

Pentwater Bible Church

*Pharaoh's Invitation
Genesis Message Eighty - Two
Genesis 45: 16- 46: 7*



The Family of Jacob in Egypt by Gaspar van Hove Antwerp 1648

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Genesis Message Eighty-Two

PHARAOH'S INVITATION

September 2, 2012

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Review:

JUDAH'S MAGNIFICENT PLEA

Genesis 44: 18-34

Judah, realizing the terrible situation that was unfolding, started to plead with the Egyptian governor. He had made a pledge to Jacob offering himself as surety if he did not bring back Benjamin. He was now making good on that promise. He was keeping his word to his father. He approached the prime minister of the greatest nation on earth at that time without being asked to come near. This could have easily been a capital offense. One does not approach a sovereign without being recognized to do so. Judah recognized that this man's power and authority was equal to that of Pharaoh. But the motivation to keep his word to his father and preserve his brother Benjamin far superseded his fear of the governor and his position. Judah told Joseph that he would become surety for Benjamin if it came to that and now he was prepared to do that. Joseph was seeing the outcome of his testing of the brothers. Judah was speaking for his brethren and trying to make good for their sin, which brought grief upon their father.

Judah then began to relate his previous conversations with the governor starting with his questions regarding his family back in Canaan. He reminded the governor that he asked about their father and brother. Judah affirmed that again and reiterated the issue of one brother being dead as well as that brother's mother being gone too. He affirmed his father's love for Benjamin. Judah did not seem to exhibit any jealousy toward Benjamin as he had toward Joseph twenty-two years ago. It is not clear if Judah realized that Benjamin was innocent of the theft of the silver cup but he was going to make an impassioned plea to avoid Benjamin's incarceration in an Egyptian prison. Joseph was seeing an entirely different Judah than he knew back in Canaan. This person in front of him seemed to have had a genuine transformation.

Judah continuing his plea to the governor stated the governor's need to see Benjamin in order to grant them food, which was a major concern to his father. But Judah continued to reconstruct the entire discourse he had with Jacob regarding his fear of losing Benjamin as he had lost Joseph. Still not realizing that he was in front of Joseph he said that Jacob thought that Joseph had been killed by an animal for "*I have not seen him since: and if ye take this one also from me, and harm befall him, ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to Sheol.*" Judah not realizing this was a test just told Joseph that his father had not abandoned him because he thought he was dead. Joseph must have wondered why his father never looked for him, now he knew.

Judah continuing his plea to this powerful man he tells Joseph that if he does not bring Benjamin back to Canaan, Jacob will die as "*his life is bound up in the lad's life;*" meaning Benjamin is his favorite son as if to say, "he clings to him with all his soul." Judah continues this magnificent plea by stating that he does not want to be responsible

for that and therefore placed himself in the role of a pledge for Benjamin should anything happen to him. He continues by saying that he will bear the blame for causing his father's death if he does not cause Benjamin to return to Canaan. Finally he begs Joseph to exchange him for Benjamin so Judah will not have to witness the evil that will come upon Jacob when he sees that Benjamin is lost as Joseph was.

THE GRAND REUNION

Genesis 45: 1-15

As in the past Joseph could no longer contain his emotions, he burst out in a loud cry "*Cause every man to go out from me.*" *And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.* It was simply not appropriate that the government officials see him in such an emotional state. He had to maintain a strong image in their presence as a high government leader. He could no longer continue his testing of the brothers. It was time to reveal himself to them. But his emotions could no longer be constrained as he wept loudly and openly with just his brothers in the room with him. His weeping was so loud that all the servants as well as the members of Pharaoh's household heard too, i.e. the royal family. The first question he had for them as he let them know that he was their brother was whether his father was still alive or not. He did not have an interpreter in the room. He was speaking with them in their native language which he had not used daily for twenty-two years. His brother's reaction was one of sheer terror.

They realized what they had done to him, and the compromising situation they were in with no food and bowing down to him in obeisance. Surely they remembered the dreams when he was just a seventeen-year-old innocent boy. He saw them bowing down to him that fueled their envy and incited them to attempt to murder him but ended selling him into slavery. They could only imagine what retaliation he might enact. No wonder they were terrified. Then as if to say I am not going to seek any vengeance he says, "*Come near to me, I pray you.*" As they approached him "*he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.*" In other words I am the person you sold into slavery. They were still sensing a stunning revelation and continued to be terrified until he soothed them. He said, "⁵*And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*" Joseph announced here as a prophet, that Elohim had brought him into Egypt to preserve through him the family which He had chosen for His own nation, and to deliver them out of the danger of starvation which threatened them now, as a very great nation. The brothers were unwitting instruments in God's divine plan for the nation Israel and all humankind.

