly, what God would have us to do. Not everything that happens to come our way means that it is God's will for us to go to that place and live our lives there. Many people have romantic notions about these kinds of things. They think their life would be so much better if they moved to another location. It is as if God is not with us in every place, or that He cannot bless us in any place. The real question is, "What does God want me to do at this particular time in my life? It could be that God, at some time in your life might want you to move and to actually go to a place which is totally unfamiliar and whose culture is quite different from yours. This was the case with Jacob here in our text. As Jacob is very old and feeble and full of fears about leaving the Promised land and going down to Egypt to live, God promises him that He will go down with him and give him many

comforts and assurances of blessing, to him and to his whole family. God knows how to lead each of His Elect people into all the blessings which He has prepared for them both in this life and in their death. It may be a place like Egypt that he leads you into, in comparison to the Canaan that your now live in. It may be that you will be called to be a missionary to a people in a foreign land in the later years of your life. Or it may be that He would have you to become a better witness to the truth to the pagan society which we now live in. The question that we want to ask this morning is this. "How does God lead Jacob to overcome his fears and convince him that it is his will for him to go down to Egypt and live there for the rest of his life?" "And how is it that God will overcome our fears, that we as believers in Jesus Christ, will be content to be with Christ wherever the Lord leads us, living as strangers and pilgrims in a fallen world? God is going to convince Jacob that this move is the right thing to do. He will do so by giving Jacob 3 promises of blessing.

1st- He tells him that he is the God of his father and promises Jacob that in the plans that He has for him, that He has gone before him.

(Verses 1-3)

It is always a good thing for every believer in Jesus Christ to remember, that God has plans for us. And to find out what God's mind is, it is good for us to bring the matter directly to God. The text says that "Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac." This was how Jacob brought the matter to God's attention. He offered sacrifices when he came to Beersheba. It is good to take all that we have, and all that we are, and bring it to God in a prayer of dedication and devotion unto Him before we make any major move in our lives. Jacob is a picture of this truth. Beersheba was on the way to Egypt. And I am sure that Jacob when he approached the place, was reminded in many ways, of the life and devotion of his father, to God. This is how it ought to be. The scenes of childhood, of one whose parents were godly people; if they are godly themselves, are usually burned into their minds of their children so much that they cannot escape the example. The times of prayer, when Jacob saw his father Isaac call upon God. The times that he had either heard about or seen personally when Isaac went out to meditate in the field, when he went to pray and to be alone with God; and the time he had often heard about, when Isaac's prayers were answered; when he lifted up his eyes and saw Rebekah, Jacob's mother, coming to him, riding on a camel. He remembered also, his father telling him about the time when Lord had appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you." "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father." That was the time

when the family was living in Gerrar. But then, when his father tried to dig wells for water, then there were quarrels that took place with the herdsmen of Gerrar over the wells of water. So his father had moved from there, and dug another well, and there was no quarrel about it. So his father called the place, Rehoboth, because he said, "For the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." What a joy this was to Jacob, to see the Lord answer his father's prayers for direction. In Genesis 26: 23 it says, "Then Isaac went up from there to Beersheba." "And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you.' "I will bless you and multiply your descendents for My servant Abraham's sake." So it says that Isaac "built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well." Verse 33 says, "So he called it Shebah." "Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day." It was the "well of the oath", the oath that Isaac swore to Abimelech when he made a covenant with him that he would "only do him good." Jacob remembered all this; the way that the Lord had directed his father to the place that he would have him to live.

So this is what came to his mind as he approached Beersheba. If this God, the God of my fathers directed them; why will He not direct me, and give me wisdom as to whether I should go down to Egypt to live? This is why he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. He needed to be convinced that God was in this move to Egypt. With all of his heart he desired to go to be with his son Joseph whom he had not seen for 23 years. But he still loved God and his word to him more. To visit Joseph would be perfectly permissible. But to take everything and everyone of his household and move to Egypt; this needed the approval of God Almighty, the One who had appeared to him before. He would not go down to live there if God did not want him to. This ought to be a great lesson to every sincere Christian. Is your God the God of your fathers? Then you ought not to move the ancient boundary mark of your father as it says in Proverbs 22: 28. "Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set." Do not move away from the truth of God's word which was conveyed to your godly father and grandfather; which they lived their lives by. Do not move away from the example of devotion to God and devotion to truth that was set before you, in the lives of your father and grandfather. Do not think, if you are a Christian, that the truth of the Word of God that was given to them, lived out by them, and passed on to you, is a baton which can be dropped by you and there not be grave consequences. It will affect the whole way that God will lead you and how God will deal with you. God will take notice of your departure and He will lead accordingly. If you drop the baton of truth and devotion to God, God will have to lead you in a different way than the way that he led Jacob. The rich

blessings of God will not come to you like they did to Jacob. You may be blessed in worldly things for a time; but not in spiritual things to advance the kingdom of God.

