

God's Promises to Jacob Going Down to Egypt

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

- [0 : 00] Now, let's look together for a short moment, a short time this evening, at chapter 46 of Genesis, that passage we read, and from verse 2.
- We can read from the beginning of the chapter. So Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.
- And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. Then he said, I am God, the God of your father.
- Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again.
- And Joseph's hand shall close your eyes. And Jacob, in his old age, had not prepared or was not expecting such a change in his circumstances, as you find here in this passage.
- [1 : 11] He's getting ready to travel. He's done all his packing. Everything that he has, he's going to have to take with him.
- He's not been studying the brochure so as to go on holiday. His journey is not going to be a short break. And then back again quickly to Canaan, where he lives.
- It's going to be permanent. It's a relocation. It's a huge step at this time of his life. Huge step at any time. But a huge step now, especially at this time in his life.
- And yet he knows that it's the Lord's will. He has been convinced from what his sons told him, and especially from what Joseph sent to him to reassure him that he was indeed alive and would take care of him when he came to Egypt.
- From all of that, Israel, Jacob knew this was what God intended for him. But it wasn't easy. Just imagine what it must have been like to take everything he possessed.
- [2 : 27] All the things that he had got together in the land of Canaan, as you read at the end of the previous chapter there. All his descendants, his family, all their goods, everything in their possession.
- He had to take all of that with him. And he stopped at Beersheba. That's an important reference.
- Beersheba had so many associations for Jacob. Associations especially with meeting with God and the worship of God. And you can tell immediately from that, that as he took his journey and all that he had, he came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.
- Jacob is not going to take this journey without God. Even though he knows that God is sending him to Egypt. Even though he knows that this is God's will. He's not prepared to enter into his journey very far without stopping and dealing with God.
- And for all the changes. And especially the major changes and the events of our lives. Whether they be personal or congregational, there will be changes through the course of life.
- [3 : 46] And maybe we're something like Jacob this evening and hadn't anticipated making such changes, such monumental changes in our own experience and in the pathway of our life.

But we know that it's God's will. And we know that that's what God is bringing us into and has brought us into in his providence. So we set out on that journey by faith as Jacob did.

But we stop very soon and consult with God. We come to give our obedience to God and to honor him as we step out onto the journey.

We take God with us into the decisions and the movements of life. And as you find that here, so God comes to reassure his servant that what he is doing is something he need not be afraid of.

So let's look at that passage. And as we do so, we'll try and relate it and apply it to our own changing circumstances in life as they occur from time to time.

[4 : 56] And take the great principles from this passage that we always need to apply. Because that's the great thing about God. And that's the great thing about God's word, the Bible, this truth.

That however much your circumstances change and however much God in his providence will bring about even major changes that you may not even have expected. The principles that he gives us in his word are always relevant, are always applicable, are always reliable.

You don't need to look for something new. For when you need to make a change of direction in your life. It's all there already, as Jacob well knows.

And when he goes, he stops at Beersheba. And he offers sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And then God introduces himself once again to him in the visions of the night.

Let's look at that introduction. He said to him, Jacob, Jacob. And Jacob responded, here am I. Now that's interesting.

[6 : 04] These words, Jacob, Jacob. Because you find that in different places in the Bible. And God sometimes addresses people. He doubles their name. He repeats the name.

And very often, that's in a context where something really important is about to happen. As in this instance, it's something that really is a big moment in the life of Jacob.

And for the big moments, God is there. For the big moments, God comes to introduce himself. For the big moments in life, God is assuring us. As he assured Jacob, he knows what he's doing.

And he's getting his attention. So that he will focus his mind now on God's purpose and on God's direction. Isn't it the same when Abraham was about to kill Isaac in obedience to God?

He had taken the knife to slay his son. When all of a sudden he heard, Abraham, Abraham. Big moment.

[7 : 14] Big intervention from God. You find the same in Samuel. When he had not yet learned to listen to the Lord as a young boy. Samuel, Samuel.

The Lord repeated his name. You find it also in Acts 9. When Saul of Tarsus is about to really meet his big moment in life.

As he meets the Lord on the way to Damascus. Saul, Saul. Big moments. God is in charge of them. God reveals himself in them and through them.