It is a mystery to us as to how God works. He accomplishes His perfect will through sinful mankind (Isaiah 55: 8; Ezekiel 18: 25 etc.). He uses absolutely despicable events to further His plans for us. All the actions of the people on this earth are as a giant mosaic or puzzle that only God controls and knows the outcome. We as Bible believing Christians see the prophetic portions of Scripture being fulfilled. This gives us some insight into His plans and ways. By Joseph being sold into slavery he was set up for becoming the second in command of the greatest nation on earth at that time to enable the nation of Israel to survive and thrive. There were seventy in Jacob's family that were living in Egypt (Genesis 46: 26) right after they came from Canaan. When they left Egypt

some four hundred years later in the Exodus at 1444 B.C., they numbered more than two million. They went to Egypt as a large family but came out a nation.

After Joseph let them know who he was he instructed them to quickly go back to Canaan and let Jacob know what had happened and relocate him to the Goshen region of Egypt. This was near the Nile Delta region and had a lower population than the main cities such as Memphis. There would be little or no relocation of Egyptian citizens if they settled there. That area offered safety and security in Egypt with family, food and a favorable government with Joseph in a controlling position. Joseph had proven himself to be a superb planner and this was an example of it. He further told them to bring all their livestock too for the famine was going to last for another five years. In a final emotional measure he wept and kissed Benjamin first then the rest of his brothers. This was followed by a reunion after twenty-two years apart. Joseph was now thirty-nine.

Today's Message:

PHARAOH HEARS OF JOSEPH'S REUNION

Genesis 45: 16-20

¹⁶And the report thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. ¹⁷And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye: lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; ¹⁸and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. ¹⁹Now thou art commanded, this do ye: take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours (ASV 1901).

Surely the news of the reunion had an effect upon Pharaoh. One he liked Joseph and two he *needed* Joseph. Pharaoh was Semite Hyksos and Joseph was a Semite Jew. Joseph never did assimilate into the Egyptian culture regardless of his wife and position. The Egyptians were xenophobic and viewed themselves as a "better" class of people than other races. They were descendants of Noah's son Ham. Joseph remained true to Jehovah God and never worshipped the polytheistic false gods of the Egyptians. Without his birth family nearby Pharaoh must have realized the potential tenuous relationship Joseph had to the nation Egypt. Now that the famine emergency planning was accomplished, what would keep him in Egypt? Pharaoh needed Joseph and wanted his family to join him here. If his family was with him in Egypt then the chance of Joseph staying in Egypt to serve Pharaoh was strong. So Pharaoh essentially commanded Joseph to instruct his brethren to take wagons (first mention of wagon in the Bible) with adequate provisions for the trip back to Canaan and return with his father. From time immemorial Egypt was rich in small, two-wheeled carriages, which could be used even where there were no roads (Genesis 50:9; Exodus 14:6; Isaiah 36:9). So the instructions were to be given to the brothers to return to Canaan and bring the entire family without burdening themselves with too many utensils such as furniture. Pharaoh would provide them with all they

needed once they returned. It must have impressed Pharaoh to learn that Joseph's family was of "royal" heritage and not slaves. While in prison Joseph assured the cupbearer to let Pharaoh know this when he was restored so Joseph could be released from his unjustified imprisonment. Of course it was not politically expedient for him to do that and Joseph languished in prison for two additional years from the time Joseph interpreted his dream and the cupbearer's (butler's) restoration at Pharaoh's rebirth celebration.

THE DEPARTURE AND PROVISIONS

Genesis 45: 21-25

²¹And the sons of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. ²²To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. ²³And to his father he sent after this manner: ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with grain and bread and provision for his father by the way. ²⁴So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way. ²⁵And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father (ASV 1901).

Joseph carried out Pharaoh's commandments regarding the fetching of Jacob and the provisions provided for the journey. Interestingly Joseph gave all his brothers except Benjamin a change of clothes (raiment). To Benjamin he gave five changes of clothes and one hundred pieces of silver. Joseph continued to test the brothers, still not having complete trust in them. He was looking for an envious response from them as in earlier tests. One must forgive others but it is prudent to be wary of them in future dealings.