But Jacob did the right thing. He offered sacrifices in the very place where his father had settled and lived; according to the Word of God to Isaac so many years ago. This God was his father's God. Jacob knew that this would bring the desired response of God's counsel coming to him. So too, when we bring our sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise for all that the Lord has done for us in the past; the way that he has provided, the way that He has led, and especially in His revealing to our souls the great salvation from our sins and the gift of eternal life, which have been freely given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ; then we can be confident that God will counsel us as well. God answered him. God told him of the great plans that He had for him, to make of him a great nation in Egypt. He was not to be afraid. How many people, among God's true people, are continually afraid and fearful because they do not keep up their devotion to God. "I sought the Lord and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears." (Psalm 34: 4) A person may even believe that God is sovereign, but because he does not seek God, he does not have his fears removed in a timely fashion. Jeremiah 29: 11 and following, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you." "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." "I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity...." You will find when you seek the Lord, that the Lord has gone before you in the plans that He has for you; plans for your welfare and not for your calamity. The truth of this, Jacob came to know by real experience.

2ndly- God promises Jacob that He will go down with him to Egypt.

(Verse 4a)

Verse 3 says, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there." "I will go down with you to Egypt..." I wonder if you and I sufficiently consider the blessing of God which comes to us when we become a true Christian; the promise "I will never leave you nor forsake you." What a wonderful blessing is the presence of God with each of His people in the New Covenant. It assures us that God will counsel us in our spirit in accordance with a renewed mind and a heart changed by grace, so that we will be led in the way that God would want us to go. Knowing that the Lord would go with him, having received this promise, gave Jacob the confidence that he needed to go forward into Egypt. It took away his fears that perhaps he was being presumptuous in thinking that he should go to live in Egypt. A true Christian will always have legitimate fears about what the

influences of the world will do to his relationship with God. He knows that the Lord Jesus was holy, harmless, and undefiled; separate from sinners. He knows that, "in the world you shall have tribulation." He remembers that in New Testament times that Demas left the Apostle Paul and the work that the Lord had called him to do to help Paul, "having loved this present world." And he does not want to make shipwreck of his faith. But as the true Christian walks through this life, he becomes more and more thankful for the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit who himself, "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. That which gives us as Christians the confidence that we can go into the work world, the business world, the social world of our day is not the belief that we are strong in ourselves and know what we can and cannot face. No, No. It is the firm belief that Christ goes with us into all the various situations in life. It is His good Spirit and presence that lead us on level ground.

And what do we do when we need direction, when we are afraid that perhaps we are making a mistake in our involvements with a world so heavy with sinful influences to our souls? Well turn to Isaiah 41: 8. Here the Lord, through the prophet, is addressing the descendants of Jacob and he says to them, "But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend." "You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest region, and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God.'" "I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." This is most certainly an Old Testament promise of the New Testament grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He now sits at the right hand of the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for His people. Jacob is a father to the faith of all God's Elect; a pattern and a type of those who inherit these blessings. God does go with Jacob, down into Egypt, the picture of the world in the Scriptures. He does go with us, by His glorious presence, so that we will be guarded and guided in our souls. He will help you, O believer. Verse 14 gives the word of assurance again. "Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel!" "I will help you," says the Lord and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Behold I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills like chaff." "You shall winnow them, the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter; you shall rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy One of Israel." Is this not what Christ's Church and every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ learns to do? Is this not the way that he is led? There are mountains of difficulties to holiness and a good witness of Christ to men of this world. We have fears that threaten to overwhelm our soul and spirit. A threshing sledge is given to us to

harvest the grain. It is a picture of the Holy Spirit being given to the Church so that, the presence of the Lord, being continually with His people; that when they use the Word of God rightly, they will be able to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil; all the greatest enemies of the believer, all of which the believer has his fears about. Certainly the world, pictured by Egypt in our text, was something for Jacob to worry about. He feared that his faith would be overwhelmed by it. And you and I should fear this great enemy of our faith as well.