Here's another change in Jacob's life. Here's a crisis, you might say. And here is God meeting him for it. Meeting him in all the resources that are God's.

That he's going to give him and assure him at this time of. And that's so true for ourselves. Whatever big moments you'll have in life. Whatever changes.

[8 : 18] For the additions. For the losses. For the gains. For the losses. For the new chapters in life that open up. For family life. For personal life. For congregational life.

There are so many big moments. And we have to stop over them and come to the God of Jacob. And as we do so in faith. God will address us.

And God will come. To let us know that he is aware of our needs intimately. He repeats our name as it were. Just to assure us. I know you're there.

And I know what's happening. And I'm going to go before you. And then he said to him. I am God. The God of your father.

That's the final part of the introduction. The rest of it is really a reassurance and an encouragement. But this is how God introduced himself. Jacob.

[9 : 12] Jacob. I am God. The God of your father. In other words. He is being. God is reassuring. Seeing Jacob. But this critical chapter in his life.

As he has to face going to Egypt. With all that he has to take with him. And with the journey. And with all that lies ahead of him. In Egypt. As he thinks ahead. So many changes.

So many new things to get used to. And God is saying to him. Yes Jacob. All of that is new. This is a new chapter. This is another phase in your life. But I am the same.

There will be no change on my part. You can be assured. That whatever changes you come across. As you go from Canaan to Egypt.

As you experience Egypt. Rather than Canaan. And all the difficulties. And the trials. That you may have there. And even as you go on the journey. Whatever will happen to you on the journey.

[10 : 08] And whatever changes that may bring in. However different it may be. I your God. I'm not going to be different. You can be assured. You're taking the same God.

Into all your new circumstances. Aren't you thankful. Tonight for the consistency of God.

For the consistency. Of this God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That he is the same. That he does not change. That his mind doesn't have to catch up.

With a change in events. In the life of his people. That he doesn't have to adjust his program. Just because we might sometimes be caught out. By things in his providence. Or things in our own life.

He's never caught up. He's never caught out. He never has to catch up. He's always before us. He's always behind us. He knows the end from the beginning. In every single sense.

[11 : 07] God is absolutely consistent. And it's part of what makes him trustworthy. You don't need to worry about. Whether or not God is going to be the same.

In your new circumstances. As he was in the old. I am the God of your father. The God your father knew. The God your grandfather knew.

The God your great grandfather knew. And the God your sons. And your sons' sons will know. I am God.

Three great words to take with you. Into all our changing circumstances in life. I am God. I do not change.

I will be what I've always been to you. You can depend upon me. Because I'm reliable. And I am consistent. That's his introduction.

[12 : 08] And isn't that one way of surely ending a communion time? To take from this communion. The consistency of God.

As we leave this communion. And enter into our circumstances. In the world. Whatever lies ahead. Whatever changes lie ahead. The Christ you remembered.

In the Lord's Supper. The Jesus. Whose death was brought before us. In the bread and in the cup. That Jesus is the same. Out with. And in his church.

He is the same for his people. In every one of their circumstances. And all of them together. And what reassurance did he give them?

Well. Did he give them? The reassurance. And encouragement. That Jacob received. You can see. Falls into two parts as well. First of all.

[13 : 05] He said to him. Don't be afraid. To go down to Egypt. Now. You can imagine how. Jacob's mind might have had. Some sense of apprehension. He might well have been.

Very afraid. We're not told. Exactly that he was afraid. But anyway. God came to him and said. Don't be afraid. You don't need to be afraid. He would have. Undoubtedly. Have had some apprehensions.

For example. His father. Isaac. And we're. Fully persuaded. That all of these. Abraham. Isaac. Jacob himself. Passed on. All that they had learned. Of God.

To their children. To their grandchildren. All the great events. And the experiences of life. And Isaac. Would have passed on. What God said to him. In chapter 26. Of Genesis. At a time.

Of famine. Don't go down. To Egypt. God repeated. His promises. To Isaac. That he had given. To his father. Abraham. But he specifically.

[14 : 00] At that moment. Said. You are not. To go down. To Egypt. And you can imagine. Maybe. Jacob. At this. Juncture. Reminding himself.