Joseph, at Pharaoh's command laded ten asses with fine delicacy provisions from Egypt to repay Jacob's kindness in sending fruit and spices with the brothers on their last trip. Additionally, he laded another ten asses with basic staples of grain and bread for Jacob's family to consume on the trip from Canaan to Egypt. As they departed Joseph admonished his brothers not to quarrel with one another on the way back to Canaan. Again he knew them well and now had the authority over them to correct their behavior, by force, if necessary so that they would remain civil to one another, especially toward Benjamin. Finally the text tells us they departed to the north and east from Egypt across the Sinai into southern Canaan to their father Jacob who was in Beersheba. Beersheba is right on the southern most boundary of Canaan at the edge of the Negev.

JACOB LEARNS THAT JOSEPH LIVES

Genesis 45: 26-28

²⁶And they told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. And his heart fainted, for he believed them not. ²⁷And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their

father revived: ²⁸and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die (ASV 1901).

The brothers immediately came to Jacob to tell him of Joseph's elevation to Viceroy of Egypt and that he was still alive. Jacob knowing the behavior of these men in the past did not believe them at first but never the less his heart was shaken at the possibility that what they were saying was true. The Hebrew word used here for "*and they told him*" is *wayagidu*, which has an unusual spelling. It is missing one letter from the normal spelling. This has given rise to a Jewish non-Scriptural explanation found in a noncanonical Jewish writing known as the Book of Yashar. Within it the writers claim that Jacob's family was approached first before the sons told Jacob to soften the blow that was to shortly be given to him of Joseph's situation. It reads as follows:

With him being very old and susceptible to a potentially deathly shock at news of this sort they enlisted the aid of a daughter of Asher who played a lute. They had her sing and play this melody, "Joseph my uncle is living, and he ruleth throughout the land of Egypt, and is not dead." Jacob listened and it pleased him, he rejoiced and the spirit of God was upon him. While Jacob was speaking to his granddaughter his sons arrived, dressed in the luxurious garments that Joseph had given them, and repeated the refrain that he was alive and ruled Egypt as Pharaoh's Viceroy (The Book of Yashar 54: 91-104).

Having heard the melodious soothing words of granddaughter singing that his favorite son still alive it caused his potential heart attack to be diminished when the sons told him. So the shock of hearing that Joseph was still alive did not put him in cardiac arrest so the plain text does say his" heart fainted" not failed. Some view this as hyperbole and dismiss the idea that Jacob's heart fainted at all. One can only imagine the impact of his news after twenty-two years of believing that Joseph was dead to hear he lives and is ruler of Egypt. Seeing the empty wagons ready to move he and his family to Egypt, his spirit was revived and he said, "*It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die*" The text in this verse uses his new name Israel pertaining to the nation that would come from his loins. He realized that the Abrahamic Covenant promises were going to be partially fulfilled through him. He was determined to travel to Egypt to see Joseph before he died.

ISRAEL MEETS WITH GOD

Genesis 46: 1-4

¹And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. ²And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. ³And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: ⁴I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes (ASV 1901).

Jacob left on the journey with *all* his family and livestock. This was the second and last time he would be leaving Canaan. He stopped in Beersheba to make an offering to God. There, on the border of Canaan, where Abraham and Isaac had called upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 21:33; 26:25), he offered sacrifices. The text states that this is the God of his father Isaac, who died ten years earlier, to differentiate from the pagan gods in the region and those down in Egypt as well. He must have been very concerned about the truthfulness of his sons, the famine and the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant that he had known all his life. Could God be using him as His instrument to fulfil part of the Covenant? He needed to meet with God in this time of great stress and need. As he sacrificed, God appeared to Israel for the eighth and last time (as far as has been revealed in Scripture; Genesis 28: 13; 31: 3; 31: 11; 32: 1; 32: 30; 35: 9; 46: 2) in a vision using his new name interchangeably with his given name Jacob. This certifies his God given name as authentic and will be the name of the nation that will be refined in Egypt over the next four hundred years. God called out to him twice in rapid succession, *Jacob, Jacob*. Repetition indicates importance as if to say listen up! Jacob responded likewise in the affirmative, “Here am I.” God identifies Himself as the one who made the Covenant with his father and by inference his grandfather Abraham. He tells Jacob to not fear going down to Egypt, as it is ordained. God told Isaac *not* to go to Egypt. But now He sanctions the trip down there. This is the first time any of the patriarchs leave the Land by divine decree. Neither Abraham, Isaac nor Jacob’s first journey to Haran out of Canaan was by divine decree. But now it is and God comforts Jacob with his knowledge. God promises to be with him and He makes a promise. Through his name Israel he will become a great nation. While in Egypt the Jews will not intermarry. The xenophobia of the Egyptians will insure this as will God’s direction. Exodus 1: 7 clearly affirms the outcome of this. As God is promising to be with him He says, “*I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again.*” This is a two-fold promise. *One* the Exodus will provide the Israelites safe journey out of Egypt to the Promised Land and *two* Jacob will personally be transported back after he dies. Finally, God assures him that, “*Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes*” meaning that Joseph will close his eyes at his death. This comfort is decidedly different than the pain his sons caused him when he considered dying without ever seeing Joseph again (Genesis 37: 35).