Turn with me to Psalm 32. Look at the strength and the power of the presence of God to establish every good thing in the life of a Christian whether they are old like Jacob, or whether they are young like some here today. David had had some sin that he had not really been dealing with in his life. In verses 1 and 2 asserts that he knew the blessedness of sins forgiven. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." But then it says that he had kept silent and had not acknowledged his sins. Then he was finally brought to this confession when "day and night God's hand was heavy upon him." He extols praying to God in a "time when He may be found." Then he calls God by this glorious name of his "hiding place". It would be to God that David would turn when fears came to him. "You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance." Then God Himself responds to Him and says these amazing words: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go." "I will guide you with My eye." "Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you." "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trust in the Lord, mercy shall surround him." Be glad in the Lord and rejoice you righteous and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" Why so? Because God is with you; He is guiding you. His presence is with you and goes with you down into the Egypt of this world. Do not be stubborn to have your own way like the horse or the mule that you will not be taught the way of wisdom and righteousness and holiness; that you will not abide in, or obey, the word of God to you. He will lead you in strict accordance with that word. Jacob was spoken to in visions of the night. This was how God convinced Jacob to go down and live in Egypt. But God will not come to you in this ancient way of revelation. He will come to you with His powerful Spirit working in your spirit to see if you will receive His blessed written Word. He will be working in the thoughts of your mind and your heart, whether it is by night or day. He will lead you by His Spirit in accordance with everything that would be good for you in accordance with His Word. This is the joy and delight of every Christian in their experience.

Come to God and ask Him for wisdom and grace in the revelation of the knowledge of Christ, and He shall come. Ephesians 1: 15 says, "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Yes, Christ has a revelation for you about the Egypt of this world. He will go down with you into the Egypt of this world. And He would have you go with your household. That is, He would have you face the temptations of the world by dwelling together with your brethren in the family of God. You will be in the world, but you will not be of the world. You will be a separate and distinct people from the world. You will live in Goshen and be cared for by shepherds. You will not then fall prey to the customs and practices of the world which you will find are sinful and idolatrous. He would be the friend of the world makes himself the enemy of God, it says in James. This is how God led Jacob and protected him. This is how He will lead you and protect you. Stay close to godly people in a local church and you shall not fall prey to the allurements of the world if they are walking in the Spirit.

Then lastly- God promises Jacob that He will bring him back up again out of Egypt. (Verse 4b-7)

God says to him, "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." God knows all of our present weakness and the decline of our physical health as we get older. He knew that this trip down to Egypt was not going to be easy for Jacob. Jacob could have questioned God as to why he should go down there at his age. But you do not read a word of it. He had God's promises and he had seen the evidence of what Joseph had sent him in the wagons. He knew that he would be well provided for. In verse 5 it says, "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." This was a part of the Lord's being with Jacob, going down with him. Carts loaded with the good things of Egypt. There are good things to be enjoyed in this life, and God is the One who best

knows how to give them and how they are to be used. Do you believe this as a Christian? One who is not a Christian does not know this. If you do know this, then I urge you to live like you know it. Do not think that God does not know how to give you good things and good comforts, all in their right time. This is the mindset of the world, that God doesn't know how to give good things. You do not need to go head over heels in debt to be able to enjoy the good things that God provides. He will see to your welfare. He will provide for your legitimate needs and comforts at many critical points in your life, if you will trust Him and walk in His ways.

Death was not too far off for Jacob. It would be a few more years and the time would come. This was a great concern to Jacob because he, I am sure, wanted to die in the Promised Land. He did not want to die in the land of idolatry, in the land of the refined heathen. But God would bring him up again. That is, God would see to it, through Joseph, that he was not buried in Egypt, but in the land of promise. This was Jacob's faith in exercise. God gave Jacob this promise of his eternal inheritance, his eternal resting place, which was typified in the land of Canaan. This is where Jacob would be buried; in the land of promise, awaiting the Messiah, and awaiting the resurrection of the righteous dead at the end of the world. It was also the promise to Jacob that his seed, his descendants would not remain slaves in Egypt any longer than the time purposed by God. They would be brought up and out of the land of Egypt by God's almighty power and outstretched hand. This is what every true believer has in mind when it comes his time to die. They would be buried in the hope of the resurrection of the righteous through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Lord has gone down with us into the Egypt of this world in the person of His Son, the greater Joseph, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is with us while we journey through this world and has given us a Goshen of our own to dwell in; the Church which He is building. But when we die, we would be buried in Immanuel's land. That is, we would be buried in full identification with our Savior. We do not desire to remain in this sin-cursed world permanently. We look forward to the New Heavens and New Earth, in which dwell righteousness. We would be pleased to have the Lord Jesus close our eyes. I believe that I remember closing my own dear father's eyes when he died, but I believe that it is the blessing of the Lord that He permitted it to be so. I believe that it is best if we believe that it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who comes to His people at their death and closes their eyes on this world, but opens their spiritual eyes to the next. May the Lord take away all fear in your death beloved brethren. May you be able to say at that hour, "Lord Jesus, put your hand on my eyes, and close them to this passing world, and open them to your eternal kingdom."