Of. What his father. Isaac. Had said. God had said. To him. He was not. To go down. Into Egypt. So how does that. Square. With. What. Jacob.

Is now. About to do. God is saying. I am God. Don't. Don't. Be afraid. To go down. To Egypt.

And of course. He knew. That the land. Of Canaan. Was the promised land. For himself. As it had been made clear. To Abraham. And his descendants. And that this land.

That he regarded as. An inheritance. From the Lord. That this was a land. That he himself. Had a right to. Why was he now. Going to have to leave it. What if he died.

[14 : 54] In Egypt. What if Joseph died. Before he died. And then also. You have. What God revealed.

To Abraham. Which he would have. Passed on. About. The fact. That his descendants. Would be. Four hundred. Years. In Egypt. And then. God would come.

To release them. Here is Jacob. And facing at the end. Or near the end. Of his life. In his old age. The prospect. Of going to Egypt. Knowing that God. Has said. His descendants.

Are going to be. Four hundred years. In Egypt. Jacob. Surely. Was thinking. At this moment. I will not. Leave Egypt. Alive. If my descendants.

Are going to be there. For four hundred years. That means. I have to die there. I'm going to die. Outside of Canaan. The land. That God promised. The land. The land. The land. Where.

[15 : 49] I would want to be buried. How can this be? God is saying to him. Don't. Be afraid. To go. Into Egypt. And every believer.

Has. Certain fears. At certain time. Or certainly. Most do. And you know. There's. Always a fear. As you well know. And sure. For new events.

For new things. In life. For new turns. In providence. And the more. We go on. In life. And the more. We become aware. Of. Perhaps. That we're not as fit. As we used to be.

And mentally. Or physically. Or even spiritually. There are so many things. That where changes. Come into our experience. Where the fear factor. Begins to kick in.

And as that's the case. It's then. That we really. Need to be assured. By God. From his truth. That he has not changed. And not to be afraid.

[16 : 44] Of what we don't know. Because God already knows it. And God. If we're following. In his will. And in his path.

And in obedience. To him. Then he's saying to us. Don't. Be afraid. Of going down. To Egypt. And then he tells him. Why that's the case. He doesn't just leave it like that.

And that's. So typical of God. God doesn't just. Command things. And then expect you. To get on with. Keeping the command. He explains. Why the command. Is important. He gives you. Additional information.

That's what he does. Here as well. With Jacob. He doesn't just say. Don't be afraid. To go down. Into Egypt. He then says. Four things. Four dynamic.

Truths. As to why. Jacob. Need not be afraid. To go down. Into Egypt. The first one is. For there. I will make you. Into. A great nation.

[17 : 39] There. I will make you. Into a great nation. What is this? Isn't Canaan. The place. Where God has said. Abraham. Isaac.

Jacob. His descendants. Will have us. An inheritance. Forever. What is he saying? What does he mean. About making him. A great nation. In Egypt. And if these people. Are going to be in Egypt. 400 years.

And be so. Oppressed. By the Egyptians. And badly. Treated. By the Egyptians. And even become slaves. Of the Egyptians. How are they going. To become a great nation?

See. There's where. One of the great principles. In the Bible. Comes really. Right to the fore. That you have to see. In what God is saying. There.

I will make you. Into a great nation. There is. God's business. There is God. In the business. Of creating. A people. In the midst. Of suffering.

[18 : 36] In the midst. Of adversity. In the very heart. Of the persecutions. Of Egypt. God is busy. Creating. God is busy.

Fashioning. A people. God is busy. Multiplying. A people. And the more. The Egyptians. Try to undo. That. And the more. The Egyptians. Try to kill off.

The people of Israel. The descendants. Of Jacob. The more. They multiply. The more. Powerful. They get. Why? Because God. Is keeping. His promise. To Jacob.

There. I will make you. A great nation. The devil. Promised. Jesus.

All the kingdoms. Of the world. And the glory. Of them. If you will. But fall down. And worship me. What would that. Entail? It would entail.

[19 : 33] A bypass. Pass round the cross. And Jesus said. Be gone. Because Christ knew.