THE ARRIVAL IN EGYPT

Genesis 46: 5-7

⁵And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons, which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. ⁶And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: ⁷his sons, and his sons’ sons with him, his daughters, and his sons’s daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt (ASV 1901).

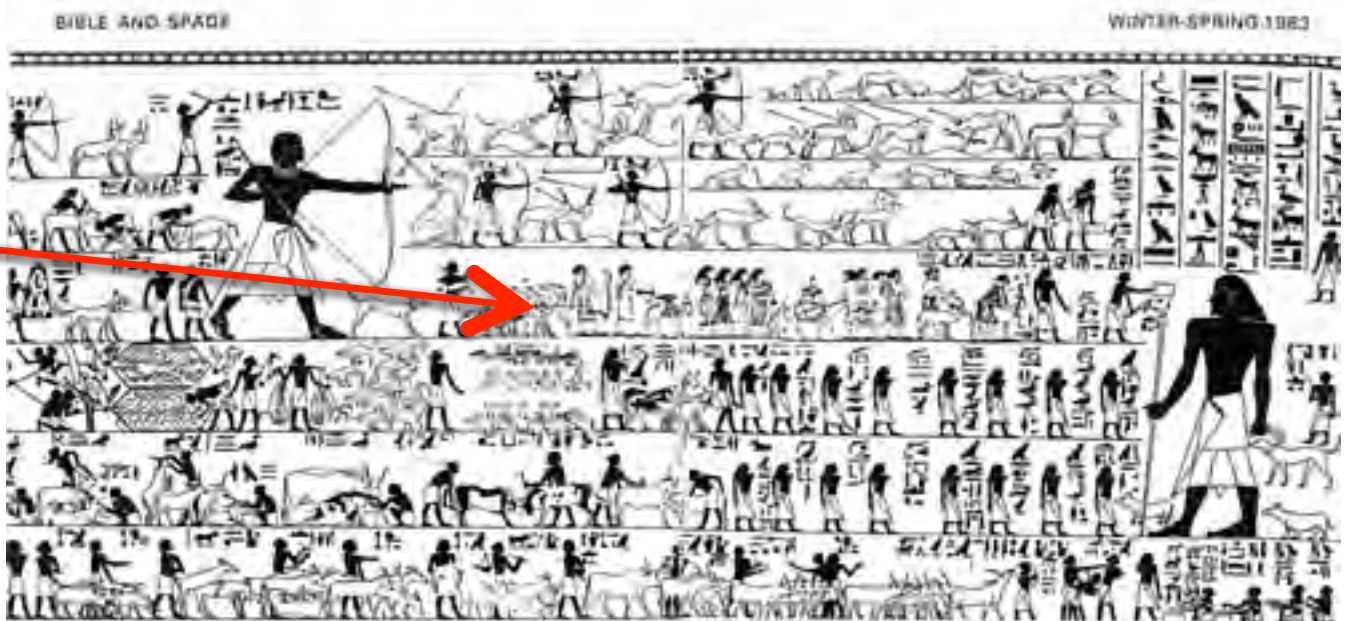
So Jacob went to Egypt after the worshipping of God at Beersheba. His sons brought all the children and grandchildren in the wagons provided by Pharaoh. The also

took their livestock and their personal belongings to Egypt with them. This move out of the Land would last for four hundred years. He had daughters as the text says in addition to Dinah, which is the only female named in Scripture. None of his family remained in the Land. Jacob now will spend the last seventeen years of his life living in relative luxury in the most powerful nation in the world at the bequest of its two highest officers in government, Pharaoh and his beloved son Joseph.



Color rendering of row three of the mural of the tomb of Khnum-Hotep III at Beni Hasan.

The modern village of Beni Hasan is one hundred sixty miles south of Cairo.



Mural of the tomb of Khnum-Hotep III at Beni Hasan

NEXT WEEK: JACOB ARRIVES IN EGYPT

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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