As he taught his people. That it's not by avoiding. Suffering. Or bypassing the trials. Or not. Experiencing any temptation.

That God. Strengthens his people. That God. Multiplies people. And that God multiplies. Even within a single person. The spiritual vitality. And life.

Of that person. Don't be afraid. Of going down to Egypt. He's saying. For there. I will make you. Into a great nation. Not. After you've come out of Egypt.

Not before you go into Egypt. But there. Right in Egypt. Remember Paul's. Way of. Saying the same point. Pretty well. As he said about himself.

- [20 : 29] In 2nd Corinthians 4. And applied it to. The Lord's people as well. Where he talked about. And just imagine. He was including himself.
- In this. He called it. Our affliction. But he called it. Our. Light. Affliction. And why did he call it. Light. Affliction.
- Not because. It didn't feel heavy. Not because. It wasn't painful. But because. It was light. Compared to the. Weight.
- Of glory. That God. Had in store. For him. And for God's people. Our light. Affliction. Which is but. For a moment. Is working. For us. A far.
- More exceeding. And eternal. Weight. Of glory. In other words. Paul is as it were. Saying. Here. Are a set of balances. A set of scales. On the one side.
- [21 : 23] Put the weight. Of all your sufferings. Put the weight. Of all your tribulations. Load them all. Onto that side. Of the scale. And just watch. The scale.
- Go down. With the weight. Of them. And then. On the other side. Put the glory. That God. Has in store. For his people. In heaven. And just.
- Watch that side. Go down. And the other one. Comes up. I am persuaded. He said. To the Romans. That the sufferings. Of this present time.
- Are not. Worthy. To be compared. To the glory. Which shall be revealed. In us. Do we really believe that? Jacob had to believe it.
- That's the principle. That comes across to us. From the pages. Of God's word. That it's really there. Where people would least expect. A productiveness.
- [22 : 19] To be in place. A creative. Work. To be going on. It's there. That God works. It's there. That God uses.
- The kind of suffering. That his people experience. And through that. He makes them great. He multiplies.
- He makes them a great nation. That's the first thing. The second thing was. I myself. Will go down with you.
- To Egypt. Now just think of that. It would have been a great thing. If God had said. To Jacob. I will get my chief angel. Gabriel.
- I will take him. And I will instruct him. That he must go down. To Egypt with you. That he must accompany you. On the journey. That he must stay with you. All the time. That you live.
- [23 : 14] In Egypt. What a great message. That would have been. But it's nothing. Compared to this. I will go down. With you. To Egypt. Egypt.
- Is the dark place. Egypt. Is the place. That these people. Of Israel. That these. People of God. Have been instructed. To. Regard.
- As a pagan place. As a place. That is associated. With enmity. Against God. And it's going to be. A place. That is going to persecute them. For all of these years. And here is God saying.
- Don't be afraid. To go down to Egypt. I'm going to make you. Into a great nation. In Egypt. And more than that. I'm going to go down. With you. As a believer.
- Tonight. However deep. Your sorrows. May be. They will never.
- [24 : 11] Be so deep. That God. Is not beneath them. They will never. Be so deep. That God. Will say. Oh I can't. Go down.
- That far. I can't. Enter into. Quite. That. Depth. Of suffering. Quite. That. Depth. Of experience. I will give you help.

But I won't go into it. Myself. What God. Is saying is. When you go down. To Egypt. I will go down. With you. And that's what God.

Is in the habit. Of doing. And he has. Proved it. In the very thing. That you and I. Were remembering. Yesterday. In the Lord's Supper.

How far. Down. Did God. Go. In going down. With his people. Into. Their sin. Their guilt.

[25 : 10] Their need. He went down. As far. As the cry. Of Christ. On the cross. Exclaims. My God. My God.

Why. Have you. Forsaken me. He went. Down. As far. As that. He. Himself. In the person. Of his son. In our nature. Took hell.

Into himself. And reached. The depths. Of it. Don't be afraid. To go into Egypt. For I will make you.

There a great nation. And I. Myself. Will go down. With you. My friends. Tonight. If God. Has gone down. In Jesus Christ. Into the depths.

Of suffering. That are really. The hell. That we deserved. If he has taken that. Into himself. And experienced that. If he has accomplished. The kind of death. That has paid.

[26 : 03] For our sins. You need not. Be afraid. That he's not. Going to go with you. Into the lesser. Sufferings. Of our life. He has proved himself.

Already. In Jesus Christ. That he's the God. Who goes down. With his people. And ahead. Of his people. Even into the depths. Of death.

And that is. How Jesus. So often. Assured. And reassured. His disciples. At the times. When they themselves. Were taken up.

With apprehension. Or with fear. Sometimes. Just by. His glorious presence. Appearing. As to John. In the isle of Patmos. As you find. In the book of.

Revelation. This great figure. That he describes. There in the opening. Verses. Such a magnificent. Awesome figure. And then.

[27 : 04] John says. That he put his hand. On me. And he said. Don't be afraid. And isn't that. How he came. Across the sea. To the disciples.

When they were. Fearful. Of drowning. Of being overtaken. In the storm. Don't be afraid. It is I. It's I myself. There's no one less than that.

And so. For all your experiences. And mine. For all the depths. We may have to plumb. For all the difficulties.

And the trials. We may have to go through. God is not going to give us. A bypass. When it's his will. That we have to face up to them. And overcome them. But God is not saying to us.

Now I'm going to send you. Into what's going to be. A difficult period. Of your life. And when you go through it. I'll meet you on the other side. I myself.

[28 : 00] Will go down with you. I'm going to accompany you. Jacob. I'm going to be your companion. I'm going to be closer to you. On that journey.

Than any of your family. And that's how Jesus assured his disciples. Of his presence with them. To the end of the age.

When they were to go forth. And make disciples. Behold. I am with you. Not with you sometimes. Not with you in the toughest times.

Not with you. In the times. When you're not really. In the very depths. But I am with you. He didn't qualify it. He didn't say it would only be. A part time.

Accompaniment. He's a full time saviour. He's a full time companion. And he doesn't shirk his responsibilities. To accompany his people.

[29 : 00] When the going gets really tough. That's when you come to really appreciate. That he's a God. Who sticks by his people. Thirdly.

I will bring you up again. Now Jacob's going to die in Egypt. And yet here is God saying. I will take you up again.

I'm not going to leave you in Egypt. Even though Jacob's going to die there. That's not where he's going to be buried. His remains. Will come back to be buried. In the land of Canaan.

His family will see to it. But God is assuring him here. That however much his family will see to his needs. And to the needs of his very body.

Ultimately. It is God. Who's taking him back up. That's what he's being assured of. Whatever happens in Egypt Jacob. Not only am I going to go down with you.

[30 : 00] But I'm also going to bring you up again. Now you see. That really. Is effectively the language of resurrection. Isn't it?

It's the language of God. Speaking about going down. And then coming up. It's the language associated with going down to the grave. And then coming up again in newness of life.

It's the language associated with going down to the depths of sin. And then being brought out of sin in his redemption. But it's also indicative of what happens in our resurrection.

As Paul said. Where body is sown in the earth. And then it is raised incorruptible. And in glory.

It is a wonderful thought. Isn't it? That. God will go down with us.

[30 : 59] In every phase of life. And even in death. And God will bring us up again. For all who are his. That is their destiny.

Who is going to bring them. Out of the grave. Who is going to bring their bodies back. From the dead. It is this God. They are not doing it by their own power. It's not by some other agency.

I will bring you up again. So don't be afraid. To go down to Egypt. That's you see. Of course something. That we have in mind. About our own death. About the manner of our death.

About the circumstances of our death. So many things in that. That fill us understandably. With apprehension. With fear even. But for death itself.

God is saying. Don't be afraid. To go down there. Your body will go down. Into the grave. But I'm not going to leave it there.

[32 : 01] I've made provision that. As we mentioned yesterday. Even the very grave. The grave was sanctified. By the fact that the body. Of the son of God. Was laid in it. And then he's saying.

I will bring you up again. I'll make sure. That you will not be left. In the darkness of Egypt. You'll come back to Canaan.

To be buried there. What a great prospect. God's people have. When they are assured. Not only. Through all the issues of life.

That God is with them. That he goes down with them. Into all the dark. And difficult trials of life. But also that he goes down with them. Even to the very grave. He's gone ahead of them.

Into the grave. And he's not going to leave. Even their body in the grave. He's going to go up with. He's going to bring them up again. The language of. Resurrection.

[32 : 58] The great hope. Of God's people. Is that God will certainly do. What he has promised to do. And bring them up.

To meet the Lord himself. In the air. And then fourthly. Finally he says. And Joseph. Will close.

Your eyes. Joseph's hand. Shall close your eyes. Now that's very poignant. It's very emotional. Because it's to do with.

What happens. When a person dies. And their eyes need to be closed. By whoever is to close them. And when you think back. To what Jacob said.

After his sons. Had made him believe. His other sons. Had made him believe. That Joseph had been killed. They showed him the coat. Covered with the blood.

[33 : 55] Of the animal. That they had killed. And sprinkled. Splattered the coat. With the blood. And Jacob concluded. My son. Joseph has certainly. Joseph has certainly.

Been torn to pieces. I shall go down. In sorrow. To the grave. To him. And then you read that. His family tried to comfort him.

And it says categorically. He refused. To be comforted. He refused. To be comforted. And now here is God.

Coming to this old man. Who had had such traumas. In his life. Who had had to live. Through all of these years. Thinking his beloved Joseph. Was dead. Who had all the traumas.

Of trying to manage. These brothers of Joseph. In all their disputes. In all their deceitfulness. Who had had to live with that. For so many years. And now.

[34 : 50] All of a sudden. He hears. Joseph is alive. And he has sent all of this. To carry him down to Egypt. And I must. He says. Go and see him. Before I die. And here is God.

This great. And kind God. This God. That comes to reassure him. On the journey. Long before he reaches Egypt. While he is still. At Beersheba. Having given his. His.

His. Worship to God. Joseph. shall close your eyes. In death. Your beloved Joseph.

For all of these years. That you believed. You would never see. In this world again. Not only will you see him. But when you die. It will be he. He will be the one.

Who will do the last offices. For you. He will close your eyes. When you die. No other hand will do it.

[35 : 48] Joseph will personally see. To his father's final needs. And that's beautiful. And that's God. Coming even to.

Such a detail as that. To assure Joseph. To assure Jacob. This is what is lying. Ahead of you. You're going to have.

At the very end of your life. Your beloved Joseph. Taking care of you. God. And how much greater is it. When we think of God. When we think of God.

Saying don't be afraid. To go down to Egypt. Don't be afraid. To go into. The trials. And the difficulties of life. Don't be afraid. Because. There. I will be at work. Creatively.

Don't be afraid. Because I go with my people. Into their circumstances. Don't be afraid. Because I will take you up again. I will actually bring you. Into your final destiny.

[36 : 44] And glory. And who is going to do. That final act. Of wiping away. The tears from our eyes.

Not an angel. What does revelation say? God shall wipe away. Every tear.

From their eyes. That's the kind of God. You have. Not a God. Who stands at a distance.
From the needs of his people.

And when it comes. For them to leave. This world. And when it comes. To their final. State
in glory. Where there shall be. No more mourning. Or crying. Or tears. Where all things.

Are made new. You have the assurance. That God's own. Very delicate touch. Will do that
final act.

[37 : 45] Of bedding you. Into your final comfort. That's the God. We worship and follow. No
wonder Israel could say.

Who is like unto you. O Lord. There is none. And he is worthy of all.

Our trust. Let's pray. Gracious Lord. We give thanks. For the reassurance.

That you give us. Through your word. Of your own commitment. To your people. Of the
way in which. You bring that consistency. That belongs to you.

So perfectly. The way you bring it. To bear upon all. Their circumstances. In life. The way
you come. To strengthen them. Through reassuring them. Of it.

[38 : 42] We thank you tonight. O Lord. That we can trust. Your word. That we can take it. Into all
that remains. Ahead of us. In our lives. We pray that you would. Teach us.

To do so. That you would. Help us. To rely upon. All that it states. To us. So categorically.
Of your own relationship. To your people. So be with us.

We pray now. And hear us in our prayers. Accept all our worship. For Jesus' sake. Amen.